

Systemic Collapse & Data Blackout

**Analyzing Mexico's Refugee/Asylum
Process and the Implications of
Missing Data**

**By:
Gwendolyne Madrid Aman**



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Source: COMAR public data,
downloaded [12/17/25], covers years
2013–2018

Source: datos.gob.mx – Personas
extranjeras víctimas de delito,
downloaded [12/17/25]

Source: datos.gob.mx – Migrantes
atendidos por Grupos Beta,
downloaded [12/17/25]

Problem & Context

Mexico's refugee system promises a 45-100 day process but delivers multi-year delays, leaving applicants in legal limbo without work authorization. This analysis investigates the system's collapse using the last available public data (2013-2018) and traces the consequences through humanitarian and victimization datasets after official transparency ended.

Role & Tools

Sole Data Analyst

Google Sheets

Tableau

SQL

Glossary

Abandono	Abandoned application.
COMAR	Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados (Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance)
Desistido	Withdrawn application
Grupos Beta atendidos	People assisted by Beta Groups - A service by the INM dedicated to the protection and defense of the human rights of migrants and are specialized in providing orientation, rescue and first aid, regardless of nationality or immigration status.
INM	Instituto Nacional de Migración (National Institute of Migration of Mexico)
NNA	Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes (boys, girls, and teenagers)
Negativo	Negative resolution/rejected
Pendiente	Pending resolution
Protección Complementaria	Complementary Protection
Refugio	Full Refugee Status

Process

-Acquire (COMAR, Grupos Beta, Victims data)

-Clean & Transform (Sheets: master tables, unpivoting, filtering)

-Analyze & Visualize (Tableau: charts, maps, trends)

-Synthesize (Insights, narrative, recommendations)

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Year	Source Table	Action Taken	Reason	Scopes/Limitations
2	Oct. 2018-2025	~	~	~	No available data. Data request emailed on 10/14/25 & PNT request sent on 12/23/25
3	2013	Tables 3 & 4	Excluded	Sex-disaggregated subsets of Table 2; age retained only at aggregate level	
4	2013	Table 5	Excluded	Redundant with Table 6 (same dimensions, lower geographic granularity)	
5	2013	Table 7	Merged into Table 6	NNA data appended with population_type flag	
6	2013	Table 9	Merged into Table 8	NNA data appended with population_type flag	
7	2013	Table 11	Merged into Table 10	NNA data appended with population_type flag	
8	2013	Table 13	Merged into Table 12	NNA data appended with population_type flag	
9	2013	Table 15	Merged into Table 14	NNA data appended with population_type flag	
10	2014	Tables 3 & 4	Excluded	Sex-disaggregated subsets of Table 2; age retained only at aggregate level	
11	2014	Table 7	Excluded	PDF extraction collapsed multiple numeric columns into single cells; data not recoverable without manual reconstruction; exclusion documented	
12	2014	Table 11	m/w_subtotal & total cells	The source table contains all underlying monthly sex-disaggregated values. The final row-level subtotals were absent but are mathematically implied. We computed them directly from reported values and documented the derivation.	
13	2014	Table 5	Excluded	Redundant with Table 6 (same dimensions, lower geographic granularity)	
14	2014	Table 7	Excluded	NNA geographic detail unavailable for 2014 due to extraction failure	
15	2014	Table 9	Merged into Table 8	NNA data appended with population_type flag	
16	2014	Table 11	Merged into Table 10	NNA data appended with population_type flag	
17	2014	Table 13	Merged into Table 12	NNA data appended with population_type flag	
18	2014	Table 15	Merged into Table 14	NNA data appended with population_type flag	
19	2015	Tables 3 & 4	Excluded	Sex-disaggregated subsets of Table 2; age retained only at aggregate level	
+ ≡ ar_master_2013_2018 ▾ README/Decisions ▾ annual_summary_comar ▾ visual-annual_summary_comar ▾ Interpretive Notes: Per					

Data Limitations & Ethical Considerations

- COMAR data stops at September 2018; subsequent analysis uses proxy indicators.
- All data is aggregate; no individual applicants are identifiable.
- Underreporting in victim data is treated as a finding, not a data quality issue.
- This analysis works within these constraints to reconstruct the crisis.

Update (Feb 2026): COMAR released partial 2022 & 2025 data. Initial review shows:

-Missing pending/resolution fields in many records

-Only underaged applicants

Gaps from 2018-2021, 2023-2024 remain unaddressed

- This selective, incomplete release reinforces rather than resolves transparency concerns.

