

Crossing the “Vertical Frontier”

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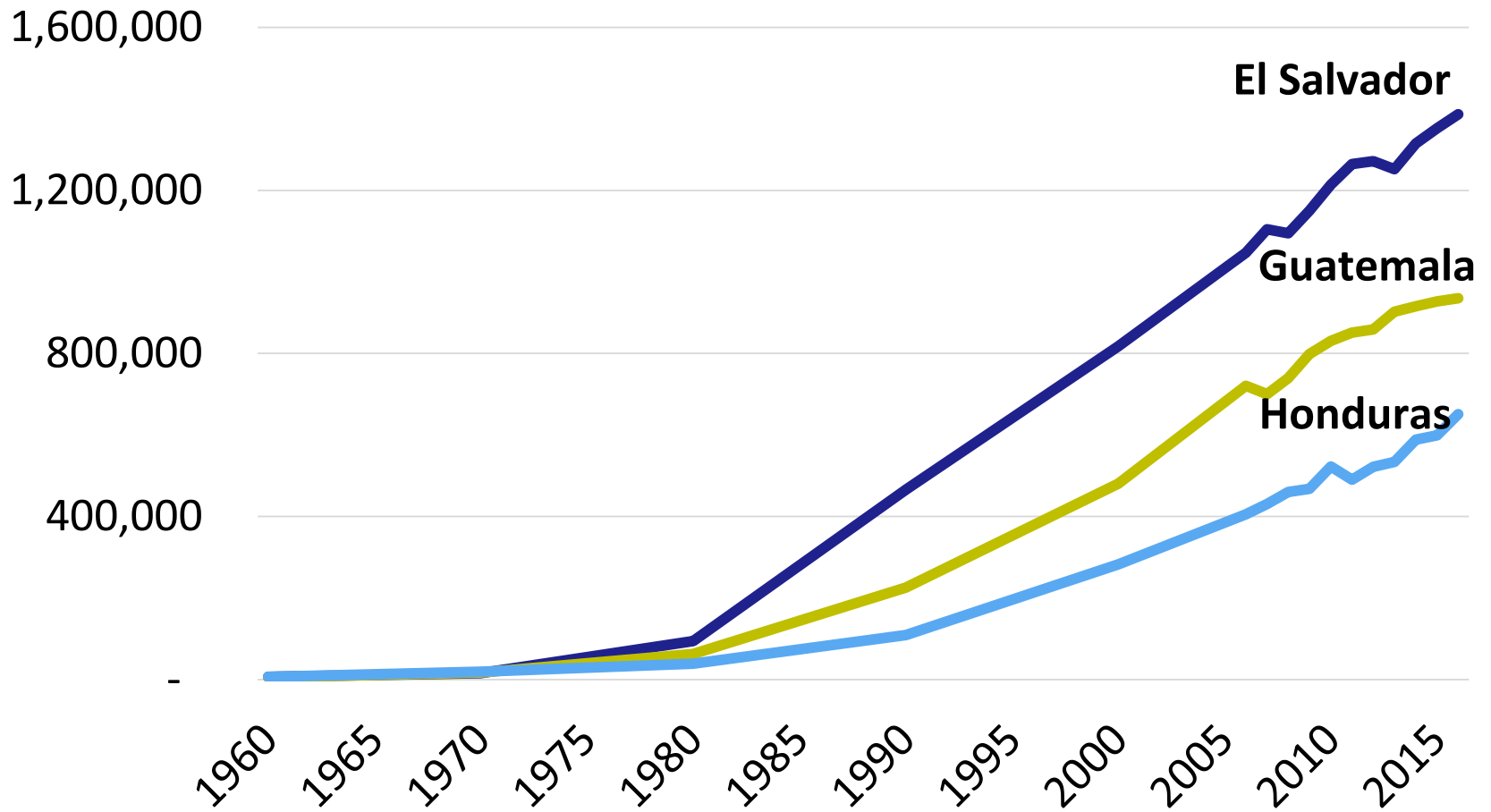
Why leave Central America?

- World homicide ranking (2016):
 - El Salvador - 2nd
 - Honduras - 4th
 - Guatemala - 17th
- Extensive gang control of territories / corruption / impunity
- UN “human development index” ranking of 189 countries (2018):
 - El Salvador - 121st
 - Guatemala - 127th
 - Honduras - 133th

Why go to the U.S.?

- 100+ years of U.S. military interventions and total economic domination tie Central America to U.S.
- Central American community in the U.S. established in 1980s by people fleeing wars in which U.S. deeply involved

Central American immigrants in the U.S., 1960-2016




Why travel in a caravan?

