

Amid surging violence, some Mexicans choose asylum over voting

Notes & Cues:**Article:**

As millions of Mexicans lined up on Sunday to vote in the country's largest election in history, others were huddled at the door to the United States, fleeing violence and bereft of hope that a new government could staunch it.

With almost 30,000 homicides registered in 2017, Mexico experienced its bloodiest year on record. Since election campaigning began last September, at least 145 politicians and candidates for office have been killed, according to data from the Mexico-based security consultancy Etellekt.

The victims belonged to a variety of political parties. Security experts say drug gangs are using violence to install friendly mayors and other elected officials and scare off would-be reformers who might stall their trade.

Mexican voters will elect a new president and decide on more than 3,000 down-ballot seats on Sunday. Widespread disenchantment with the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) over intensifying violence have helped leftist frontrunner Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador maintain a strong lead in opinion polls. He has promised to curtail corruption and take a different approach to Mexico's militarized fight against drug cartels.

But Oscar Misael Hernandez, a researcher at the College of the Northern Frontier, said many Mexicans have given up hope that their government can guarantee their security, which is why some are willing to risk everything on a long-shot asylum claim in the United States.

The violence, he said, "is impacting families, no matter their social class, gender or creed."

Summary: