

Why is Biden recycling failed strategies to slow immigration?

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/biden-recycling-failed-strategies-to-slow-immigration>

- Below: Los Angeles Times article, by [Jean Guerrero](#)

“So far, the Biden administration continues to rely on the useless strategy of trying to curb immigration by encouraging investment from international corporations. [...] Countless people leave rural areas of Mexico and Central America because they’re forcibly evicted from lands while witnessing the murder of loved ones for resisting the takeover by corporations and drug cartels working with foreign investors.”

Jean Guerrero

“They’re literally getting on pickup trucks, trains, transport trucks or walking across the lowlands of their countries through these vast plantations trying to get to the very place that all of these products are being exported to.”

Grahame Russell

Why is Biden recycling failed strategies to slow immigration?

By Jean Guerrero, Los Angeles Times, Feb.20, 2023

<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2023-02-20/immigration-border-corporations-biden-kamala-harris>

As Americans become [increasingly anxious](#) about immigration, Vice President Kamala Harris is searching for answers in all of the wrong places.

The solutions to the causes of migration aren’t in Central America — certainly not in corporate investments that have been a big factor in depriving people of their lands and livelihoods. As a daughter of immigrants, Harris must know the truth.

Now would be a good time to end myths Americans cling to about immigration.

A new Gallup [survey](#) found that about 19% of Democrats said they want less immigration, a steep increase from 2% in 2021. Most of the people who said they want less of it are Republicans: 71%, compared with 69% last year.

It doesn't matter that the U.S. is experiencing a worker shortage so dire that some Republicans propose lifting restrictions on [child labor](#). It doesn't matter that [tens of thousands of unfilled jobs](#) are in industries that rely on immigrants, such as meat-packing and construction. Many Americans want less immigration, period.

And the truth is, nobody would benefit more from undoing the drivers of migration — poverty, violence and corruption — than people south of the border.

But so far, the Biden administration continues to rely on the useless strategy of trying to curb immigration by encouraging investment from international corporations. This month, Harris [announced](#) \$950 million in new private investments in Central America to address “root causes” of immigration, including from Nestlé — which is [known](#) to [displace](#) small coffee farmers and has been [accused](#) of benefiting from slave labor — and Target, which is [hostile to unions](#). The irony is stark when the administration claims to be prioritizing labor rights.

The new funds bring the total private-sector pledges [to \\$4.2 billion](#). The Biden administration argues that the funds will create jobs and help people thrive locally. Some investments seem well-intentioned, including those to boost [social services and microloans to women](#).

But the emphasis on export-oriented industries known to exploit land and labor, such as textile manufacturing, is incomprehensible.

The U.S. has always protected the investments of its corporations in Latin America through [alliances with corrupt oligarchs and organized crime](#), including U.S.-backed military governments that have massacred people who fought for labor rights and local ownership of land and resources.

Harris' plan to promote clean energy projects is concerning since plantations for palm oil, used in biofuel, have been a [main driver](#) of displacement in Guatemala and Honduras.

“All the best lands in both countries are fundamentally in service of the global economy in Canada, the U.S. and Europe,” Grahame Russell, director of Rights Action, told me. “That’s the underlying problem.”

Countless people leave rural areas of Mexico and Central America because they’re forcibly evicted from lands while witnessing the murder of loved ones for resisting the takeover by corporations and drug cartels working with foreign investors.

“They’re literally getting on pickup trucks, trains, transport trucks or walking across the lowlands of their countries through these vast plantations trying to get to the very place that all of these products are being exported to,” Russell said.

Land reform would be the best way to keep people from leaving, he said. That means supporting policies to restore land and resources to Central Americans.

For example, the U.S. should be [supporting](#) the new Honduran President Xiomora Castro’s successful push to [roll back](#) special economic zones, which courted foreign investors by letting them [create their own laws](#).

Instead, U.S. companies are [suing](#) Honduras for billions of dollars after its legislature [repealed](#) the zones.

