

As human caravan moves through Mexico, 'full respect' needed for national control of borders: UN chief

With more than 7,000 Central-American refugees now on the march through Mexico towards the southern border of the United States in search of safety and work, all countries involved are being urged by the UN to liaise with key agencies on the ground providing support.

Answering questions from reporters at the daily press briefing on Monday, UN Deputy Spokesperson, Farhan Haq, said that the [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)](#) and the UN refugee agency ([UNHCR](#)), had been boosting resources on the ground, as the caravan of mainly Honduran refugees and migrants made its way north, across the border between Guatemala and Mexico.

Mr. Haq said that UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres was urging all parties to abide by international law, including the principle of "full respect for countries' rights to manage their own borders."

According to media reports, what started as a small group of under 200 just a few days ago, has grown considerably. Mr. Haq told journalists that "it is estimated that the caravan comprises some 7,233 persons, many of whom intend to continue the march north."

US President Donald Trump has reportedly responded to the march, by threatening to cut off foreign aid to Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador should the caravan of people fleeing their homeland, attempt to cross into the US illegally.

Earlier this week, a [UN rights expert](#) urged Member States not to prioritize security concerns over the basic human rights of migrants and refugees.

"UNHCR has reinforced its capacity in Southern Mexico, with the deployment of an emergency team drawn from across Mexico's operations," said Mr. Haq. "The office now has 32 people on the ground, in the border, Ciudad Hidalgo, and Tapachula."

He added that these numbers will increase in the coming days, explaining that the agency's aim was to ensure that travelers are fully informed regarding their rights to asylum, along with providing legal advice and humanitarian assistance.

The IOM has reported large numbers of people arriving in Mexico who will likely remain in the country for an "extended period," Mr. Haq said, explaining that most individuals have crossed irregularly and are gathering in makeshift shelters.