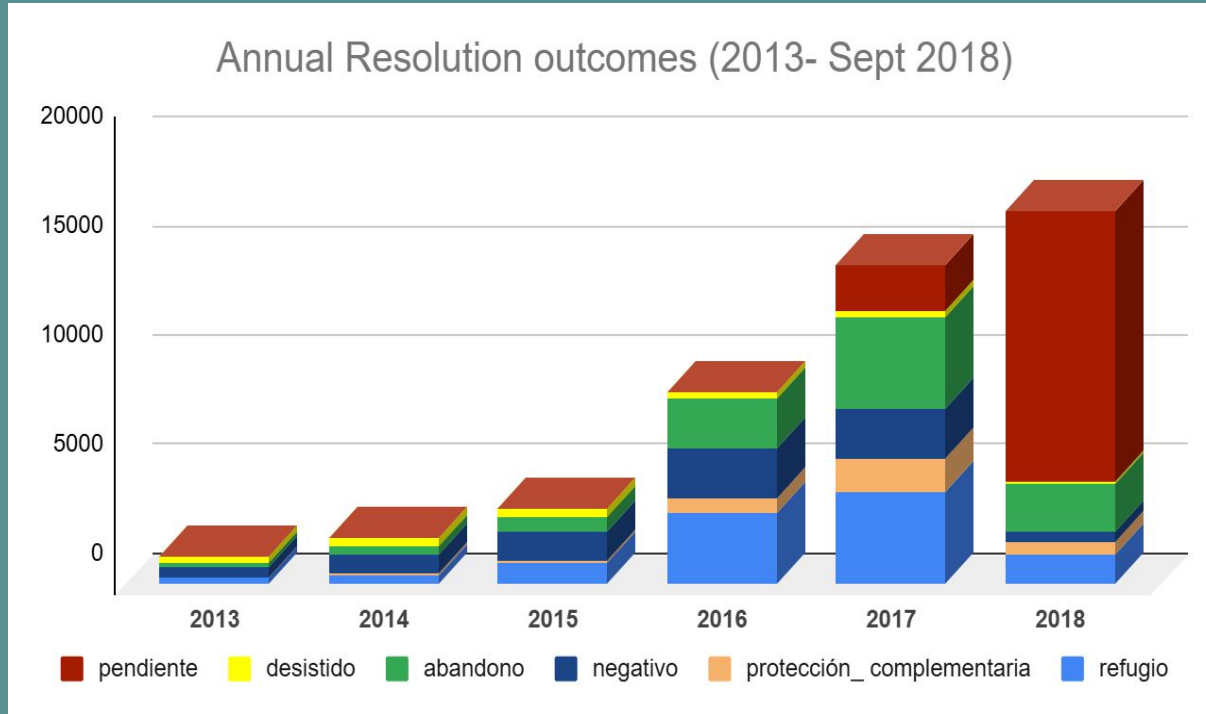
What the Data Cannot Tell Us: LGBTQIA+ Applicants

Year ▾	Population ▾	Refugio ▾	PC ▾	Negativo ▾	Abandono ▾	Desistido ▾	Pendiente ▾	Total ▾	Notes ▾
2013	All	25	0	0	0	0	—	25	no pending cases recorded this year
2014	All	22	2	0	0	0	—	24	no pending cases recorded this year
2015	NNA only	2	—	—	—	—	—	2	All applicants' table collapsed/ no pending
2016	NNA only	9	1	0	0	0	0	10	All applicants' table collapsed
2017	All	140	4	0	0	0	0	144	
Sept. 2018	All	35	1	0	0	0	0	36	

In 2017, resolutions peaked at 144—five times higher than 2014.
After 2018, no public data exists.

