

# Central American Women and Children Migrants and Refugees to and through Mexico



Migration, Trafficking, and Organized Crime in  
Central America, Mexico, and the United States

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Information summarized from *Las familias centroamericanas refugiadas y migrantes en México y sus necesidades de protección*, Gabriela Diaz Prieto, IMUMI (2017, unpublished).

# Introduction

Why focus on Women, Children and Families?

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Migration Statistics: increase in families fleeing, detained, and deported

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Responses of U.S. and Mexico to the Central American Refugee Crisis

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New Strategies and Risks

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Access to Protection Mechanisms

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New Questions and Concerns

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## Why focus on women, children and families?

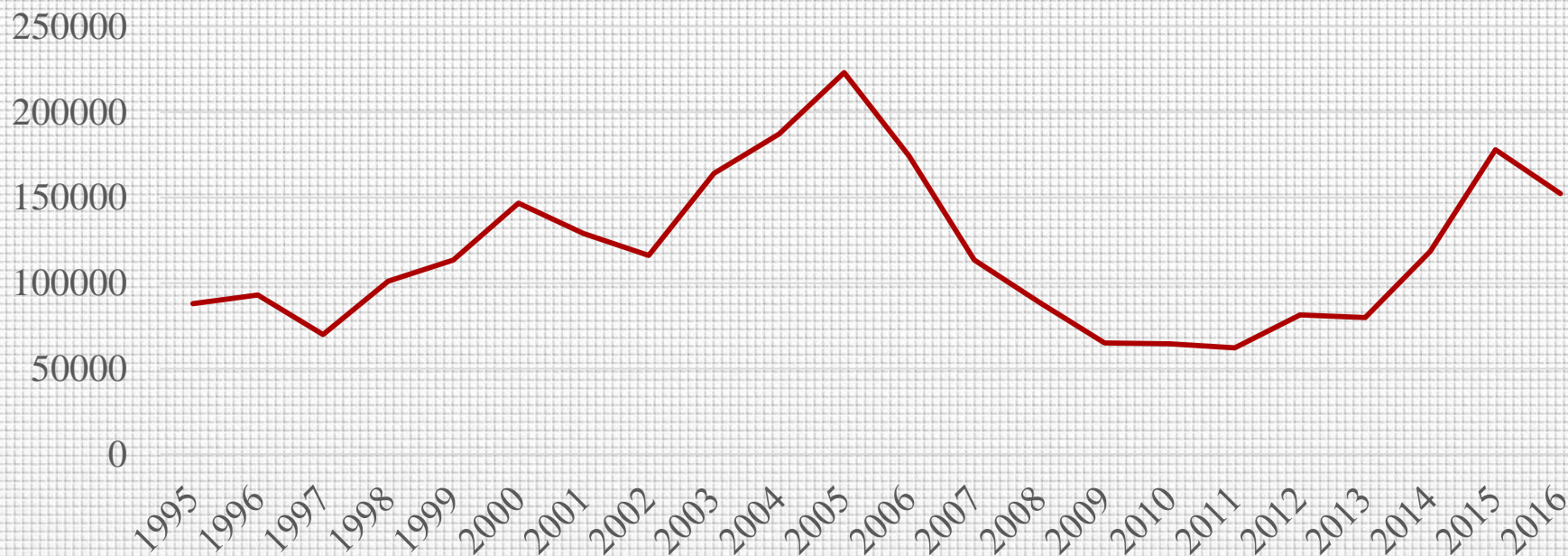
1. Analyze reasons for leaving, who they are traveling with and who is left behind.
2. Traditionally fewer women and children in statistics regarding migration flows.
3. Routes and risks while traveling may differ for women, children and families.
4. Impacted differently by deterrence and detention policies in both Mexico and U.S.





**Migration  
Statistics:  
Central American  
Women, Children  
and Families  
between Mexico  
and the U.S.**

## Number of Detentions of Northern Triangle Country Nationals by Mexican Migration Institute, 1995-2016



### Department of Homeland Security:

In Fiscal Year 2016, total apprehensions by the Border Patrol on our southwest border, between ports of entry, numbered 408,870. This represents an increase over FY15, but was lower than FY14 and FY13, and a fraction of the number of apprehensions routinely observed from the 1980s through 2008.