- **MIGRANTS ARE TARGETS: Gangs and corrupt police assault, extort, & kill people in transit**



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Mexican Police Helped Cartel Massacre 193 Migrants, Documents Show

December 22, 2014 · 11:08 PM ET

Why travel in a caravan?

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- **IMPUNITY - 99% of crimes reported against migrants in 2014-2016 did not result in a sentence – WOLA 2017**

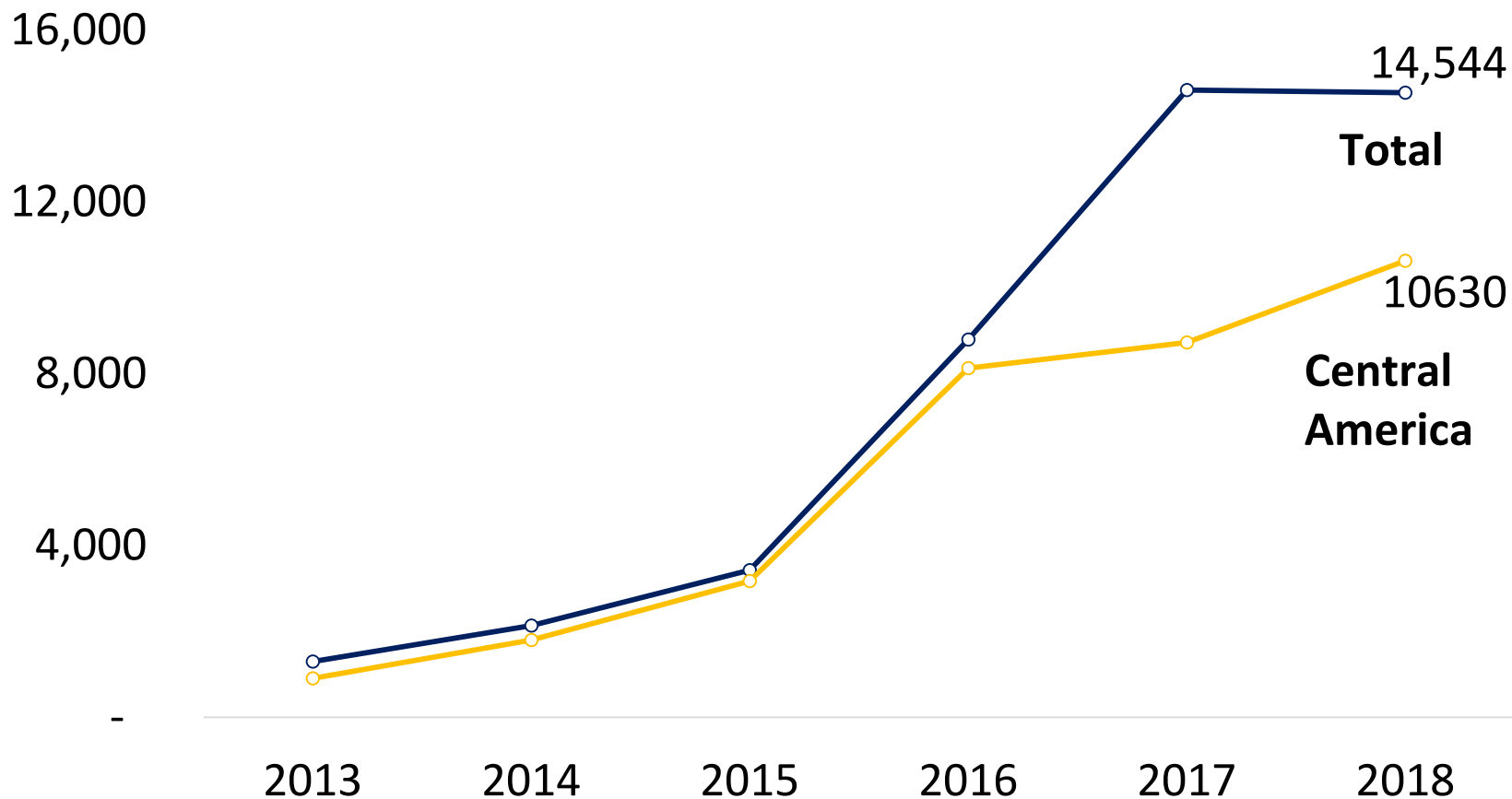


Mothers from Central America cross into Mexico demanding information about missing loved ones. Image by Julysa Sosa. 2016.

