

## Externalised Migration Controls and the Deportation of Minors and Potential Refugees from Mexico

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**Abstract :** Since the 'urgent humanitarian crisis' of the arrival of tens of thousands of Central American minors at the Mexico-US border in early 2014, the USA has increasingly externalised migration controls to Mexico. Although the resulting policy 'Plan Frontera Sur' claimed to protect migrants' human rights, it has manifested as harshly delivered in-country controls and an alarming increase in deportations, particularly of minors. This is of particular concern given the ongoing situation of forced migration caused by criminal violence in Central America because these deportations do not all comply with Mexico's international obligations and with its own legal framework for international protection that allows inter alia verbal asylum claims and grants minors additional protection against deportation. Notably, the volume of deportations, the speed with which they are carried out and the lack of adequate screening indicate non-compliance with the principle of non-refoulement and the right to claim asylum or other forms of protection. Based on qualitative data gathered in fieldwork in 2015 and quantitative data covering the period 2014-2016, this research details three types of adverse outcome resulting from these externalised controls: human rights violations perpetrated in order to deliver the policy—namely, deportations that may not comply with the principle of non-refoulement or the protection of minors; human rights violations perpetrated in the execution of policy—such as violations by state actors during apprehension and detention; and adverse consequences of the policy—such as increased risk during transit. This research has particular resonance as the Trump era brings tighter enforcement in the region, and has broader relevance for the study of externalisation tools on a global level.

**Keywords :** deportation, externalisation, forced migration, non-refoulement

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