Source: Mexican Migration Policy Office, (Unidad de Politica Migratoria), Mexico to December 2016.

**Table 1. Detentions on the US-Mexico Border, Fiscal Years 2013 - 2016**

Category	2013	2014	2015	2016
Family Units (No. People)	14,855	68,445	39,838	77,674
Unaccompanied Children	38,759	68,541	39,970	59,692
Individuals	360,783	342,385	251,525	271,504
<b>Total</b>	414,397	479,371	331,333	408,870
<b>Other than Mexicans</b>	148,988	252,600	145,316	218,110

Source: DHS 2016 (2014 and 2016 more Central American migrants than Mexicans).

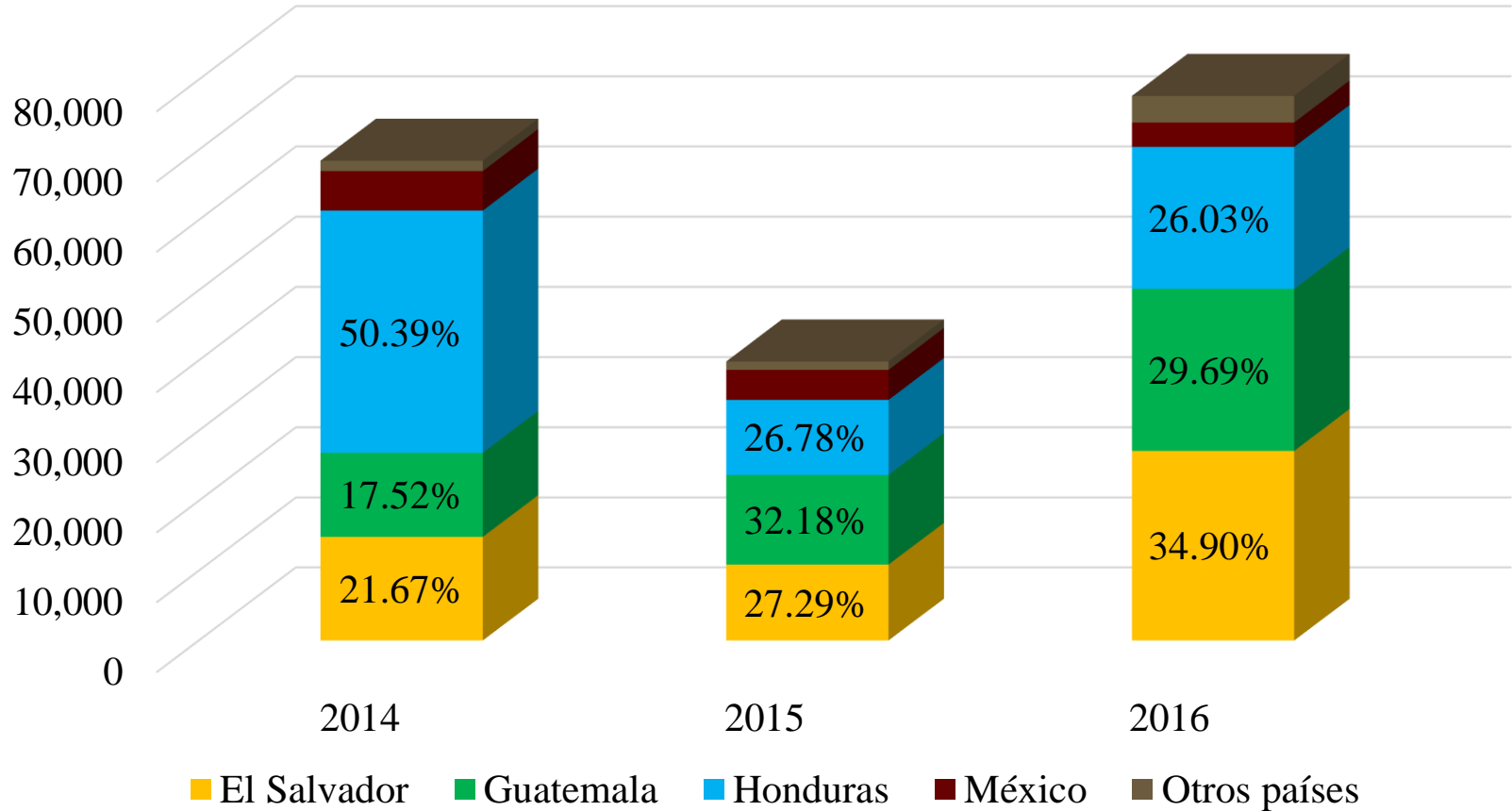
**Table 2. Events of people presented before the National Migration Institute, 2013-2016**

