

# Mexico | Trump 2.0 mass deportation: an unlikely event

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- **On the first day of the Trump 2.0 administration, at least 7 executive orders or proclamations were issued regarding immigration issues, highlighting the importance of this issue for his government.**
- **During President Trump's first administration (2017-2020) an average of 300,000 immigrants were removed per year, a figure lower than that observed during both President Obama's administrations: 400,000 per year in his first administration and 375,000 in the second.**
- **It is estimated that in the United States, there are about 10 million undocumented workers, 6% of the workforce. A program of mass deportations (millions of people) in an economy in which the unemployment rate is at its natural or equilibrium level, would result in an economic recession and a permanent increase in the inflation rate.**
- **6.1 million of the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States, 56% of the total, resided in a state with a Democratic Party governor. Although it is not a rule, these states tend to cooperate less or very little with federal immigration authorities.**
- **It is estimated that there are just over 12 million Mexican immigrants in the United States, of which 4.1 million are undocumented. Of this group, 430,000 have the protection to reside and work in the United States thanks to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).**
- **During President Trump's first administration, remittances to Mexico increased by more than 50% in dollars. The new Trump administration's effect on the flow of remittances to Mexico in the coming years is likely to be very little. The main factor driving migration and remittances is the U.S. economy, not immigration policy.**
- **President Trump will reinstate the "Remain in Mexico" program, which ordered more than 81,000 migrants to remain in Mexico during their asylum proceedings in the United States between 2019 and 2022. Honduras, Guatemala, Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Ecuador, and Venezuela were the main countries of origin.**

On Monday, January 20, Donald Trump was once again inaugurated as President of the United States for the 2025-2028 term. In his inaugural speech, delivered from the capitol rotunda, he reaffirmed that his government will stop the entry of undocumented migrants across borders, and seek to deport immigrants residing in that country without authorization (The White House, 2025h).

By Monday afternoon, as promised by President Trump, he issued a large number of official statements on his first day in office, possibly setting a record for a single day. A total of 46 actions were recorded on the official White House website, including **4 administrative appointments of officials, 26 executive orders, 12 memorandums, and 4 proclamations**. The difference in these instruments is more form than substance (Jeyaretnam & Guzman, 2025). Of these actions that the executive branch announced, **at least 7 are directly related to the topic of immigration:**

- **Clarifying the Military's Role in Protecting the Territorial Integrity of the United States.** Calls on the Army and National Guard to take action and implement a plan to prevent the entry of unauthorized migrants at the southern border of the United States (The White House, 2025a).
- **Declaring a National Emergency at the Southern Border of the United States.** Calls for channeling military resources and personnel to protect the southern border, including the addition of physical barriers and the use of drones (The White House, 2025b).
- **Guaranteeing the States Protection against Invasion.** Government agencies are instructed to take all necessary measures and actions to stop unauthorized migrant entries into U.S. territory (The White House, 2025c).
- **Protecting the American People against Invasion.** Seeks to restrict federal funds to "sanctuary jurisdictions" that do not cooperate with immigration authorities, establish more detention centers, and create a task force in each state to enforce immigration law (The White House, 2025d).
- **Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship.** Seeks to deny birthright citizenship in the United States (*ius soli*) to children of undocumented or temporary migrant mothers and non-citizen or non-resident fathers (The White House, 2025e). This is a blatantly unconstitutional measure, with at least 22 states already filing lawsuits against President Trump's administration over this policy (Schwartz & Baker, 2025).
- **Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program.** Suspends the reception of refugees until further notice (The White House, 2025f).
- **Securing Our Borders.** Among its main actions are redirecting funds to reinforce and construct the border wall with Mexico, reinstating the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), commonly known as "Remain in Mexico," canceling the "CBP One" app appointment program for asylum seekers, and ending the humanitarian parole program for migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela (The White House, 2025g).