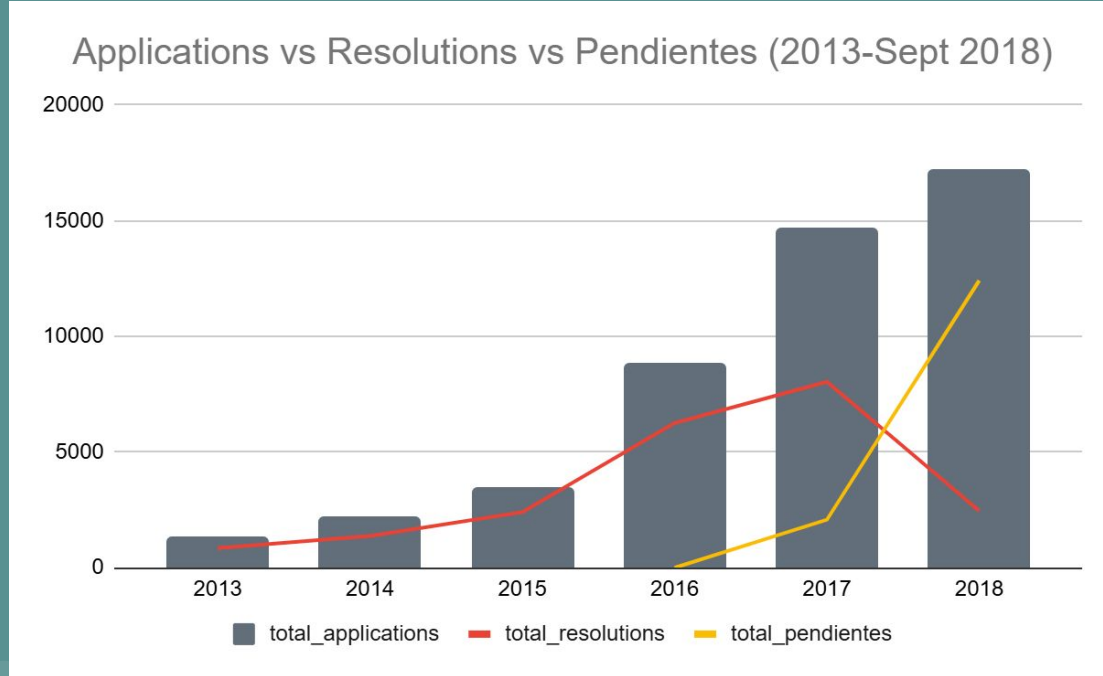
Key Visuals: Annual Summary Tables								
data_coverage	year	total_applications	refugio	protección_complementaria	negativo	abandono	desistido	pendiente
full year	2013	1296	280	33	533	176	274	NA
full year	2014	2137	463	81	826	389	378	NA
full year	2015	3424	952	166	1282	663	361	NA
full year	2016	8796	3240	709	2307	2219	317	4
full year	2017	14603	4195	1591	2247	4205	290	2075
partial (Enero-Sep)	2018	17116	1327	654	472	2141	105	12417
year	Approval rate	Proteccion Complementaria	Negativo rate	Abandono	Desistido	Pendientes	NNA_applicants	NNA
2013	21.60%	2.55%	41.13%	13.58%	21.14%	NA	60	4.63%
2014	21.67%	3.79%	38.65%	18.20%	17.69%	NA	72	3.37%
2015	27.80%	4.85%	37.44%	19.36%	10.54%	NA	132	3.86%
2016	36.83%	8.06%	26.23%	25.23%	3.60%	0.05%	231	2.63%
2017	28.73%	10.90%	15.39%	28.80%	1.99%	14.21%	648	4.44%
2018	7.75%	3.82%	2.76%	12.51%	0.61%	72.55%	268	1.57%

Key Visuals & Insights



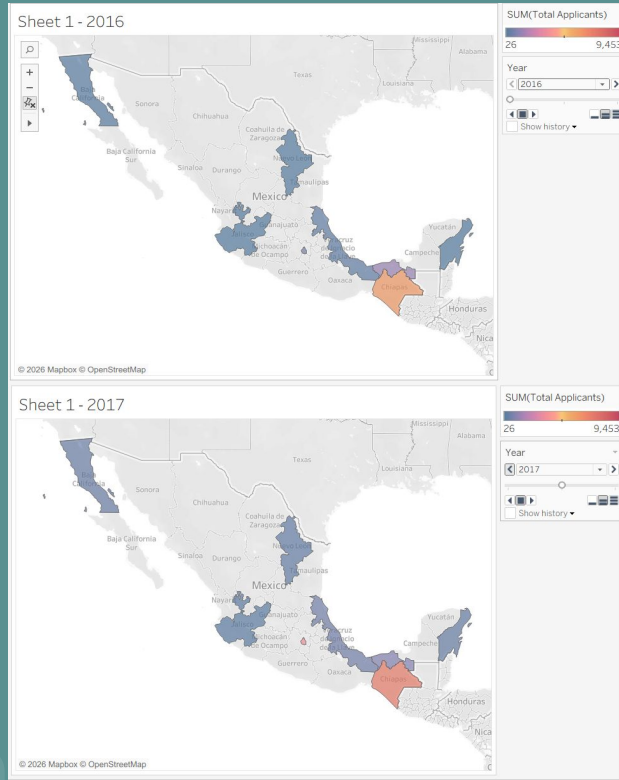
Positive resolution rates fell sharply as the backlog grew, replaced by administrative limbo.

