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THEDIALOGUE

FEATURED Q&A

What Did Leaders Accomplish at Their Migration Summit?

Guatemalan President Bernardo Arévalo (second from left) hosted a summit this month with representatives of several Western Hemisphere nations to discuss migration. // Photo: @MinexGt via X.

Q Representatives from 22 Western Hemisphere countries participated in a regional summit on May 7 in Guatemala where they promised to pursue the creation of legal pathways into their countries and organize responses to migrant flows, including supplying aid to communities that are experiencing effects from migration. What did the representatives accomplish at the summit, and what policies are likely to come out of it? What role should the United States take in coordinating those policies? What responsibilities do governments in Latin America and the Caribbean have for improving the safety conditions of migrants traveling north?

A Louis DeSipio, professor of political science and chair of Chicano/Latino studies at the University of California Irvine: "The regional summit on migration and border security reflects an important ongoing effort to establish regional responses and resources to address migration in and through the Americas. The recently concluded Guatemala summit is the third such meeting designed to ensure that national responses to migration reflect modest levels of collaboration across different nations in the region. This collaboration has resulted in tangible efforts to resettle refugees in nations closer to their countries of origin and to reduce migration to the United States. Regional cooperation, and funding from the United States for example, creates incentives for migrants from Venezuela to settle in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru rather than to make dangerous trip to the United States and face an uncertain future once there. As had been the case in the two previous summits, the Guatemala meeting sought to

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Spain Recalls Envoy to Argentina After Milei Insults Sánchez's Wife

Spain on Sunday recalled its ambassador to Argentina after President Javier Milei, during a visit to Madrid, called Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's wife "corrupt."

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Mexico Declares State of Alert for Power Grid

Mexico declared a state of alert for the country's power grid amid an ongoing heat wave. Power shortfalls caused rolling black-outs earlier this month.

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POLITICAL

Abinader Sails to New Term in Dominican Republic Election

The Dominican Republic's president, Luis Abinader, was re-elected Sunday in a landslide without the need for a runoff. His closest opponents conceded.

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Abinader // Photo: Instagram Page of Luis Abinader.

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POLITICAL NEWS

Abinader Wins New Term in Landslide in Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic's president. Luis Abinader, won re-election on Sunday in a landslide, defeating his rivals without the need for a runoff. With more than 94 percent of polling places reporting results, Abinader won 57.16 percent of the vote, far ahead of his next-closest rival, former President Leonel Fernández, who had 29.34 percent, according to preliminary data from electoral authorities. Abinader's support put him well above the 50 percent threshold needed to avoid a runoff. Fernández and former legislator Abel Martínez, who had 10.21 percent of the vote, both conceded defeat. Of the six other candidates in the race, only one had support of more than 1 percent. "Today, our country shines with its own light," Abinader told supporters at the headquarters of his Modern Revolutionary Party, Reuters reported. Abinader also thanked his rivals for conceding, saying it reaffirmed "the country's image as an example of deep democratic convictions," Bloomberg News reported. Abinader said Sunday that he will step down at the conclusion of his second term and respect constitutional term limits. "The message of the ballot box was clear," he said, Bloomberg News reported. "The changes we've made are going to be irreversible, there is no turning back. The Dominican Republic has changed, and it has changed forever" he added. Voters cast ballots in the election amid a worsening humanitarian crisis in neighboring Haiti, which has struggled with fighting gangs that have increasingly taken control of territory. Abinader has accelerated deportations and has started construction on a border wall. He has also crusaded against corruption and has touted his record handling the Covid-19 pandemic, Reuters reported. Abinader has also vowed to reform the country's finances while also maintaining economic growth, which analysts estimate will be 5.1 percent this year, the Financial Times reported. The country currently has a debt burden of approximately 45 percent of its gross domestic product. "The widespread hope is that Abinader's second term will see further measures to improve the public finances," William Jackson, chief emerging markets economist at Capital Economics, said in a note to clients before the election, the Financial Times reported.