Migration is a highly sensitive and significant issue in the United States, and President Trump's stance was undoubtedly a decisive factor in voters' choice for the 47th president. The current president recently declared that the immigration issue had been the main factor that led him to win the election. Trump outlined his 20 commitments for his 2025-2028 electoral platform in the **Agenda 47** project, of which 4 directly address the issue of immigration.

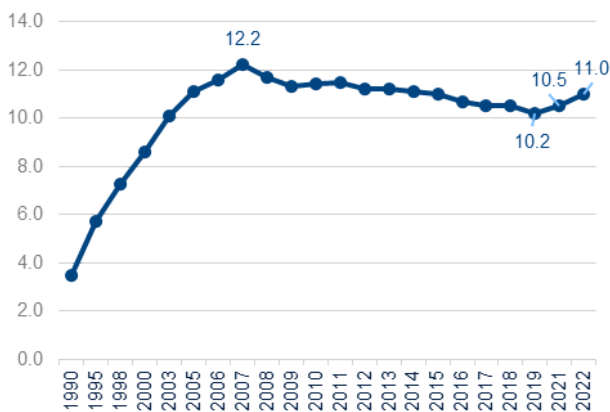
President Trump's rhetoric is that undocumented immigrants are responsible for many problems in the United States (misuse of public programs, inflation, violence, drugs, etc.), and many of his supporters believe this, although multiple studies show that immigrants commit fewer crimes than the U.S.-born population (Abramitzky et al., 2023). His solution: **a mass deportation of undocumented immigrants**. We consider that this scenario is **very unlikely to occur**. Below, we will present some of the main reasons why we believe a mass deportation of immigrants in the United States in the next four years (2025-2028) is unlikely to occur; and we do not believe that there will be significant impacts on the flow of remittances to Mexico.

## There are 12 million Mexican immigrants in the United States, but only 4.1 million are undocumented

An estimated 51.5 million immigrants reside in the United States, representing 15.6% of the total population of that country in 2023. Much of this population already has U.S. citizenship, lawful permanent residency, or other documented immigration status. It is estimated that of these 51.5 million immigrants, 11.0 million (21.4%) have an irregular immigration status or are undocumented, and of these, between 8.5 million and 10 million are part of the labor force.

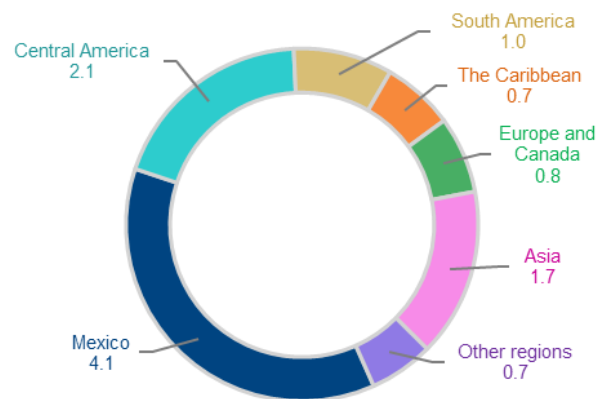
As for the Mexican immigrant population in the United States, it is estimated that there are just over 12 million, of which 4 million have U.S. citizenship, another 3.9 million have a Green Card or other documented status, and 4.1 million are undocumented. Of this last group, 430,000 have the protection to reside and work in the United States thanks to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

Chart 1. **UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS IN THE U.S., 1990-2022** (Million)



Source: BBVA Research based on data from Pew Research Center, 2024.

Chart 2. **UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS IN THE U.S. BY COUNTRY OR REGION OF ORIGIN, 2022** (Million)



Source: BBVA Research based on data from Pew Research Center, 2024.

