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Analysis Shows Links Between Food Security, Violence and Migration in North Triangle of Central America

By *Dave Dilege*

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International Organization for Migration: Analysis Shows Links Between Food Security, Violence and Migration in North Triangle of Central America

Millions of Central Americans live outside their countries, with 80 percent of them living in the United States, according to new research into the connections between food insecurity, violence, and migration in the region. El Salvador alone has the highest percentage of its population living outside the country's borders at over 18 percent, the research shows. Further, during the period 2011-2013, the number of unaccompanied minors entering the United States from El Salvador increased by 330 percent. Worse, that number reached 593 percent for unaccompanied minors coming from Honduras.

In a report, [**Hunger Without Borders: The Hidden Links Between Food Insecurity, Violence and Migration in the Northern Triangle of Central America**](#), coordinated by the [**World Food Program**](#), researchers found that migration in Central America can be a highly lucrative phenomenon.

Unaccompanied minors gained notable momentum in recent years, becoming the "new form" of the irregular business of migration, according to the Ministry of Social Development in Guatemala. The new research has shown that with the perception that minors have a greater chance of being granted asylum than adults, coyotes - smugglers -- have been increasingly promoting it as a way to regularize migration of parents as well.

The report is a compilation of two studies conducted by the [**International Organization for Migration**](#) and the [**Department of International Development at the London School of Economics and Political Science**](#). Both focus on the correlation between two push factors - food insecurity and violence - and migration in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. It is the first report that combined these three variables in one analysis.

Main Findings

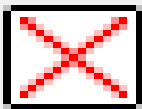
- Existence of positive correlation between food insecurity and migration in the three countries considered: the higher the food insecurity, the greater the chances that people migrate in search of better conditions.
- Violence is a push factor for outward migration in Guatemala and Honduras but not necessarily in El Salvador.
- Migratory patterns vary depending on the type of violence and groups affected.
- People have become accustomed to violence, and in some cases it no longer influences their decision to migrate or not.

- Along with violence, economic well-being, employment, and family reunification remains among the most commonly cited motives that induce people to migrate.
- Migration of women and children are on the rise as compared to past years.

The report will be presented September 17, 2015 by Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General of the IOM, Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director of the WFP and Luis Almagro, Secretary General of the OAS. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador, Hugo Martinez, and of Guatemala, Carlos Raúl Morales Moscoso, will be present.

The report launch will start at 11:00 am at the OAS Hall of the Americas, 17th Street and Constitution Ave., NW Washington, D.C. To attend, email sara.sarno@wfp.org

About the Author



Dave Dilegge

Dave Dilegge is a retired USMCR Intelligence and Counterintelligence / HUMINT officer. He is also a former USMC civilian intelligence analyst and worked several years in the private sector. He served with the 1st Marine Division during Operation Desert Storm. In 1999 he was the recipient of the National Military Intelligence Association's Colonel Donald G. Cook Award for his work in supporting USMC and DoD urban operations analysis, wargaming and experimentation. He is currently a Director at the Small Wars Foundation and is Editor-in-Chief of *Small Wars Journal*. His son David is an Infantry Sergeant currently serving in the Army's 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized).

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