Spain Recalls Envoy to Argentina After Milei's Remarks

Spain on Sunday recalled its ambassador to Argentina after the South American country's president, Javier Milei, called Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's wife "corrupt," Agence France-Presse reported. Milei made the comments at an event in Madrid. "It is unacceptable that a sitting president visiting Spain should insult Spain and the Spanish prime minister, a fact that breaks with all diplomatic customs and the most elementary rules of coexistence between countries," said Spain's foreign minister, José Manuel Albares. "With his behavior, Milei has brought the relationship between Spain and Argentina to its most serious state in recent history," said Albares, Reuters reported. The foreign minister said he expected an apology from Milei for insulting Sánchez's wife, Begoña Gómez. Other Spanish government ministers also condemned Milei's speech, in which he also criticized socialism as "cursed and carcinogenic." Milei's spokesperson told an Argentine television station that he would not apologize and added that Spanish officials should apologize for insulting him, Reuters reported. During the visit to Spain, Milei also broke protocol by refusing to meet with Sánchez and King Felipe, instead promoting a book he wrote alongside Santiago Abascal of the far-right Vox party, Reuters reported. The main Spanish opposition party, the conservative People's Party, refused to support the government's statements, and sources within the party told Reuters that Sánchez should have answered allegations about an alleged corruption case weeks ago, Reuters reported. "His silence generates internal doubts, but also distrust abroad," said an unnamed

NEWS BRIEFS

Mexico's Top Presidential Candidates Spar Over Security During Debate

Mexico's top presidential candidates sparred over security issues during their final debate Sunday night, with the ruling party's Claudia Sheinbaum defending the record of outgoing President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, whom leading opposition candidate Xóchitl Gálvez accused of being soft on crime, the Associated Press reported. "What has been this administration's strategy? Give the country to organized crime," Gálvez said during the debate. Mexicans go to the polls on June 2.

Mexico Reportedly Considering Higher Taxes on Banks

Mexico's government is seeking to raise taxes on banks in order to improve public finances, the Financial Times reported today, citing unnamed people familiar with the matter. Officials have been discussing several options to raise revenue in various sectors to address the country's fiscal deficit, the newspaper reported. The options in the banking sector reportedly include new restrictions on tax deductions, the Financial Times reported.

Marfrig Says it Hasn't Been Notified of Move to Block Sale of Plants

Brazilian meatpacker Marfrig said Friday it had not been notified of any decision by Uruguayan antitrust authorities to block the firm's deal to sell some of its plants to Brazilian beef production company Minerva, Reuters reported. The deal being blocked had circulated as a story in the media, but Uruguay's economy ministry told Reuters that the country's antitrust authorities had not yet made a decision on the deal, which would see Marfrig sell 16 slaughtering plants to Minerva for 7.5 billion reais, or $1.47 billion.

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source in the People's Party, Reuters reported. Last month, a city court said it was probing accusations of influence peddling and business-related corruption that had been lodged against Gómez. The case was brought forward by Manos Limpias, an anti-corruption group. However, the prosecuting attorney in Madrid said it was seeking to have the case dismissed due to a lack of evidence, Reuters reported.

BUSINESS NEWS

Mexico Declares State of Alert for Power Grid

Mexico declared an operational state of alert on Saturday for the country's power grid amid an ongoing heat wave, Bloomberg News reported. Power grid operator Cenace published a statement on its website indicating the alert applies nationwide, as Mexico's meteorological service expects temperatures across the country to reach over 95 degrees Fahrenheit, with some areas breaking above 110 degrees, Bloomberg News reported. Power supply shortfalls already caused rolling blackouts in several cities earlier this month, and Mexico has broken multiple records for high temperatures so far this year. On May 7, blackouts affected the city of Nuevo Laredo as well as several parts of the state of Mexico, including areas near Mexico City. In a statement the following day, Cenace blamed the blackouts on multiple factors that included a fall in power generation from wind and solar, some plants being offline and a spike in power demand during the early evening hours as people returned home from work, The New York Times reported. Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador on Saturday praised the country's state-owned electric company, the Comisión Federal de Electricidad, or CFE, in a posting on social media site X for having maintained power and avoided blackouts during the previous 10 days "even when there is greater demand because of the heat and more consumption in peak hours," Bloomberg News reported.

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both balance efforts to strengthen borders with efforts to target foreign economic and development assistance to reduce the long-term incentives to migration. These are clearly major objectives that will take many years to achieve, but the process of bringing nations from throughout the region together deserves recognition. The United States has long focused its response to undocumented immigrant and refugee migration on enforcement efforts, particularly along the U.S.-Mexico border. By working with other nations in the region, it has been able to slow some potential migration and to create modest opportunities for some potential refugees to establish their eligibility from abroad and reduce the hazards of migration through Central America and Mexico."