## Trump deported fewer immigrants from within the country per year than Obama

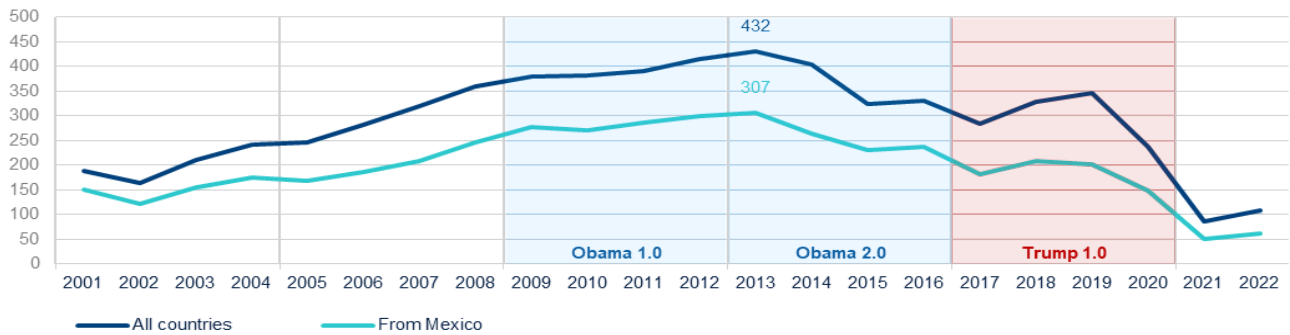
Regarding interior removals (with an expulsion order), which separate families and deport migrants with many years of ties to the country, the leading president in deportations was Obama, with an average of 400,000 events annually during his first term and 375,000 in his second term. Despite President Trump's aggressive rhetoric against undocumented immigrants, during his first administration (2017-2020) 300,000 migrants were removed per year, a figure lower than that observed during both administrations of President Obama.

The task of containing the migratory flow at the southwest border of the United States could be easier for President Trump during the beginning of his second term. Due to the need to win votes during the 2024 presidential campaign, former President Biden issued an executive order to limit asylum applications, in addition to making arrangements for various transit countries to stop part of the migratory flow to the United States. Thus, it can be

seen that since July 2024, migrant apprehensions at the southern border of the United States have reached their lowest levels in over 4 years. In December 2023, almost 250,000 migrant apprehension events were recorded in a single month, while in December 2024, only 47,300 apprehensions were recorded; that is, a fifth of the number of events of the previous year.

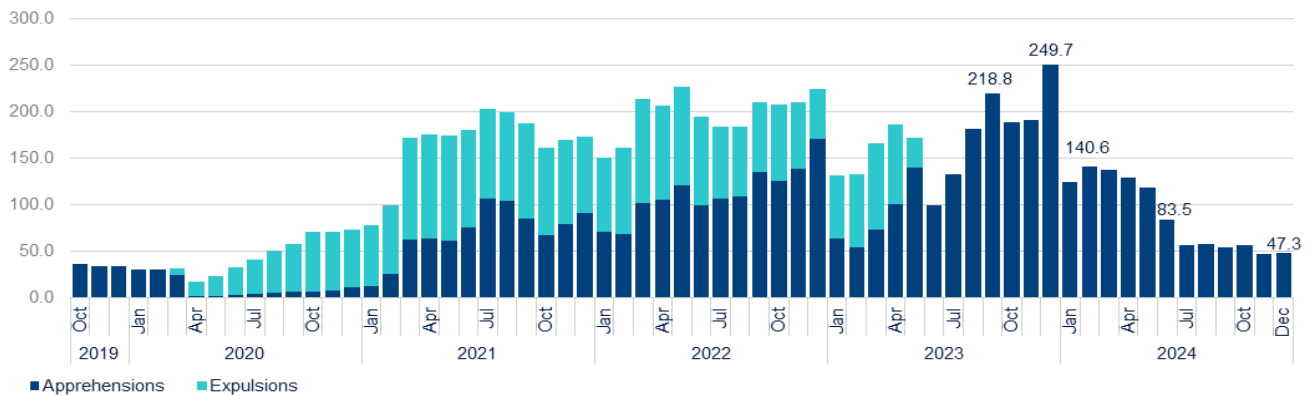
The Trump administration is sure to exert hostile pressure on immigrants and impact their quality of life, but there will be little effect on the overall volume of unauthorized immigrants in the United States as a program of mass deportations in an economy that is at full employment would have significant recessionary and inflationary effects. In particular, the agricultural and construction sectors would experience contraction, especially now that there will be strong demand for housing construction due to the fires in the city of Los Angeles. While the immigration issue was central to Trump's election, so was the growth in the inflation rate during Biden's presidency. In this regard, it is difficult to envision the implementation of a mass deportation policy that would lead to a permanent increase in the inflation rate, as it would create significant pressure on wages.