Category	2013	2014	2015	2016
Accompanied Children	9,630*	12,153	18,146	22,653
Unaccompanied Children		10,943	20,368	17,889
Adults	76,668	104,053	159,627	148,053
<b>Total</b>	86,298	127,149	198,141	188,595
<b>Northern Triangle Countries</b>	80,700	118,446	177,949	152,231

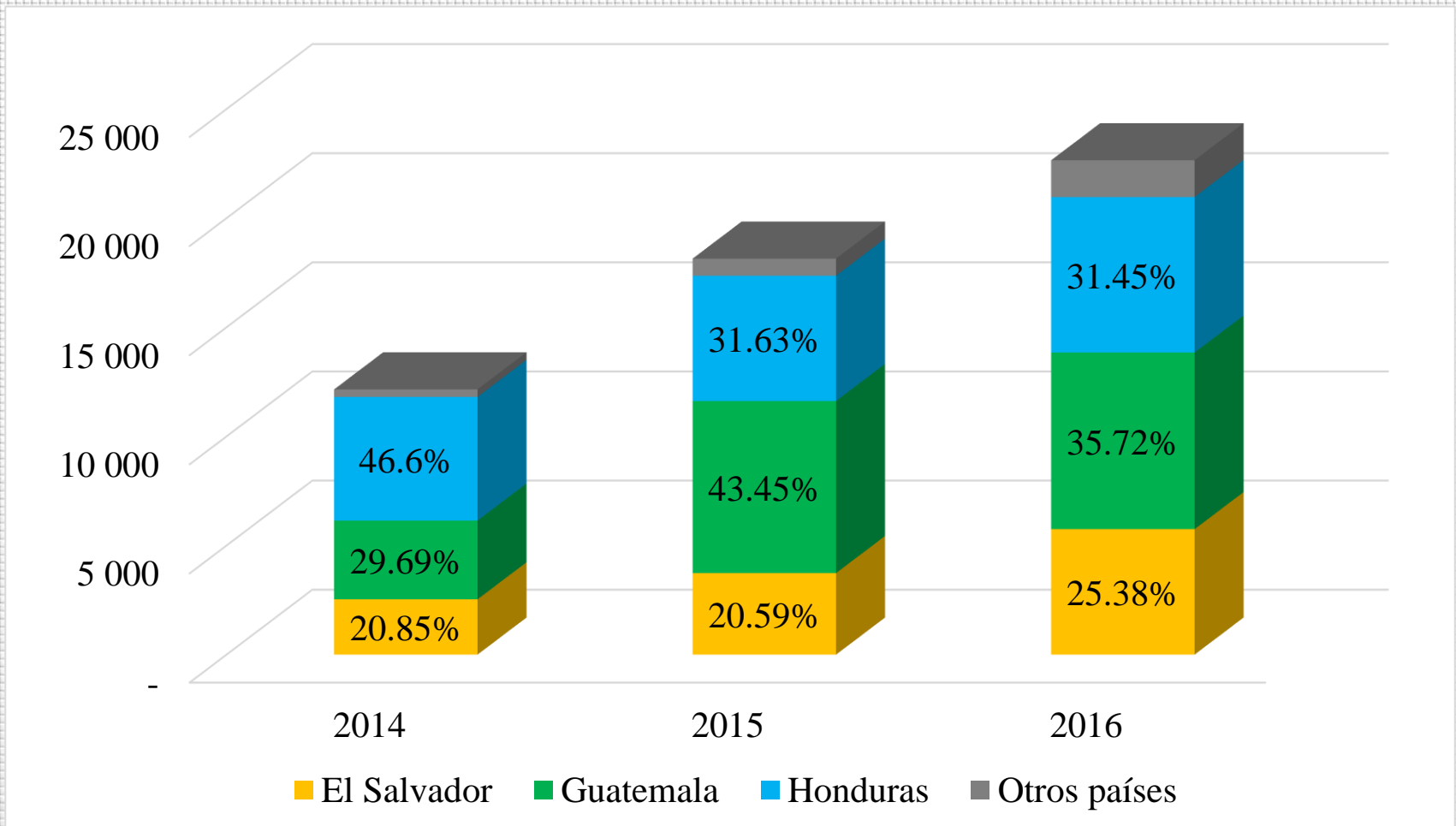
Source: Migration Policy Office (Unidad de Política Migratoria, Mexico).