Key Visuals & Insights

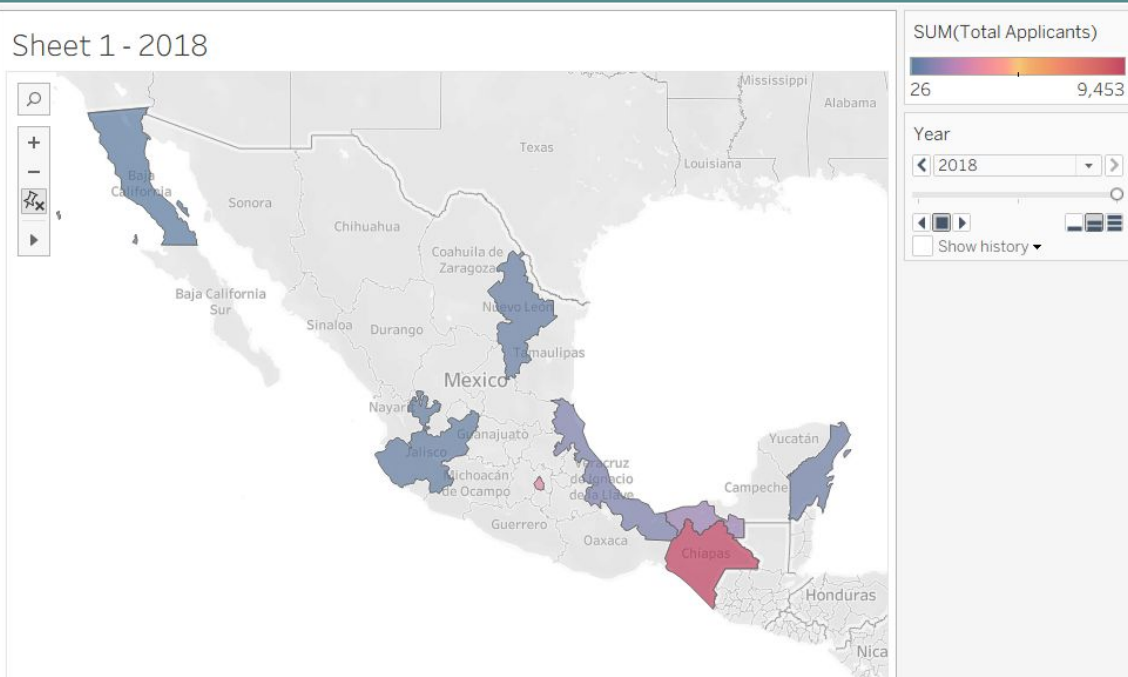


As applications rose, the decision-making capacity collapsed, creating a backlog of over 12,000 by mid-2018.