Chart 3. **NONCITIZEN REMOVALS (INTERIOR DEPORTATIONS) BY THE UNITED STATES, 2001-2022**  
(Thousand)



Note: Removals are compulsory movements based on an expulsion order. The information refers to fiscal years.  
Source: BBVA Research based on data from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), 2009-2022. Updated to January 2025.

Chart 4. **SOUTHWEST LAND BORDER ENCOUNTERS BY U.S. MIGRATORY AUTHORITY, 2019-2024**  
(Thousand)



Source: BBVA Research based on data from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

## Undocumented immigrants are scattered across many households: to deport them, authorities would have to go house to house across the United States

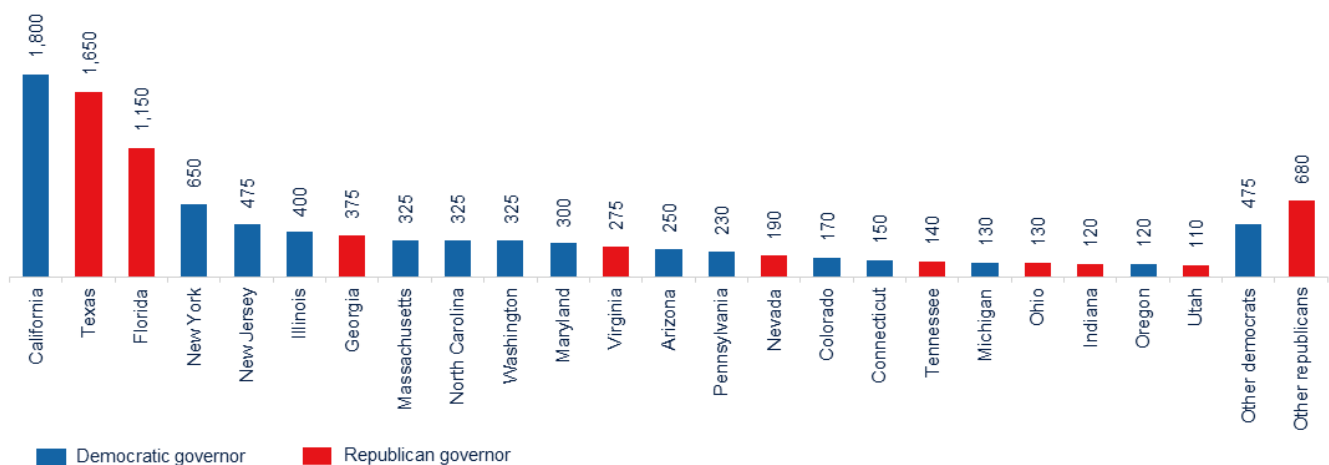
One might think that undocumented immigrants in the United States share a roof near an agricultural or rural work source and that through raids, a large portion of this population could be apprehended. Nothing could be further from the truth. There are many of these cases, but they comprise a tiny fraction of the total number of undocumented immigrants. About 70% of the undocumented immigrant population resides in households with a mixed migratory composition: U.S. citizens by birth, citizens by naturalization, permanent residents, individuals with some form of immigration relief, visa holders, etc.