Based on US Fiscal Years, 01 October to 30 September 2012-2016.

Gráfico 1. Detención de **Family Units** by the Border Patrol, Southwest Sector, Fiscal year, 2014-2016.

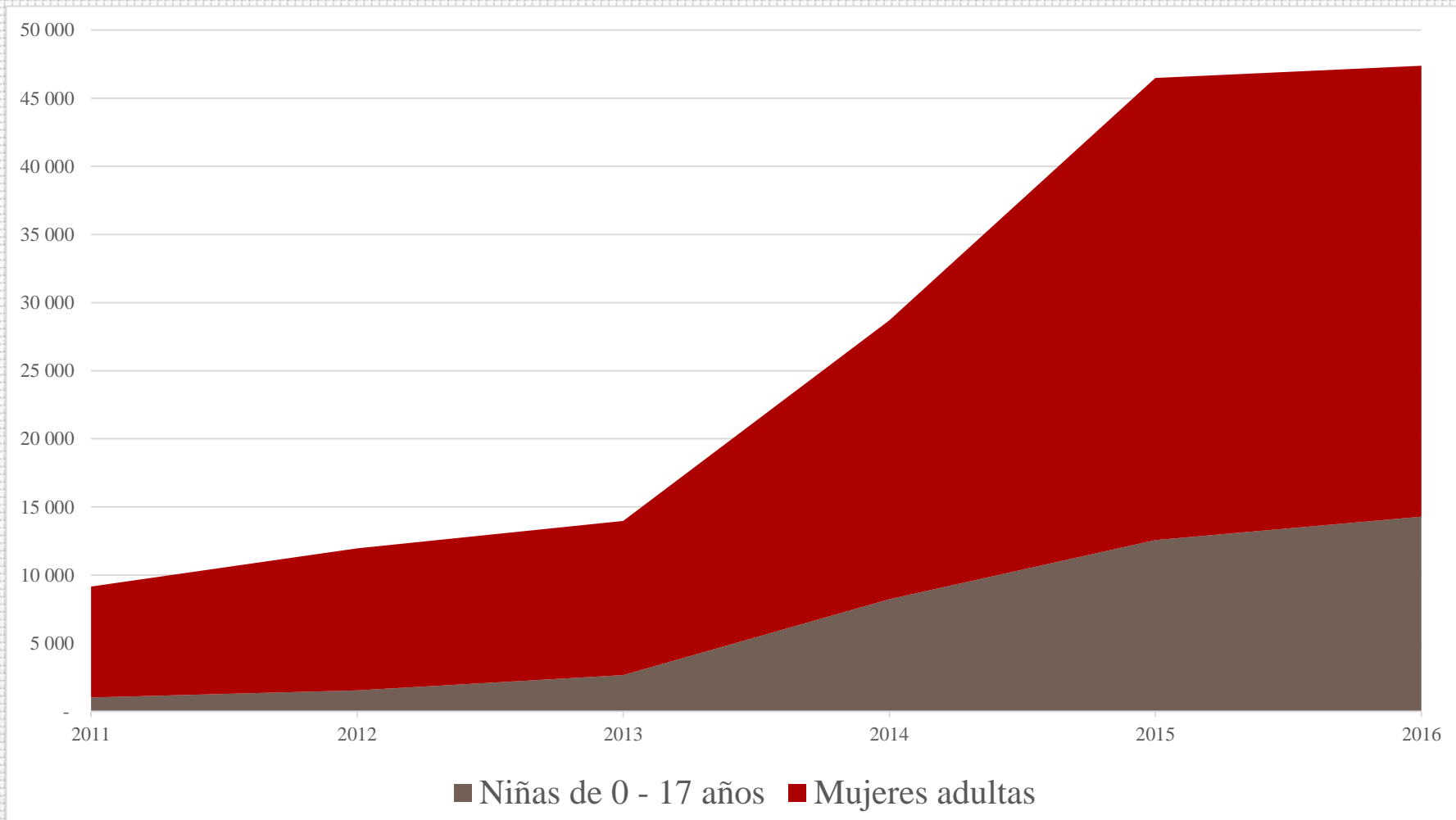


Graph 2. Events of accompanied children (0-17) detained by Mexican Migration Institute, 2014 – 2016.





**Graph 3. Number of events of girls and women detained by Mexican Migration Institute by age groups, 2011-2016**



Source: Mexican Migration Policy Office (Unidad de Política Migratoria, Mexico).

## Summary Trends (Mexican Statistics):

1. We do not have detention statistics on family units in Mexico so cannot compare US and Mexico.
2. Between 2011-2016, the number (events) of Central American women detained in Mexico increased fivefold.
3. Percentage of women and girls increased from 14% of the total detentions (events) in 2011 to 25% in 2016.
4. While the number of unaccompanied teens (12-17) continues to increase, the number of young accompanied girls (0-11) increased by a greater rate – leading us to believe that more families are migrating.
5. More Central American mothers are traveling with young children than Central American fathers. (EMIF Sur).

*Based on statistics and anecdotal information (interviews), we believe mothers and families are fleeing increased violence and making the difficult decision to take young children with them in spite of the risks and improbability of receiving access to asylum. This reflects an increase in violence in the Northern Triangle.*

## Response by U.S. since 2014

1. Alliance for Prosperity (conditioned to migration deterrence campaigns, anti-smuggling legislation).
