

# **New 10,000-strong migrant caravan would leave for U.S. the day North American leaders summit starts**

Expert says Mexican president using caravans as 'leverage' on Biden administration; industry leader warns dealing with masses of migrants affects border trade

EL PASO, Texas (Border Report) - A second major migrant caravan could be assembling in southern Mexico shortly.

Activist Irineo Mujica, who is currently leading upwards of 1,000 Central and Haitian migrants through the state of Oaxaca, said he's expecting to meet up with a caravan 10 times larger in nearby Veracruz on November 18.

"We are not going to Mexico City, we are now going the northern border, we are going to Sonora," Mujica said this week on social media. "For that reason, I am calling on all our migrant peers in Tapachula, in Coatzacoalcos, in Tabasco, in Acayuca [...] to gather on the 18th of this month."

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Breaking: Oaxaca MEXICO. Leader of the caravan of 4000 Irineo Mujica says that they are going to the north border of Sonora that connects to Arizona and he will built a bigger caravan of 10,000. @AgueroForTexas @BenBergquam @GriffJenkins @RealAmVoice @AliBradleyTV @UNITE\_USA\_1st

That's the same date President Biden is scheduled to meet with Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to talk - among other things - about immigration. The timing could be more than coincidental.

"It seems to me that Mexico is using the caravans as leverage with the United States. Otherwise, the 18,000 Haitians that made it to Del Rio, Texas, would not have made it that far. They were allowed to transit through Mexico and make it to

the border,” said Tony Payan, director of the Center for the U.S. and Mexico at Rice University’s Baker Institute.

The September migrant crisis in Del Rio drew international attention as thousands of Haitians, including families with small children, waded across the Rio Grande and formed a gigantic camp under the international bridge. Images of Border Patrol agents on horseback charging to contain the surge went viral on social media.

Lopez Obrador is pushing for the U.S. to ramp up worker visas for Mexicans, many of whom are already trying to cross the border by any means available after being displaced by narco-violence in the countryside in states like Michoacan, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Zacatecas, Durango and others. AMLO, as Lopez Obrador is known, also wants the U.S. to “invest” in economic development in Southern Mexico and Central America.

“Every time a caravan comes to the border, it creates a political problem for the Biden administration. Not only do they have to deal with the asylum-seekers, but it also gives political gunpowder to Biden’s critics in the GOP and states like Texas to portray his policies as failed policies,” Payan said. “It’s not a good thing. It distracts him from other issues.”

Mujica, a U.S. citizen affiliated with the nonprofit Pueblo Sin Fronteras (People Without Borders), in late October led 4,000 out of Tapachula, a city near the border with Guatemala which he characterized as an “open-air prison” for migrants from all over the world. Most of the Haitians that showed up at Del Rio a month before also left from Tapachula.

In a Tuesday news conference in Mexico City, U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Ken Salazar allegedly accused caravan organizers of benefiting smugglers who make money off of the migrants.

“The organizers say they are doing something for human rights. In reality, what they are doing is making money for the smugglers and criminals,” Milenio and Infobae quoted Salazar as saying.

The statement incensed Mujica.

“I completely refute what the ambassador said,” Mujica said on social media,

pulling out his wallet open for the cameras. “This is my wallet, ambassador. I have nothing. [...] Your intelligence (agents), are they not telling you I don’t even have money for tortillas? Where are you and what world are you living on?”

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Breaking: Leader of caravan Irineo Mujica Sends a direct message to the ambassador of the United States in Mexico: show me the millions that I’m stealing from the people, show me the millions in my account”.@AgueroForTexas @BenBergquam @GriffJenkins @AliBradleyTV

Mujica said the United States’ immigration policy has been a “disaster” and its officials are now turning to slandering him. “You should be ashamed of yourselves, ambassador, because you and Mexico have de-humanized migrants. What low morals you have,” the activist said.

This new wave of migrant caravans is also bad for business.

“There has to be some hard discussion on working together to prevent that because when (the caravans) reach the U.S. border and apply for asylum, that takes (U.S. Customs and Border Protection) officers off the vehicle inspection lanes and the cargo lanes and that slows down trade,” said Jerry Pacheco, president and CEO of the Border Industrial Association.

Pacheco said Mexico should “actively participate” in dissuading the northbound caravans because neither U.S. companies that invest south of the border nor their Mexican partners want to see their trucks being held up or enduring long waits at ports of entry. “Immigration has a direct impact on trade,” he added.

Payan of the Baker Institute concurs that the caravans have become an international political distraction.

“I think the caravans are absolutely distracting and it’s absolutely necessary that the United States convinces Mexico not to allow them to form, march through Mexico and get to the border,” Payan said. When that happens, “everything else is off and all the attention, all the resources go to dealing with asylum-seekers.”

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