It is almost impossible to deport a large volume of undocumented immigrants since they are widely dispersed throughout many homes and across all 50 U.S. states. According to the Pew Research Center, the nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants residing in the United States live in 6.3 million households; that is, 1 in 20 households in the country has at least one undocumented immigrant (Passel & Krogstad, 2024). Thus, if the immigration authority manages to identify a house with undocumented immigrants, it is almost certain that there are only one or two undocumented people in the household. Tracking down all such individuals would be a monumental task, requiring a house-by-house review, which would incur significant fiscal costs.

## Many undocumented immigrants reside in "sanctuary jurisdictions," which cooperate less or very little with immigration authorities

Although immigration laws are federal, much of the apprehension of undocumented immigrants within the United States begins with actions or notifications from local authorities. An estimated 6.1 million of the 11.0 million undocumented immigrants—56% of the total—reside in a state with a Democratic Party governor. Although it is not a rule, these states tend to cooperate less or very little with federal immigration authorities.

Chart 5. **UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS BY STATE IN THE UNITED STATES AND GOVERNOR'S PARTY\*, 2022 (Thousand)**



Note: \* State governor as of January 2025. Washington, DC not included.  
Source: BBVA Research based on data from Pew Research Center, 2024.

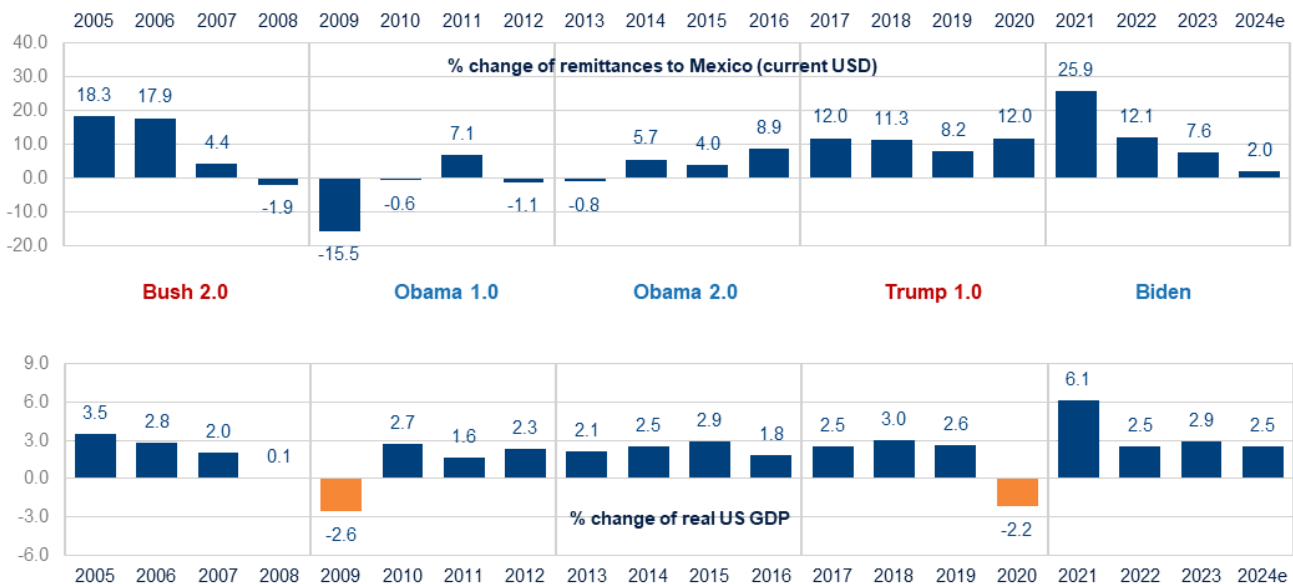
Oregon and Illinois are the states with the most protective laws for immigrants —regardless of immigration status—followed by California, New Jersey, and Washington, which also have fairly broad sanctuary jurisdiction laws. Other states such as Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland, Vermont, New York, and Rhode Island have some laws that limit cooperation with immigration authorities (ILRC, 2024).

If President Trump's administration and predominantly anti-immigration states toughen immigration measures, it is possible that there will be a shift of the undocumented immigrant population to "sanctuary" states. However, we believe that this interstate movement will not be of a great magnitude, and we consider it even less likely that immigrants will opt to return to their countries of origin.