2. Assistance to Mexico through Merida Initiative (training, equipment, presence of agents).
3. Deterrence at the Mexico-US border including collaboration with Mexican authorities.
4. Family Detention
5. Raids (or threats of raids), visible deportation
6. Protection (asylum, Central American in-country processing and San Jose Agreement, SIJV, TPVR unaccompanied minors referred to ORR).

## Response by Mexico since 2014

1. Southern Border Program (2014-2016).
  - a. Discourage train travel
  - b. Push people into more remote areas, exposing them to extortion, robbery, physical and sexual abuse, kidnapping and human trafficking.
  - c. Increase “permanent” and mobile checkpoints along highway system and allow for increased collaboration of law enforcement authorities.
2. Increased detention and deportation – concentrating in southern states of Chiapas, Tabasco, Veracruz, Oaxaca).
3. Increased, but limited, protection (access to asylum procedures, referral of some unaccompanied children, release of some asylum applicants from detention and some humanitarian visas issued).

# Survival Strategies while en Route



Imagen tomada de *Un viaje sin rastros*. IMUMI. P. 33

## Internal Migration Enforcement – checkpoints and mobile inspections. Monitoring Chiapas-Veracruz 2013



More than half (some estimate up to 82%) of people fleeing the Northern Triangle Countries need international protection.

Less than 1% of people from the Northern Triangle who enter Mexico apply for asylum and approximately 0.5% are granted protection.

Of the 20,368 unaccompanied children detained in 2015, 142 requested asylum 44 were granted asylum and 14 received other types of humanitarian protection.