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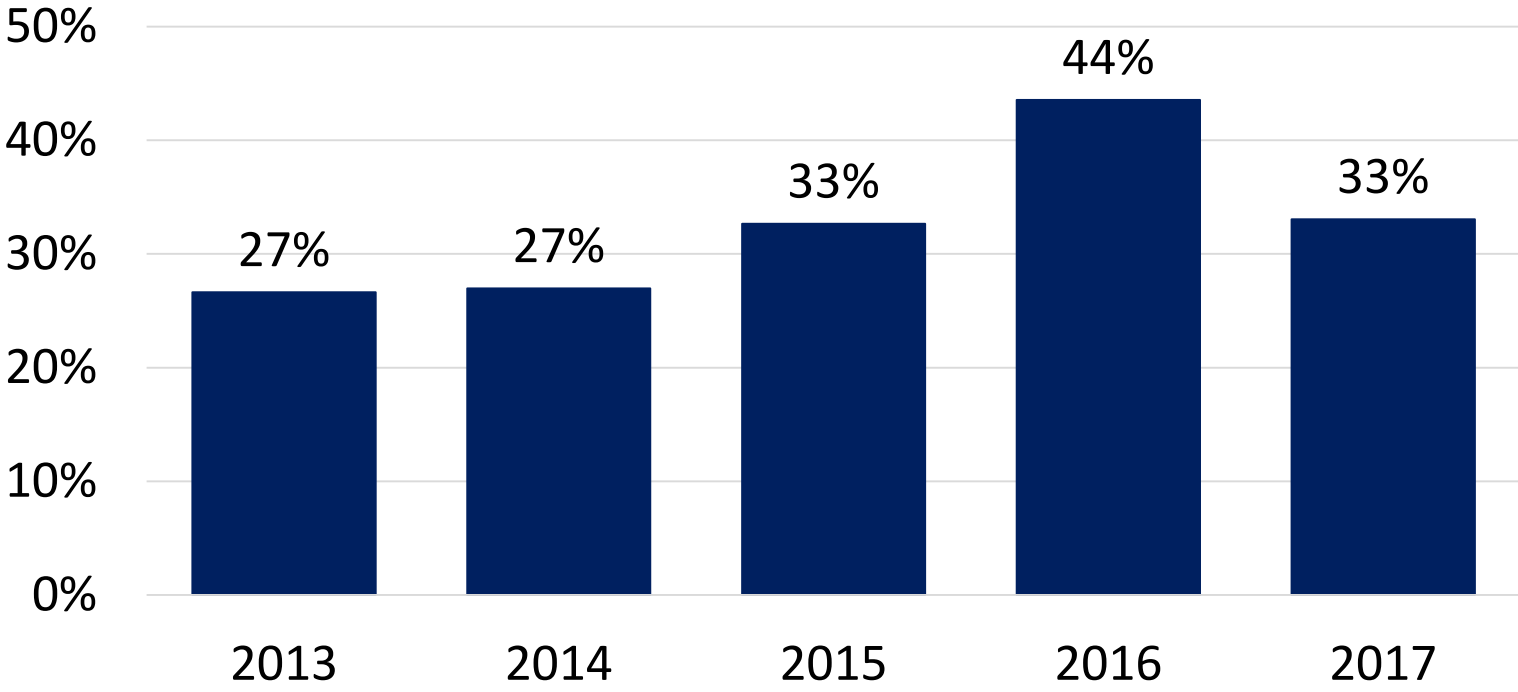
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- **IMPUNITY** - 99% of crimes reported against migrants in 2014-2016 did not result in a sentence – WOLA 2017
- **VISIBILITY** - trying to reduce risk of crime and detention/deportation

Requests for asylum in Mexico, 2013-2018



Source: Boletín Estadístico de Solicitaciones de Refugio en Mexico, COMAR.
Note: 2018 is partial data (Jan-August).

Percent of Central American applicants granted refugee or complementary protection status in Mexico, 2013-2017



Source: Boletín Estadístico de Solicitaciones de Refugio en México, COMAR

Why not ask for asylum in Mexico?

- Central Americans often targets in Mexico.
- Family ties & greater economic opportunity in U.S.
- Misinformation about asylum in U.S.

U.S. asylum denial rates, FY2012-2017



*What's new about Mexico as a
buffer to keep people from Central
America out of the U.S?*

A long history continues...

