

## *A dream deferred With tighter border, more Mexicans stay home*

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### **Body**

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Mexican shelters, usually the last stop for northbound migrants, are filling with southbound deportees. Fewer migrants are crossing in the wind-swept deserts along an increasingly fortified border. Far to the north, fields are empty at harvest time as workplace raids become more common.

Mexicans are increasingly giving up on the American dream and staying home, and the federal crackdown on undocumented workers announced Friday should discourage even potential migrants from taking the risks as the United States purges itself of its illegal population.

U.S. border agents detained 55,545 illegal migrants jumping over border walls, walking through the desert and swimming across the Rio Grande River between October and June. That's down 38 percent for the entire border compared to the same period a year before.

U.S. and Mexican officials say increased border security has thwarted smugglers who had succeeded for years at beating the system.

Migrants also say they feel Americans are increasingly hostile toward immigrants.

"It's the discrimination," said George Guevara, 28, who was deported to Tijuana last month after living in the U.S. for 18 years. "It's making people step back. It's just too much of a risk. It's better to be out here."

Guevara, who speaks perfect English and has only distant memories of Mexico, was living at a Tijuana migrant shelter filled with deportees, many of whom are Mexican-born but find themselves in a country that is foreign to them.

While some migrants try to set up new lives, others are caught between two worlds. Salvador Perez still has a pregnant wife and three small children in Bakersfield, Calif., where he worked on a pistachio ranch before he was deported. He's tried to cross the mountains near Tecate three times this summer to get back to them, but failed each time.

"I want to try again, but I'm scared something will happen," Perez said.

The biggest drop in Border Patrol detentions, a 68 percent decrease, was in the remote, heat-seared desert surrounding Yuma, Ariz., once popular with smugglers. Border Patrol spokesman Jeremy Chappell credits the additional troops and tougher security.

"Where an alien before was able to sneak across, now he has the National Guard watching him," Chappell said.

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The only area that has seen an increase - 1.5 percent - is the San Diego sector, which runs along the California **border** and includes the harsh, roadless desert surrounding Tecate. The **Border** Patrol has responded with helicopters and increased intelligence from detained migrants.

Deportations also are up for illegal immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for years. Some are caught for minor infractions like a burned-out headlight. Others are rounded up in workplace raids that the Bush administration has vowed to intensify.

The new measures announced Friday will force employers to fire anyone who cannot prove their Social Security numbers are legitimate.

## Graphic

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### PHOTO

PHOTO - A man waits to see a doctor as others eat dinner in a shelter for migrants in Tijuana, Mexico, last month. The Associated Press

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