## In the Trump 1.0 administration, remittances to Mexico increased by more than 50% in dollars

Despite President Trump's campaign threat during his first term to limit or impose a tax on remittances, data shows that during his first four years in office, remittances to Mexico increased by more than 50% in dollars, rising from 27.6 billion dollars at the end of 2016 to 41.7 billion dollars at the end of 2020. The main factor driving immigration and remittances is the U.S. economy. Therefore, in the context of an economy that is growing at rates above its potential and in which the unemployment rate is at its natural level, we believe that the anti-immigrant policies of the Trump administration will have little effect on remittance-receiving families and on the Mexican economy.

Chart 6. **PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN REMITTANCES TO MEXICO AND GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) OF THE UNITED STATES BY FEDERAL ADMINISTRATION, 2005-2024E (%)**



Note: e/ BBVA Research estimate.

Source: BBVA Research based on data from the Bank of Mexico and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).

## The effect of the Trump 2.0 administration on the flow of remittances to Mexico will be very minimal

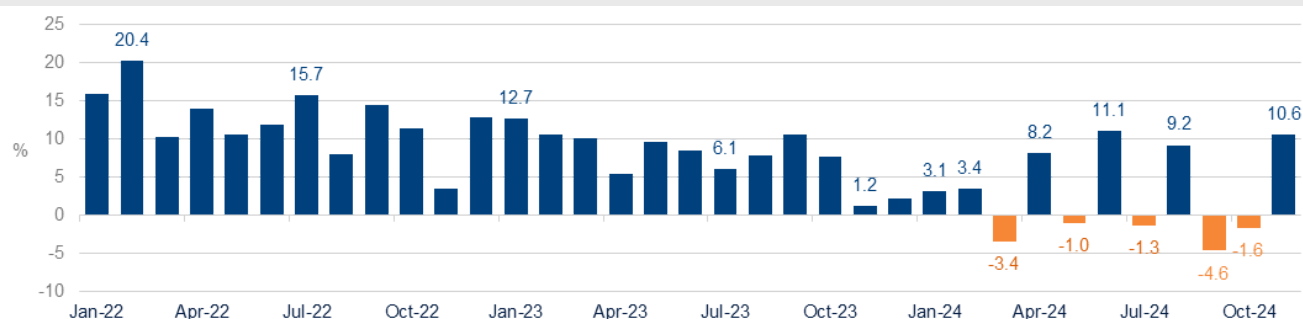
Undoubtedly, remittances are closely tied to the volume of Mexican immigrants in the U.S., so measures that restrict the entry and workforce integration of migrants would affect this flow. However, only one-third of the Mexican immigrant population is undocumented. Additionally, a lower supply of immigrant labor would increase the wages of immigrants who were able to stay, so they would have more money to send to their communities of origin. Thus, if the Trump administration manages to drastically reduce the Mexican immigrant population in the U.S., the reduction in remittances would be much less than proportional, since it must also be considered that second- and third-generation immigrants, who have citizenship, are also senders of remittances. However, we believe that this will not happen, and if there were to be a reduction in remittances to Mexico, it would be accounted for mainly by fewer employment opportunities for immigrants (economic slowdown), and not by factors related to U.S. immigration policy.

## Remittances to Mexico have been slowing down for almost a year; if they contract soon, it will not be because of Trump's measures alone

Remittances to Mexico have grown significantly since 2014, and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it had an additional boost, partly explained by tax incentives and relative labor shortages in the United States. However, we must take into account that the volume of Mexican immigrants in the United States has remained relatively stable since 2007, at around 12 million inhabitants, with a fluctuation range of around  $\pm 500,000$ . This clearly marks a limit on the growth potential of remittances, which is possibly already being achieved.