Maureen Meyer, vice president for programs at the Washington Office on Latin America: "This meeting was the third held regarding the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, signed by 21 countries at the Summit of the Americas in June 2022. Led by the Biden administration, the declaration aims to promote a regional approach to migration focusing on stability and assistance in reception communities, legal pathways for migration and humane migration management. New commitments included Guatemala's and Costa Rica's expansion of the list of nationalities that can seek legal pathways to the United States through Safe Mobility Offices; additional efforts by Ecuador, Colombia and Costa Rica to regularize migrants and a Biden administration pledge of an additional $578 million in humanitarian, development and economic assistance to support a regional migration response. This message of cooperation was clouded by U.S.-led efforts to encourage countries to block migration. Governments committed to efforts to stem irregular migration through increased use of transit visas, passenger vetting and enforcement, while days before the meeting, President Biden and Mexican President López Obrador discussed implementing 'measures to significantly reduce irregular border crossings.' On May 9, the Biden administration also put forward a new proposed rule to make it harder for some asylum seekers to pass their initial screening interviews at the border. Meanwhile, the president-elect of Panama announced his intention to deport migrants who cross through the Darién Gap. Regional governments should be developing a rights respecting response to regional migration flows, including access to protection. On the ground, though, efforts continue focusing primarily on border control and enforcement."

Felipe Navarro, policy and advocacy manager at the Center for Gender & Refugee Studies at the University of California College of the Law in San Francisco: "The recent summit showcased the tension between the objectives of the Los Angeles Declaration and its implementation. As states in the Americas commit to creating pathways and fostering conditions for integration, they enforce draconian policies that restrict migrants' movements, disregarding profound human impacts. The U.S. government has paved the way for other countries to embrace anti-migrant measures at odds with the declaration and international law. Despite evidence of the grave human consequences of these measures, governments are doubling down. For example, Colombia's arrest of boat operators in the Gulf of Urabá—a key transit route to the Darién jungle—led to a strike that left more than 5,000 migrants stranded in a small, under-resourced community. Yet, the United States will impose sanctions on the heads of companies that transport migrants, potentially trapping or pushing them toward more dangerous routes. Additionally, the U.S. government is expanding the use of the CBP One app, intended to manage asylum requests at the border. Research carried out

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by the Center for Gender & Refugee Studies shows that this app is severely limited by appointment scarcity, misinformation, language and accessibility barriers, and technical issues, leaving thousands, notably Haitians, trapped and vulnerable in Mexico. While efforts to increase pathways and aid are commendable, we cannot ignore how enforcement-focused policies contradict the declaration's human rights commitments. To promote safe, orderly and humane migration, states must decisively expand pathways to meet current needs, respond to the diverse causes of displacement—including the climate crisis—and prioritize human rights over short-sighted enforcement."

Andrew Selee, president of the Migration Policy Institute: "Latin American and Caribbean countries saw the number of migrants and refugees living in the region almost double between 2010 and 2022. Meanwhile, the United States has seen more than two million encounters at the southwest border in each of the past two years, with the majority coming from countries beyond Central America last year. Immigration has now become a major political issue almost everywhere in the hemisphere. The Los Angeles Declaration was an agreement by 22 countries on a set of four principles on migration including 1.) supporting countries with large displaced populations, 2.) expanding legal pathways for migration, 3.) coordinating migration policies and 4.) addressing mass migration events collectively. The Guatemala City meeting took stock of the advances so far and served as a forum for governments to announce a few new measures. Significantly, there was a series of side meetings the day before where governments and a mixture of international, civil society, migrant-led, philanthropic, private sector and research organizations sat down together to problem solve. In these side-meetings, there were commitments to address financing for integration efforts in host countries; measuring advances in integration, especially labor market access and legal status; and expanding new legal pathways for mobility in the hemisphere. There was a proposal to hold several smaller meetings over the next year to get traction on specific actions in each of these areas, with some specific meetings announced. Immigration policies are, ultimately, a sovereign decision in each country. But it is healthy that governments increasingly recognize that they need to coordinate with each other on their policy decisions and get support and advice from other key stakeholders outside governments as well."

What's Keeping You Up at Night?

The **Latin America Advisor** gets answers to the questions that informed executives are asking, every business day, so that you can rest easy.

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