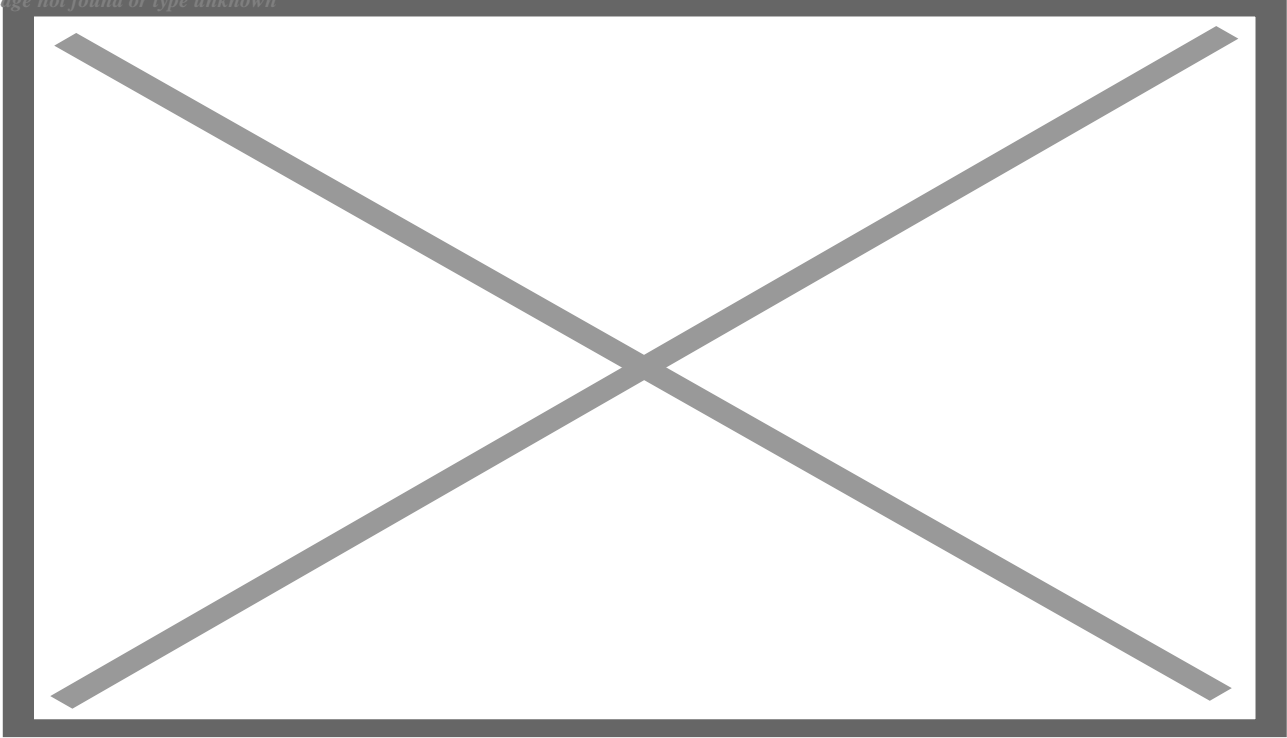


Unrealistic expectations

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Honduran migrants attempt to reach U.S. (Photo: teleSUR)

Thousands of Hondurans left their country in a caravan with the illusion of reaching the United States, where they might find opportunities missing in their homeland. However, their hopes were dashed when Guatemala became an impassable barrier to their passage.

It is thought that two or three thousand or even more people set out with one thing in common: extreme poverty, to the extent that it is preferable to face the risks of a journey and suffer from hunger, thirst, heat, cold, rain and the indifference, if not hostility, of local authorities and residents.

This situation in times of a pandemic, where men, women, children and even some people with physical problems took part, is clear proof that misery is more frightening than any disease or kind of violence, or that, in the end, they all have a similar destination: death.

Honduras is one of the poorest countries in Central America, with the greatest social inequalities in the region.

According to the World Bank, with rather conservative statistics, 48.3% of the entire population -- that is almost half of the country -- lives in poverty. And in rural areas this figure increases to 60.1%.

Middle class families account for 11% of the total population, which is very low compared to the regional average of 35 percent. Where neglect and inequality are found, crime and violence flourish, and Honduras reports a rate of 41 murders per 100,000 inhabitants, which is among the highest in the world.

Thousands of Hondurans on the migrant caravan hoped to escape from these harsh realities, but if ever there was hope, it faded in the face of the insurmountable difficulties they found on the way.

From the very first day, the president of Guatemala, Alejandro Giammattei, ordered his security forces to stop and deport the migrants that crossed the border, under the pretext that they represented a health threat.

His counterpart from Mexico, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, suggested that the exodus was linked to the upcoming presidential elections in the United States, and expressed his willingness to prevent them from crossing his country.

However, even if it had been possible to avoid these obstacles, the migrants would have found an armed southern border of the United States whose authorities maintain a zero tolerance policy against irregular migration.

One way or another, the phenomenon will repeat itself until local governments take on poverty, inequality, corruption and violence. This is the only solution to stop massive movements of those who no longer have anything to lose.

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