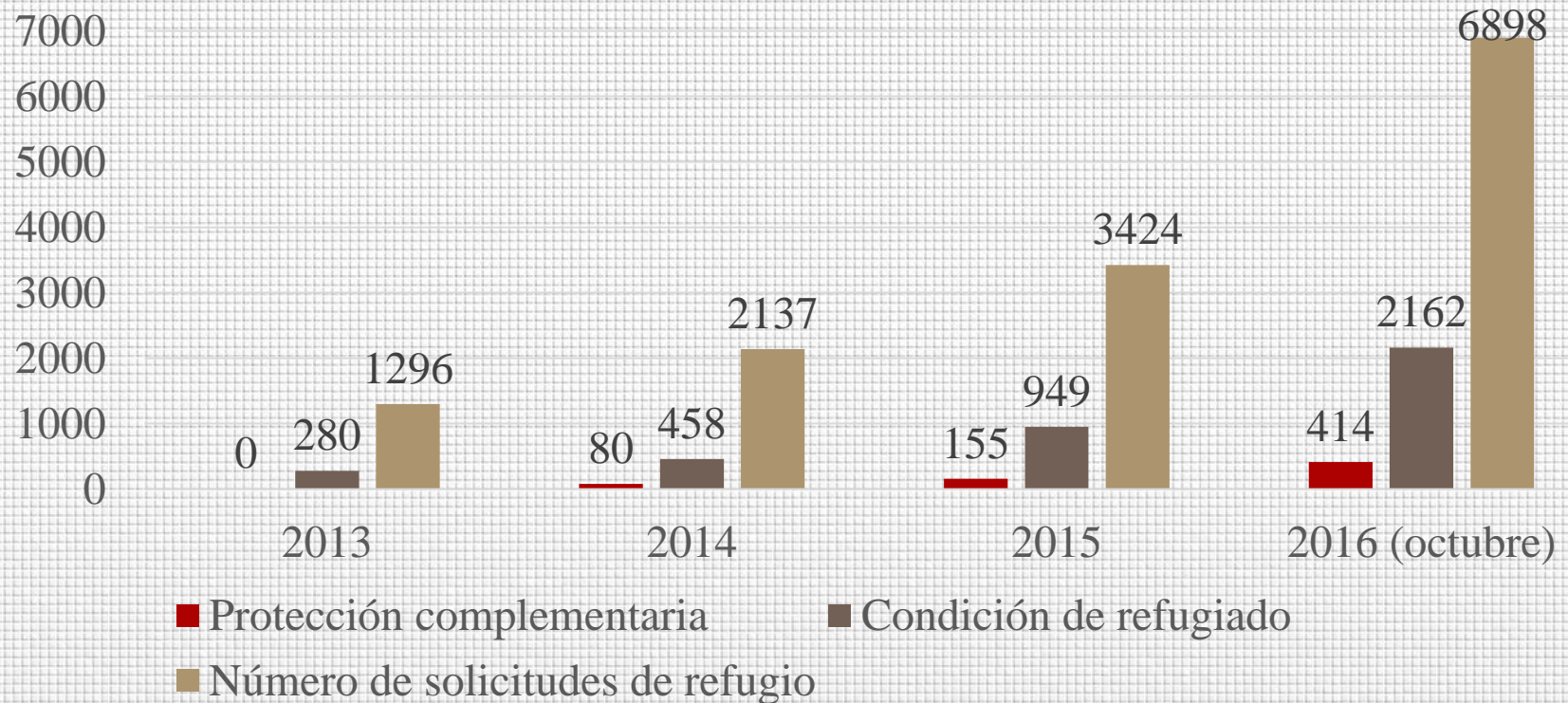
Hire smugglers and pay more (organized crime).

Use of false documents purchased through smugglers.

Avoid train, use alternative routes such as busses, cargo trucks, walking, taxis.

Avoid migrant shelters on train route, stay in different accommodations.