Key Visuals & Insights

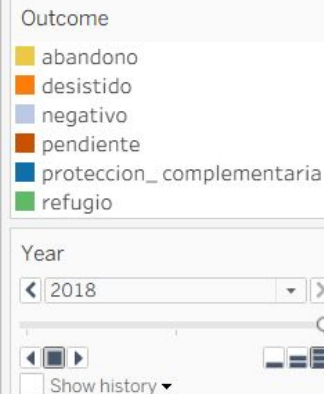
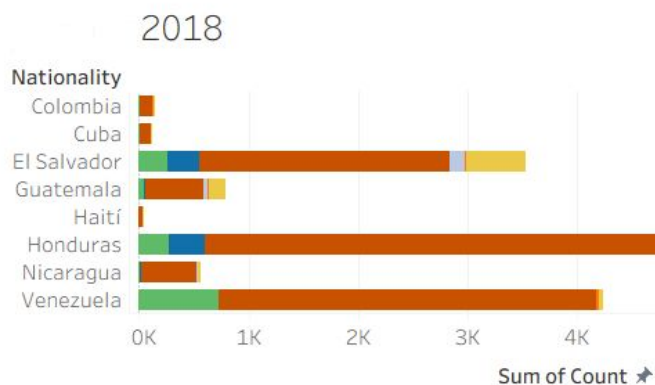
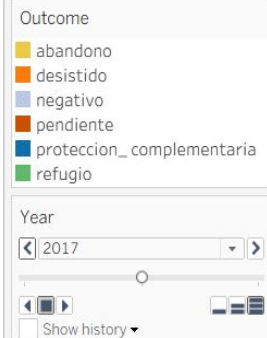
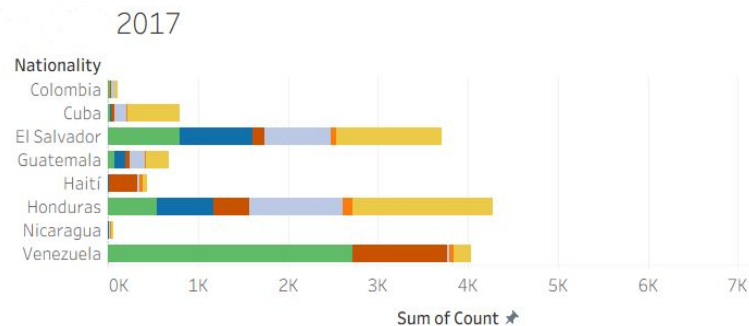
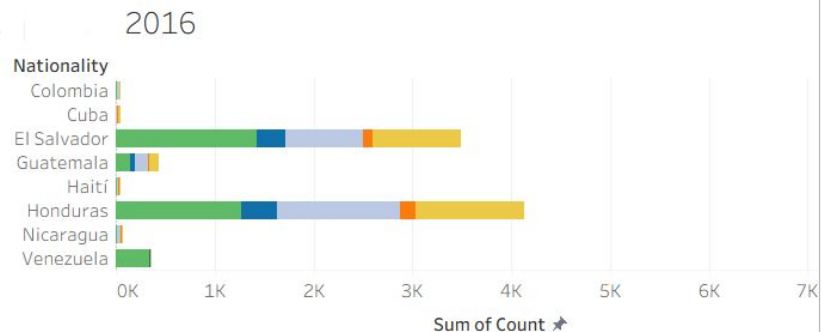


State-level applicant distribution (2016-2018) based on COMAR office location data.



*Consistent pressure on southern states (Chiapas, Tabasco)
and the capital reveals geographic bottlenecks.*

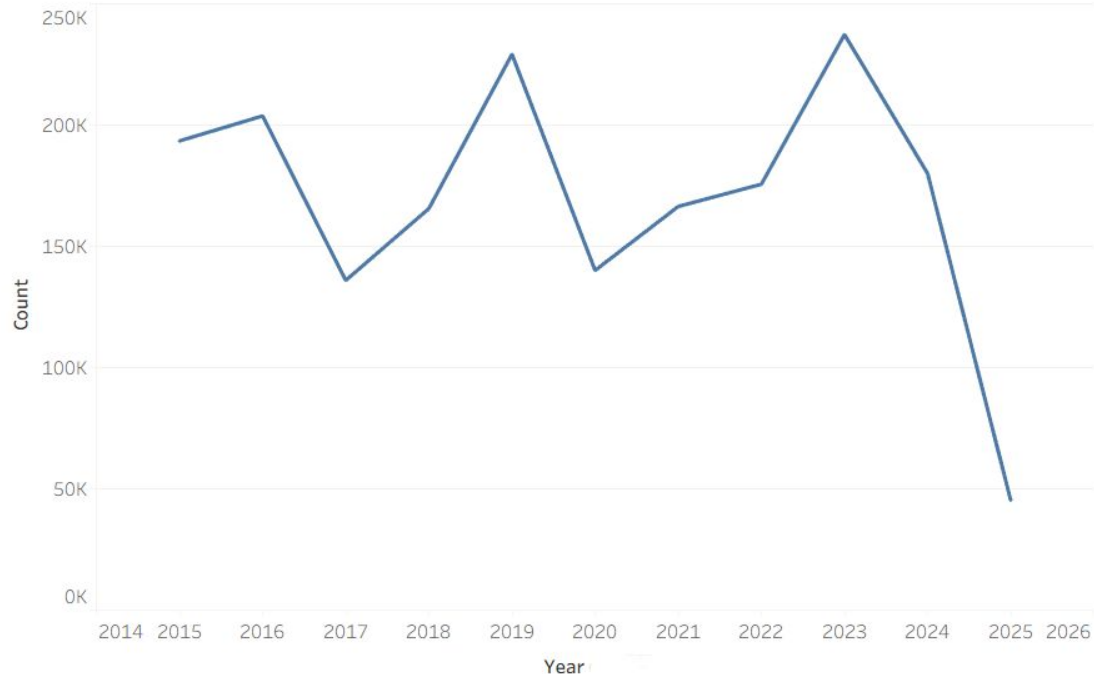
Key Visuals & Insights



Outcome disparities by nationality suggest unequal access to protection, with certain groups disproportionately stuck in 'pendiente' limbo.

