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# Mexico Threatens Suits Over Guard Patrols



AP Photo: A couple who did not give their names await processing in a U.S. Border Patrol...

By MARINA MONTEMAYOR, Associated Press Writer

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CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico - Mexico said Tuesday that it would file lawsuits in U.S. courts if National Guard troops on the border become directly involved in detaining migrants.

Mexican border officials also said they worried that sending troops to heavily trafficked regions would push illegal migrants into more perilous areas of the U.S.-Mexican border to avoid detection.

[President Bush](#) announced Monday that he would send 6,000 National Guard troops to the 2,000-mile border, but they would provide intelligence and surveillance support to Border Patrol agents, not catch and detain illegal immigrants.

"If there is a real wave of rights abuses, if we see the National Guard starting to directly participate in detaining people ... we would immediately start filing lawsuits through our consulates," Foreign Secretary Luis Ernesto Derbez told a Mexico City radio station. He did not offer further details.

Mexican officials worry the crackdown will lead to more deaths. Since Washington toughened security in Texas and California in 1994, migrants have flooded Arizona's hard-to-patrol desert and deaths have spiked. Migrant groups estimate 500 people died trying to cross the border in 2005. The Border Patrol reported 473 deaths in the fiscal year ending Sept. 30.

In Ciudad Juarez, Julieta Nunez Gonzalez, local representative of the Mexican government's National Immigration Institute, said Tuesday she will ask the government to send its migrant protection force, known as Grupo Beta, to more remote sections of the border.

Sending the National Guard "will not stop the flow of migrants, to the contrary, it will probably go up," as people try to get into the U.S. in the hope that they could benefit from a possible amnesty program, Nunez said.

Juan Canche, 36, traveled more than 1,200 miles to the border from the southern town of IZamal and said nothing would stop him from trying to cross.

"Even with a lot of guards and soldiers in place, we have to jump that puddle," said Canche, referring to the drought-stricken Rio Grande dividing Ciudad Juarez and El Paso, Texas. "My family is hungry and there is no work in my land. I have to risk it."

Some Mexican newspapers criticized President [Vicente Fox](#) for not taking a stronger

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stand against the measure, even though Fox called Bush to express his concerns.

A political cartoon in the Mexico City newspaper Reforma depicted Bush as a gorilla carrying a club with a flattened Fox stuck to it.

Fox's spokesman, Ruben Aguilar, said Tuesday that Mexico accepted Bush's statement that the sending in the National Guard didn't mean militarizing the area. He also said Mexico remained "optimistic" that the U.S. Senate would approve an immigration reform "in the interests of both countries."

Aguilar noted that Bush expressed support for the legalization of some immigrants and implementation of a guest worker program.

"This is definitely not a militarization," said Aguilar, who also dismissed as "absolutely false" rumors that Mexico would send its own troops to the border in response.

Bush has said sending the National Guard is intended as a stopgap measure while the Border Patrol builds up resources to more effectively secure the border.

In Nuevo Laredo, across from Laredo, Texas, Honduran Antonio Auriel said he would make it into the U.S.

"Soldiers on the border? That won't stop me," he said. "I'll swim the river and jump the wall. I'm going to arrive in the United States."

Associated Press Writer Mark Stevenson in Mexico City contributed to this report.

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