

Central American migrants wearing out their welcome in several Mexican towns

Several towns in Mexico where Central American migrants have been congregating are showing the strains of taking care of the mass of humanity.

In many cases, the Mexican citizens are as poor and as desperate as the migrants. That hasn't stopped them from demanding money, food, and medicine as the Mexican government struggles to deal with the crisis.

Reuters:

Hundreds of migrants have been camped out for weeks in Mapastepec, where locals say six migrant caravans have arrived since last Easter. By far the biggest was a group of thousands in October that drew the anger of U.S. President Donald Trump.

Ana Gabriela Galvan, a local resident who helped to provide food to migrants in the October caravan, told Reuters the small town in the impoverished state of Chiapas, which borders Guatemala, felt overwhelmed by the number of Central Americans.

"It's really bad, because they're pouring onto our land," she said, noting that some locals were reluctant to leave their homes. "They ask for money, and if you offer food, they don't want it; they want money and sometimes you don't have any."

Trump's threat to close the border last month has stirred the Mexican government to action. They are detaining more migrants and limiting the number of humanitarian visas given out. These visas allow the migrant to stay in Mexico and get a job.

But it brings little comfort to many Mexicans living in towns that have been inundated with migrants.

A month ago, a large knot of migrants began forming in Mapastepec when the National Migration Institute closed its main office in the nearby city of Tapachula. The closure prompted hundreds to travel north to the sweltering town on the Pacific coast where the agency has a smaller outpost. Since then, bedraggled groups of men, women and children have been staying in and around a local sports stadium, hoping to be issued humanitarian visas.

Migrant activists continue to encourage these desperately poor people to keep giving:

Jesus Salvador Quintana, a senior official at the National Human Rights Commission, said in Mapastepec the body had noticed a decrease in assistance from the public but urged people to keep helping the migrants on their often arduous journeys.

"There are children, pregnant women, whole families that sometimes need this humanitarian aid," he told Reuters.

Anabel Quintero, a young Honduran mother in Mapastepec, said when her caravan passed through the nearby town of Huixtla some shops closed rather than sell to migrants seeking medicine for sick children.

"It's a bad feeling," she said. "They told us they didn't want us sleeping in the park, and we had to leave."

This less welcoming attitude by Mexicans was inevitable. Strangers come to town demanding to be taken care of, using scarce resources, and upending the lives of ordinary people.

Just what did they expect?

Source:

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