1980s:

- U.S. pays for refugee camps in southern Mexico
- Mexico imposes travel restrictions on Central Americans in northern Mexico
- Mexico imposes visa requirements on Central Americans

1990s:

- U.S. finances repatriations

2000s-2010s:

- U.S. equips / trains Mexican immigration and border control agents

“The Guatemalan border with Chiapas is now our southern border.”

– Alan Bersin, DHS Assistant Secretary for Policy, 2012



Mexico's 700-mile border with
Guatemala and Belize



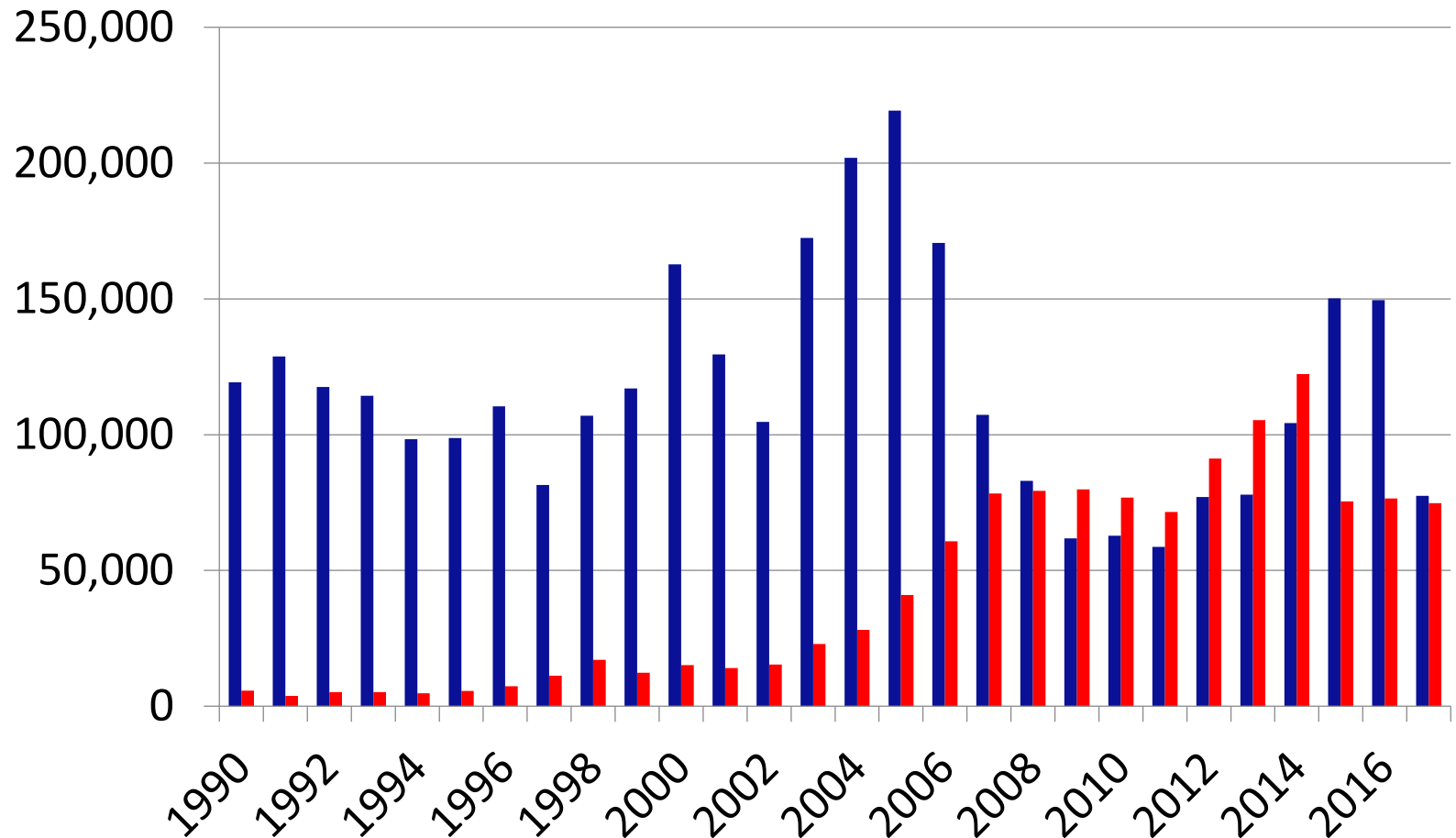
Manu Ureste

Rafts openly take unauthorized migrants across Suchiate river to Mexico

“The vertical frontier”



Deportations of Guatemalans, Salvadorans, and Hondurans by Mexico and U.S, 1990-2017



Comments welcomed

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