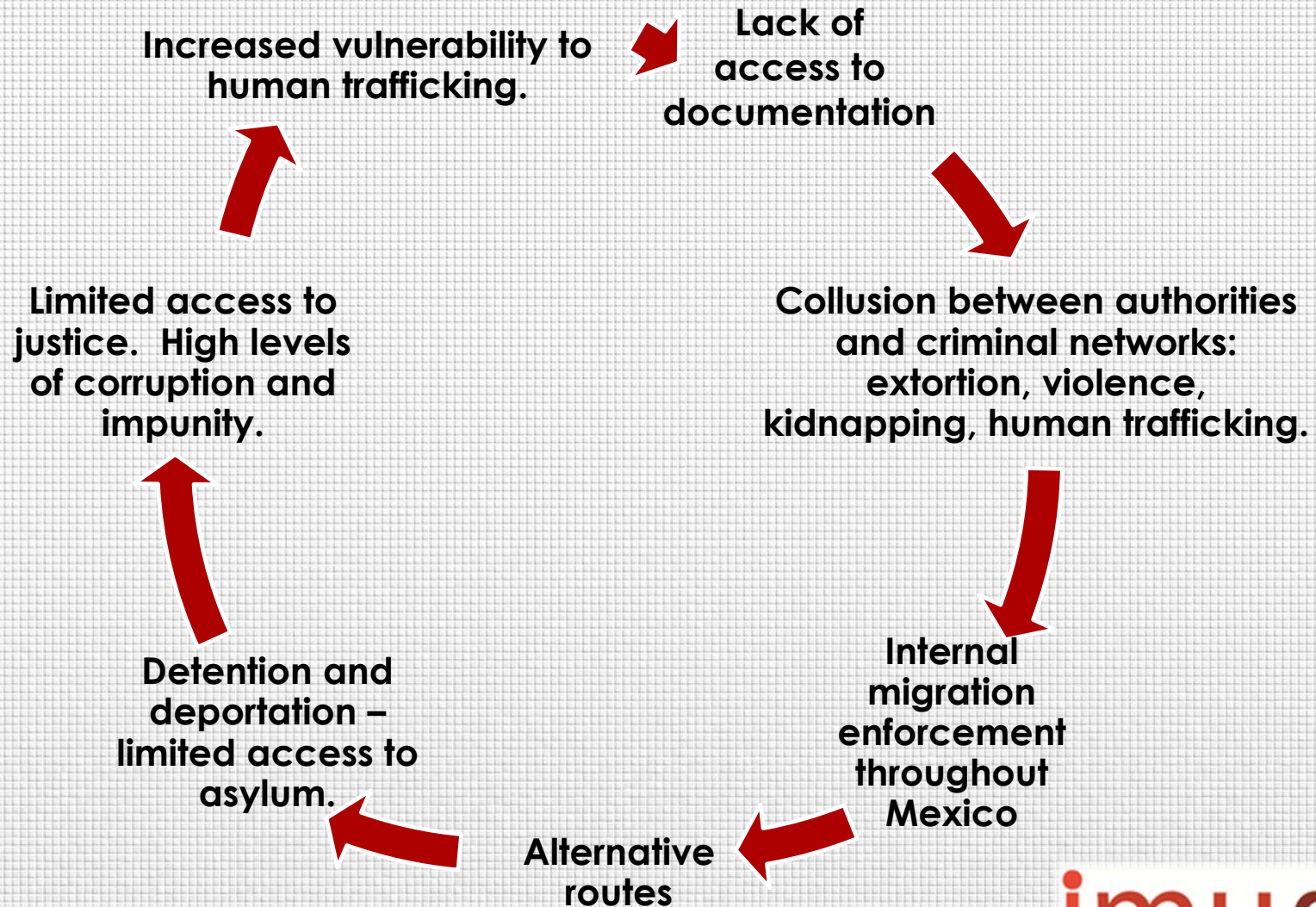
## Asylum applications submitted and granted by Mexican Refugee Assistance Commission, 2013-2016 (October)



We don't have information about the number of families that receive asylum.



# Factors that increase vulnerability to human trafficking for Central American Migrants and Refugees



## New Questions and Concerns

- Will the US return asylum seekers to contiguous countries (Mexico) and would Mexico accept them? What are the implications for legal representation, access to procedures, information, non-detention and deportation by Mexican officials, etc.?
- Will unaccompanied children in ORR protection “lose unaccompanied status” if they are released to parents in the US?

The Executive Orders (Jan. 25), state that trafficking and smuggling of children to the US is intolerable – mentioning abuse by undocumented parents in the US who pay smugglers to bring their children through Mexico.

*Assisting families – re-unification follows best-interest standards and is more economically sustainable for all.*

*Legal channels reduce smuggling (organized crime).*

*Central American children, women and families need increased access to protection in Mexico and the U.S. in order to decrease their vulnerability to human trafficking.*



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