



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on December 9, 2019

Number of African Migrants Heading to U.S. Through Mexico Doubles

The number of migrants from African nations such as Congo, Sierra Leone, and Cameroon — as well as the Caribbean nation of Haiti — found heading to the United States through Mexico has more than doubled this year. Mexican immigration officials have reported that the number of such migrants increased from approximately 2,700 in 2018 to 5,800 this year.



The *Los Angeles Times*, *San Diego Union-Tribune*, and Fox News all reported on this phenomenon on December 8, quoting from Guerline Jozef, the director and co-founder of the Haitian Bridge Alliance, an organization that helps black migrants from all over the world.

Jozef said that back in 2016, when she received a call about a group of Haitian migrants in Tijuana, she couldn't understand why they were in Tijuana instead of Florida, the more common destination for Caribbean migrants. "At the time, honestly, I did not believe it," she said.

Jozef nevertheless went to Tijuana and met with 12 Haitian migrants. Staying for a month, she counted more than 400 migrants, not only from Haiti but from Congo, Cameroon, and Sierra Leone as well.

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The *Times* report stated that in August, the Mexican government stopped issuing African migrants transit visas that allow them to travel north to the U.S.-Mexico border. Instead, Mexican officials are asking migrants to apply for residency or a visa in Mexico — which may jeopardize future asylum claims in the United States.

Mexican officials reported that the African migrants were apprehended near the U.S.-Mexico border, as well as at various checkpoints across the country.

An NPR report on November 18 cited statements from the UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency, to explain the increase in migrants from Africa who are seeking asylum in the United States. The reports named political unrest in the Democratic Republic of Congo earlier this year, which displaced approximately 4.5 million people, as one factor.

Another nation from which migrants have been fleeing is Cameroon, where a decades-long conflict between the French-speaking majority and English-speaking residents in the south of the nation has prompted a large exodus.

NPR quoted Maureen Meyer, director for Mexico and migrant rights at an organization called Washington Office on Latin America, who said: "Another factor for the uptick in African migration through the region is the increased enforcement along European borders." In other words, as European



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nations strengthen their border enforcement, more refugees seek to enter the United States, which they perceive as being easier to enter.

The report noted that after European nations struck a deal with countries such as Turkey to stem the flow of transit migration to the European Union, more African migrants have opted for the United States.

While not all migrants from Africa try to enter our nation illegally, a number of them do. In our article on July 1 ("[Illegal Aliens From Africa and Haiti Among Those Crossing Rio Grande](#)"), we cited reports from Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in June noting that illegal aliens crossing our southern border are not just Mexicans and Central Americans, but also included groups from Haiti and Africa.

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