



Press Release

An Update on Asylum Laws and Policy Changes at the Border

ALLISON EDWARDS | JULY 15, 2019

Today the United States and Mexico are meeting to assess their June agreement seeking increased enforcement against unauthorized border crossers. This agreement was part of an ongoing effort to curb the inflow of migrants across the southern border. In this piece, AAF's Director of Immigration and Trade Policy Jacqueline Varas explains the changes the Trump Administration, Congress, and Mexico have made over the last year to border operations and the asylum process, and she assesses the outlook for future policies on this issue.

An excerpt:

President Trump has indicated that if he does not see a significant drop in unauthorized border crossers, he will require Mexico to sign a “safe third country” agreement by September. This agreement would make Mexico the “first country of asylum” for individuals traveling up from Central America, meaning all Central American applicants will be denied asylum in the United States because they should have instead sought refuge in Mexico.

There would be several issues with such an agreement, even if Mexico is willing. First, Mexico is ill equipped to absorb these migrants, both because of its relatively weaker economy and a lack of infrastructure. Mexico has also experienced [increasing levels of violence](#) itself, making it a questionable place of refuge. Therefore, a safe third country agreement would likely have two effects: to create a crisis in Mexico similar to the one currently faced by the United States, and to discourage Central Americans from fleeing violence at all.

[Read the analysis.](#)