Key Visuals & Insights

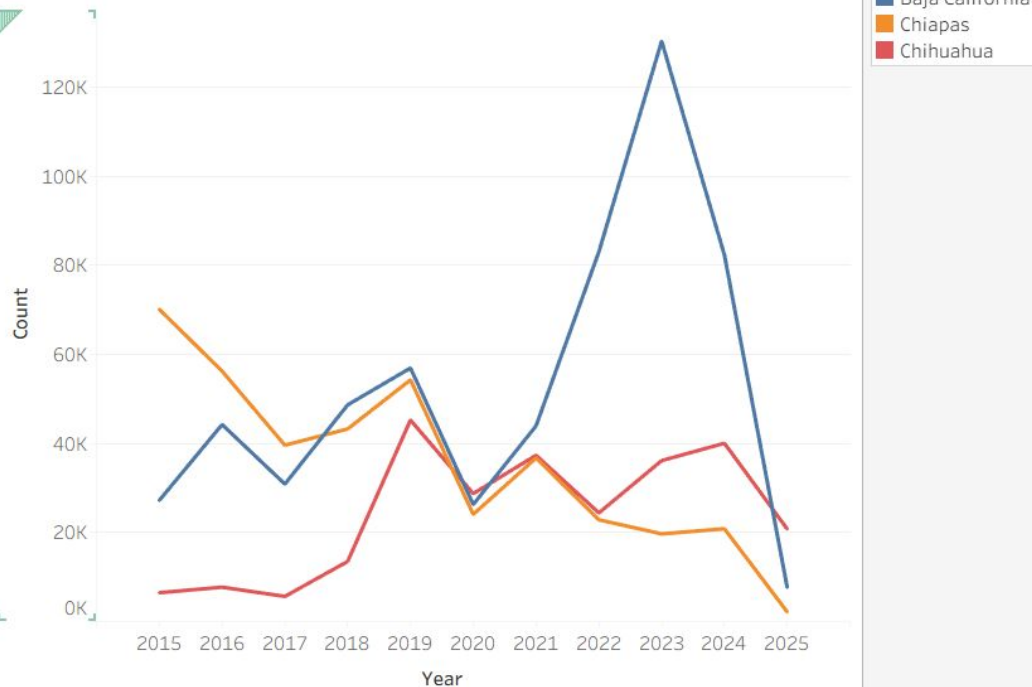
Grupos Beta



As asylum decisions froze (COMAR data ends 2018), humanitarian interventions surged. Grupos Beta atendidos in Baja California increased 650%, peaking at over 13,000 monthly in 2023—revealing the growing crisis obscured by the data blackout.

