



Migrants' Remittances to Mexico and Central America Jump to \$53 Billion in 2018

The World Bank reported that legal and illegal immigrants sent \$53.4 billion in remittances to Mexico and Central America in 2018. Remittances to Mexico reached \$33.7 billion in 2018, up 21% from 2016, and the outflow to Central America rose to \$19.7 billion in 2018, up 25% from 2016. These money transfers provide a huge stimulus to the countries that export their populations to the U.S. labor market. -GEG

Legal and illegal migrants sent \$53.4 billion in remittances back to Mexico and Central America in 2018, or more than double the cost of building a border barrier on the U.S.-Mexico border, according to a World Bank report.

Remittances to Mexico reached \$33.7 billion in 2018, up 21 percent from roughly \$27.8 billion in 2016, the bank reported.

Remittances from the three Central American countries are being spiked by the growing inflow of asylum-seeking migrants into blue-collar jobs throughout the U.S. economy, via the border's catch-and-release laws. The outflow to Central America rose to \$19.7 billion in 2018, up from \$15.8 billion in 2016, according to the bank.

The outflow to Central America rose 25 percent in just two years.

GOP legislators have urged Congress to pay for the \$22 billion border wall by taxing migrants' remittances.

The money sent back from the United States to Central America includes many migrants' payments to the cartels who traffic them into the U.S. economy. The trafficking debts can start at \$5,000 per head.

The remittances provide a huge stimulus to the countries that export their populations to the U.S. labor market. But that stimulus also imposes huge economic costs, including civic turmoil, poverty, high rates of crime, and loss of foreign investment.

The Guardian reported from Guatemala:

In impoverished villages such as Yalambojoch, agriculture is the only work available.

Such grinding poverty makes emigration an attractive alternative, according to the town's mayor, Lucas Pérez. "People leave our village, find work in the US and send money to help their relatives," said Pérez, who estimated about 200 people from the tiny village live in the United States.

The surrounding Huehuetenango province sends the largest number of migrants from the country, according to Guatemala's foreign ministry, and evidence of the exodus is clear: Yalambojoch has no potable water or electricity, but among the wooden shacks are modern two-story houses with tiled roofs – built with remittance money from abroad.

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