Since November 2023, remittances to Mexico have slowed down. If it were not for the short-term fluctuations related to the unexpected increases in the Mexican peso/U.S. dollar exchange rate, remittances to Mexico in 2024 would be lower than those currently observed. Thus, if the current trend continues, remittances may slow down further for next year, without this phenomenon being explained solely by some anti-immigrant measure. What the new federal administration under President Trump could potentially cause is a slight exacerbation of this contraction in remittances to Mexico.

Chart 7. **FAMILY REMITTANCES TO MEXICO BY MONTH, 2022-2024**  
(Annual % change in USD)



Source: BBVA Research based on data from the Bank of Mexico.



## "Remain in Mexico" program: Challenge for Mexico and border cities to address the migrant population that stays

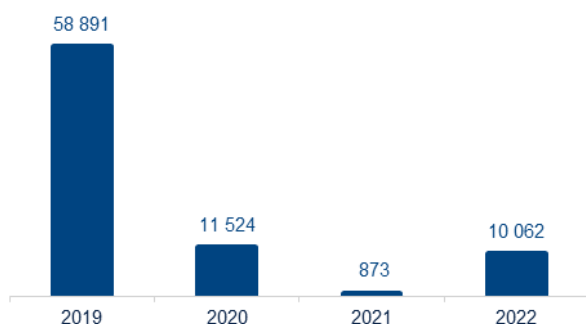
As anticipated, President Trump issued orders for the reinstatement of the **Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP)**, commonly known as **"Remain in Mexico"**. Under the program's guidelines, all people who go to a border point to request asylum in the United States must remain in the border country (in this case Mexico) until their immigration or asylum situation is resolved.

This program began in the first administration of President Trump in order to deter the arrival of asylum-seeking migrants, mainly from Central America, South America, the Caribbean, and other countries around the world. It should be taken into account that, currently, two-thirds of the migratory encounters at the southern border of the United States are with migrants who are not from Mexico, but from these other regions. It was one of the first programs that President Biden tried to eliminate when he took office in 2021, and after several legal battles, it finally ended in mid-2022.

Due to MPP, between 2019 and 2022, more than 81,000 migrants were ordered to stay in Mexico during their asylum request proceedings (TRAC, 2023). Honduras, Guatemala, Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Ecuador, and Venezuela were the main countries of origin, which in total accounted for 96% of the people processed. As can be seen, MPP does not impact the flow of Mexican emigration and the remittances they send, but it does impact the transit of migrants through Mexico.

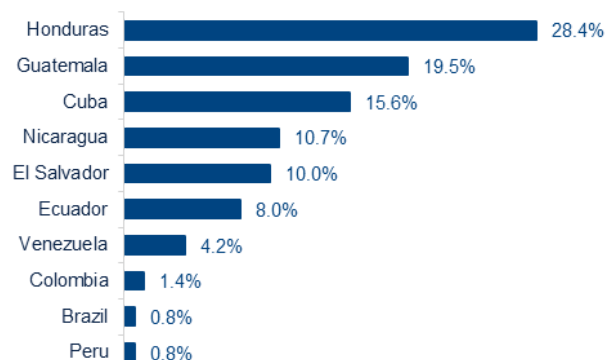
Asylum proceedings can last two to three years on average, so many migrants end up discouraged and return to their country of origin, but others decide to stay in Mexico during the process. The reinstatement of the Remain in Mexico program represents a challenge for President Sheinbaum's administration and for many border cities in Mexico, which must find a way to provide basic services and integrate the asylum seekers, personally and into the workforce, who are going to stay on the Mexican side of the border for the duration of their asylum proceedings.

Chart 8. **DEPORTATION CASES UNDER THE MIGRANT PROTECTION PROTOCOLS (MPP), 2019-2022 (Cases)**



Source: BBVA Research based on data from Syracuse University, Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), Immigration, 2023.

Chart 9. **MAIN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN OF THE POPULATION SUBJECT TO THE MPP, 2019-2022 (Percentage)**



Source: BBVA Research based on data from Syracuse University, Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), Immigration, 2023.



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