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In search of a better life

Migration by unaccompanied children from countries in the 'northern triangle' of Central America, comprising Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, is gaining attention as a humanitarian crisis in the United States, while U.S. authorities are trying to discourage the inflow of illegal immigrants who will almost certainly be deported. Since October, 52,000 unaccompanied children have arrived on the U.S. border with Mexico, according to the Obama administration, and most are fleeing gang and drug violence in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. These are scenes from what they left behind.

Above, children walk past an abandoned house at the gang-infested 14 de Marzo neighborhood in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, May 23, 2014.

Top right: A woman looks out of the door as her son sits outside their home at the Esquipulas neighborhood in Tegucigalpa, May 22, 2014.

Middle right: An abandoned bicycle for children, a baby swing and rubbish are seen in the back patio of a house seized by authorities in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, May 23, 2014. The house was seized and sealed after it had been identified as one of a series of safe houses for illegal immigrants used by a group of coyotes, according to police reports. Police found the house after arresting a coyote who was with 12-year-old Ecuadorean girl Nohemi Alvarez Quillay, on a street in Ciudad Juarez. She was travelling with the coyote after her parents, who live in the U.S., paid a group of coyotes to bring her over. She was later sent to a government-run shelter for her protection where she committed suicide shortly after.

Bottom: People hoping to reach the U.S. ride atop the wagon of a freight train, known as La Bestia (The Beast) in Itepec, in the Mexican state of Oaxaca, Mexico, June 18, 2014.



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