

## **Between humanitarian reception and disrupted transit: The responses of the Mexican State to Venezuelan displacement in a changing regional context**

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### **Abstract**

Mexico has been one of two countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to recognize recent Venezuelan displacement as refugees, which has been praised as a regional best practice. However, as in several other LAC countries, openness practices have been combined and overlapped with restrictive ones. The effects of the pandemic prompted secondary movements of Venezuelans residing in other LAC countries, further encouraged by the widespread idea of new opportunities in the United States. Thus, the south-to-north migration pattern, which had been challenged when at the beginning of this movement it adopted multiple directionalities, was reinstated. Therefore, a new wave of Venezuelans arrived in Mexico in the "post" pandemic, with the aim of reaching the United States. The initial Mexican humanitarian response to the Venezuelans was combined with a control policy based not only on unilateral visa imposition, but also with militarization, externalization of border control and extra territorialization of the right to asylum from the United States. Based on statistical and documentary information, as well as interviews with Venezuelans on Mexico's northern border, this article explores the evolution of Mexico's responses to Venezuelan migration and their impact on migrants' trajectories. The corollary has been the production of illegalized migrants, the creation of moments of regularity in irregularity, prolonged transits and even "forced" refugees.

### **Biography**

**Luciana Gandini** is a Senior Researcher at the Institute of Legal Studies at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in the field of sociology of law and the Coordinator of the University Seminar on Internal Displacement, Migration, Exile, and Repatriation (SUDIMER) at UNAM. She is Nonresident Global Fellow at the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) and a Research Fellow at the Center for Latin America and Latino Studies at American University. Gandini is a member of the research group for Comparative Analysis on International Migration and Displacement in the Americas (CAMINAR). Gandini is a specialist in

migration and refugee policies within Mexico and Latin America, and the labour and sociolegal integration of migrants on the move among south-south and south-north migratory flows; international migration and human rights; voluntary and involuntary displacements; the Venezuelan and Central American displacements. She received a PhD in social sciences from El Colegio de México and a master's in population studies from FLACSO-Mexico.