The U.S. government’s ongoing [military aid](#) to Guatemala, where the government is putting [anti-corruption judges](#) and journalists in jail but [staying friendly with foreign investors](#), speaks to an interest in maintaining the status quo: keeping countries “open for global business,” Russell said.

A better way to direct U.S. funding would be to incentivize public-private partnerships that build community banking infrastructure in remote villages so people can save money they get from relatives in the U.S. “We’re overlooking the most important source of investment available to address the root causes of immigration: remittances from immigrants,” Raúl Hinojosa-Ojeda, founding director of UCLA’s North American Integration and Development Center, told me.

Remittances from relatives working outside of home countries, which flow directly to villages from which people are displaced, [vastly exceed](#) U.S. aid.

Compare the \$4 billion in economic aid that Biden [pledged](#) over four years to Central America to the \$60 billion in remittances that just Mexico received last year alone, a record. In Guatemala, remittances reached \$18 billion last year.

Across Central America, remittances represent a large share of countries' GDPs, eclipsing foreign direct investment. But they arrive mostly in cash, which recipients are inclined to spend rather than save — in part because there are few ways to save through banking institutions or to invest the money in their villages.

Governments must collaborate to facilitate access to financial and banking institutions, including with new regulations that promote credit unions alongside big banks. Financial institutions should eliminate fees for remittances.

And the U.S. Congress must approve green cards for undocumented people, allowing them to demand fair wages and visit relatives south of the border — decreasing pressure for them to reunite in the U.S.

But instead of common-sense, creative policy solutions, Harris and Biden have been recycling self-defeating strategies while Republicans like House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Bakersfield) are wasting money on hysterical [photo ops](#) at the border.

Americans are finding common ground on immigration: They want less of it.

Delivering on that demand will mean actually changing U.S. foreign policy. It certainly won't be achieved by scrounging for money from corporate leaders and relying on worn-out ideas that may well make the problem worse.

Jean Guerrero, [@jeanguerre](#)

Jean is the author, most recently, of "Hatemonger: Stephen Miller, Donald Trump and the White Nationalist Agenda." Jean's book "[Crux](#)" was published this month in paperback.

More information

'Shithole Countries': U.S. & Canada Help Produce Forced Migrancy From Honduras & Guatemala

By Grahame Russell, February 9, 2021

<https://rightsaction.org/articles/shithole-countries-us-canada-amp-international-community-helping-produce-forced-migrancy-from-honduras-amp-guatemala>

“Our privileges are located on the same map as their suffering, and may – in ways that we prefer not to imagine – be linked to their suffering. As the wealth of some may imply the destitution of others.”
Susan Sontag

Archives-Forced Migrancy

<https://rightsaction.org/forced-migrancy-archives>

Rights Action (US & Canada)

Since 1995, Rights Action funds land and environment, justice and human rights defense struggles, and community development projects in Guatemala and Honduras, as well as providing emergency relief funds (hurricanes, victims of repression, Covid19, etc.).

Rights Action works to hold accountable the U.S. and Canadian governments, multi-national companies, investors and banks (World Bank, etc.) that help cause and profit from exploitation and poverty, repression and human rights violations, environmental harms, corruption and impunity in Honduras and Guatemala. And, Rights Action works to help transform this profoundly unjust and unequal local-to-global economic order.

Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & U.S.)

To support land and environmental defenders, and human rights and justice struggles in Honduras and Guatemala, make check to "Rights Action" and mail to:

- U.S.: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887
- Canada: Box 82552 RPO Corktown, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

Credit-Card Donations: <https://rightsaction.org/donate/>

Direct deposits, write to: info@rightsaction.org

Donations of securities, write to: info@rightsaction.org

Please share and re-post this information
More info: info@rightsaction.org, www.rightsaction.org
E-Newsblasts: <https://rightsaction.org/subscribe>
<https://www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org>
<https://twitter.com/RightsAction>
<https://www.instagram.com/rightsaction>
<https://www.youtube.com/user/rightsaction>

TESTIMONIO-Canadian Mining in the Aftermath of Genocides in Guatemala

<https://www.testimoniothebook.org>
<https://btlbooks.com/book/testimonio>