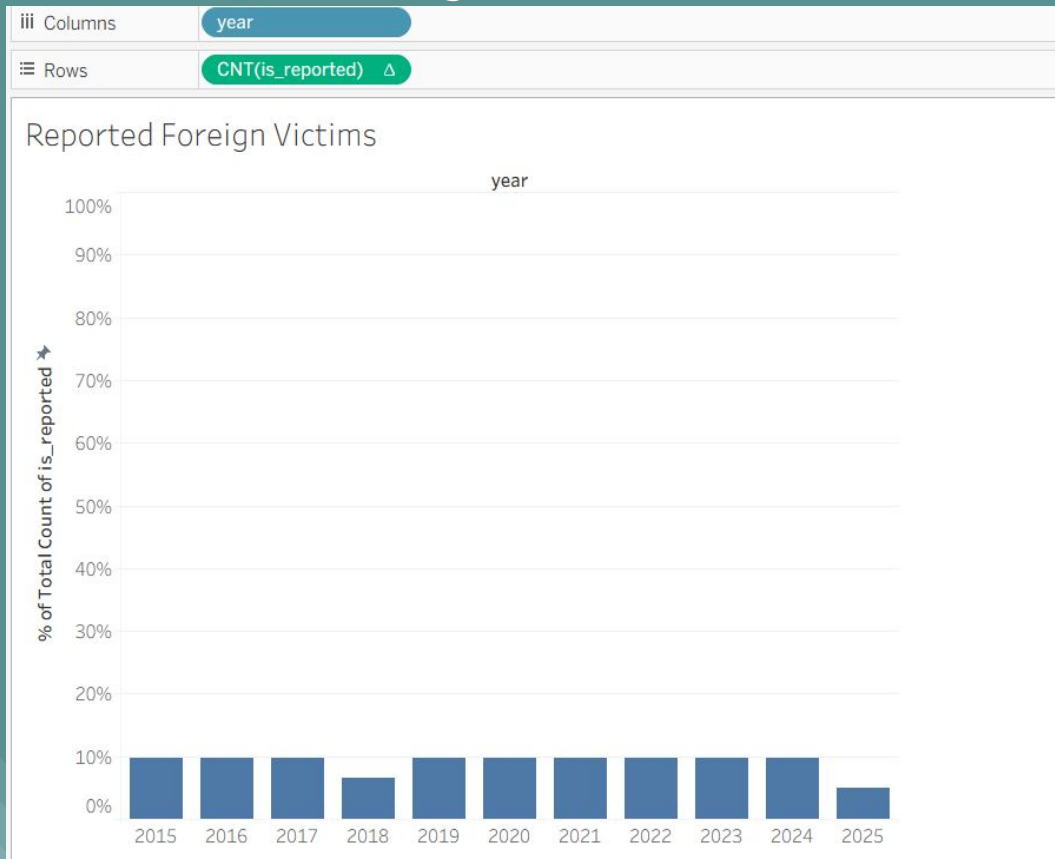
Key Visuals & Insights

Top 3 States- Grupos Beta



Baja California's atendidos exploded from ~2,000/month in 2015 to over 13,000/month in 2023 - a 650% increase. This surge happens after COMAR's data stops (2018).

Key Visuals & Insights



No more than 10% of foreign victim incidents were officially reported (2013-2025)." This near-total silence illustrates the climate of fear and institutional distrust among asylum seekers trapped in limbo.

Insights

The system was already buckling by 2018, with a backlog implying multi-year waits.

The cessation of data publication post-2018 prevents accountability.

Outcomes varied significantly by nationality, suggesting inconsistent adjudication.

Recommendations

COMAR must resume transparent, timely data publication.

Applicants must be informed of realistic, multi-year wait times and their right vs ability to work.

International partners should require complete data transparency as a condition of continued technical and financial support.

COMAR's public data trail ends abruptly in September 2018—precisely as the pending caseload exploded to over 12,000. This official silence coincides with independent reports of systemic collapse. Attorneys and public defenders report that by 2023, COMAR offices like Tijuana had reduced to a single interviewer-decision maker, while the INM stopped issuing humanitarian visas (Tarjeta de visitante por razones humanitarias), trapping applicants without work authorization. The '45–100 business day' process advertised online—unchanged since 2019—now reportedly takes 1.5–2 years, with an additional 90-day wait after the interview. The data blackout after 2018 is not a gap in the record; it is the record. Transparency ended when the system failed.

Selective Transparency: The 2026 Data 'Release'

In February 2026, after this analysis began, COMAR released partial data for 2022 & 2025. This data:

- Confirms the blackout: No records for 2018-2021, 2023-2024.
- Reveals new obfuscation: Blank resolution fields, only underaged applicants.
- Demonstrates pattern: Transparency as performative compliance, not accountability.

What True Transparency Looks Like:

For accountability, COMAR must publish:

Complete datasets: All years, all age groups, all cases

Clear resolution tracking: Including pending cases by month

Processing timelines: Intake-to-resolution intervals

Demographic breakdowns: Age, nationality, gender, location

The 2026 release demonstrates how far current practice falls from this standard.

The Path Forward

This analysis provides the evidence base for:

Immediate: Demand COMAR data publication resumption

Advocacy: Link international funding to processing metrics

Public Awareness: Inform migrants of realistic timelines before they reach Mexico. Update official websites. Request ACNUR and partner organizations to portray transparent realities—not idealized pathways—and clarify that advertised benefits apply after resolution, not during application limbo.

Data transparency is the first step toward accountability.