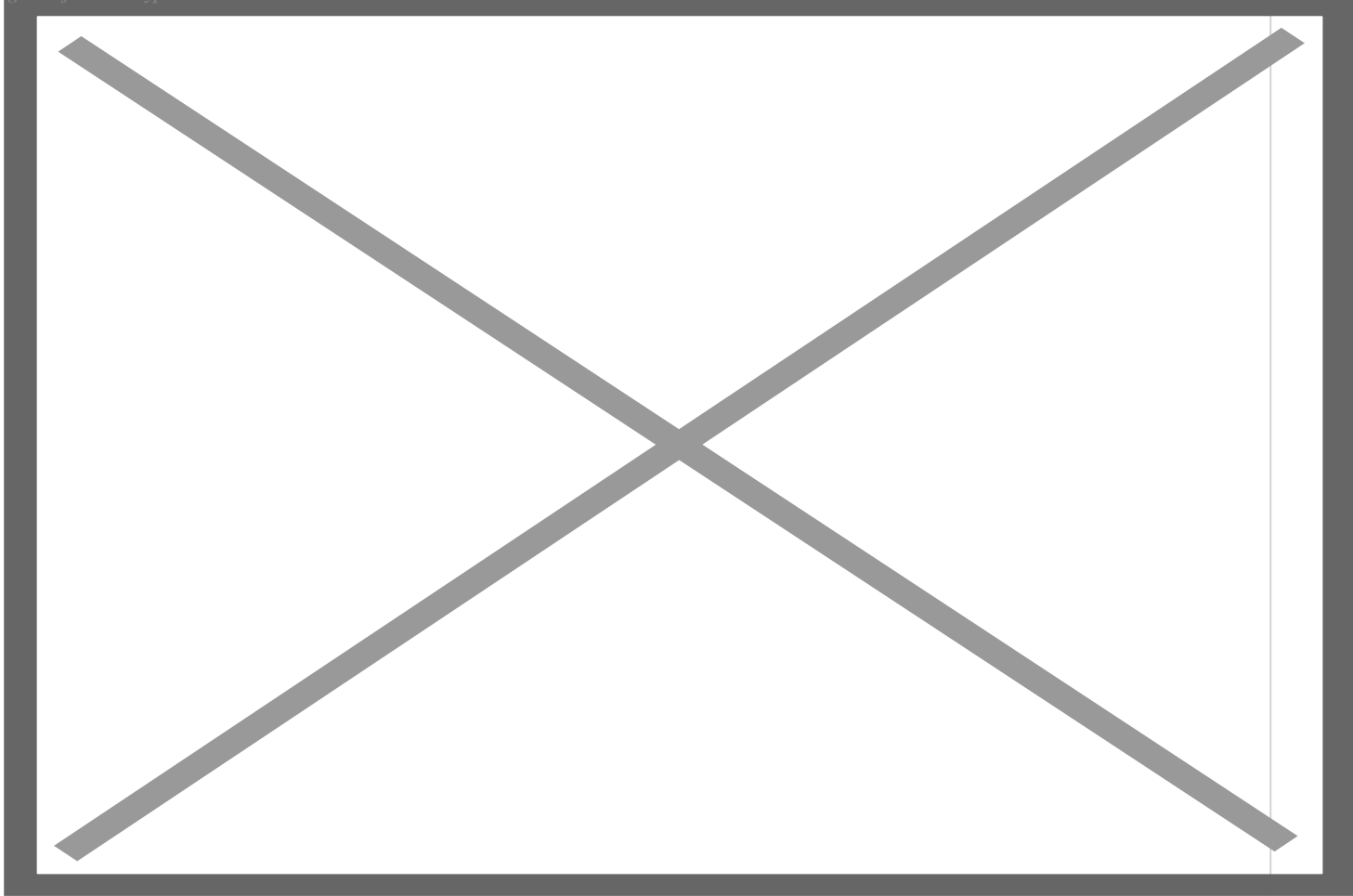


AMLO to propose extending social program to Central America

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Mexico City, April 18 (RHC)-- Mexico's president has said he plans to propose to his U.S. counterpart Joe Biden a plan to extend to Central America a key Mexican social program, as part of ongoing efforts to stem migration to the United States.

In a video message on Sunday, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said he wants to propose offering the Sembrando Vida Program, which provides work and support for the agricultural sector in Central America.

"What I want to propose is that the program Sembrando Vida is implemented in Central America," Lopez Obrador said in the video. "So people aren't forced to migrate, and it helps the environment."

Thousands of migrants and asylum seekers from Central America and Mexico have taken often perilous journeys north towards the U.S. in recent years, fuelled by economic hardships, gang violence and natural disasters, among other reasons.

U.S. officials apprehended more than 172,000 people who had crossed into the country at its southern border with Mexico in March alone. Many of those who crossed into the U.S. were expelled under a Trump-era policy that effectively sealed the border to most migrants due to the coronavirus pandemic.

But the Biden administration is allowing unaccompanied children into the country, as well as some families – prompting it to deploy additional federal resources to the border and to open additional facilities to house people.

As of the weekend, more than 22,000 children were in U.S. government custody, the AP news agency reported, including more than 2,500 who were still in substandard facilities run by U.S. border authorities.

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