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## 'Important agreements were reached': US, Mexico see headway on migration

### **«Було досягнуто важливих угод»: США та Мексика бачать прогрес у переговорах з питань міграції**

*Високопосадовці Мексики та США заявили, що вони досягли прогресу на екстрених переговорах щодо стримування сплеску міграції, який став головним головним болем для президента США Джо Байдена. Держсекретар Ентоні Блінкен здійснив незвичайний різдвяний візит до Мехіко, Про його односторонню поїздку було оголошено після того, як Д.*

*Байден поговорив телефоном з президентом Мексики Андресом Мануелем Лопесом Обрадором, який більше двох годин зустрівся з Е. Блінкеном та іншими високопосадовцями. Мексиканські лідери розповіли делегації США про нові заходи, які вони вживають. Кількість людей, які намагаються в'їхати до США без дозволу, цього місяця зросла приблизно до 10 000 на день, що майже вдвічі більше, ніж до пандемії. Лопес Обрадор заявив, що Мексика погодилася принаймні тимчасово приймати мігрантів, які прагнуть перебратися до США.*

<https://www.news24.com/news24/world/news/important-agreements-were-reached-us-mexico-see-headway-on-migration-20231228>

U.S. and Mexican officials hold talks on migrant surge

US and Mexican officials are working to address migration.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Mexico for talks on the issue.

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador says agreements were reached.

Top Mexican and US officials said that they made progress on Wednesday in emergency talks on curbing a surge in migration, which has become a major headache for US President Joe Biden as he enters an election year.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken paid an unusual Christmas week visit to Mexico City as the rival Republican Party presses Biden for a migration crackdown in return for agreeing in Congress to one of his key priorities - support for Ukraine.

The day trip was abruptly announced last week after Biden spoke by telephone with Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who met for more than two hours with Blinken and other top US officials including Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas.

Lopez Obrador, writing afterward on X, formerly known as Twitter, said that "important agreements were reached for the benefit of our peoples and nations", without elaborating.

A senior Biden administration official said that Mexican leaders told the US delegation about new measures they are taking including cracking down on smugglers who are putting migrants on buses or trains to the border.

"We were really impressed by some of the new actions that Mexico is taking, and we have seen in recent days a pretty significant reduction in border crossings," the official told reporters on customary condition of anonymity on Blinken's airplane back to Washington.

The official, however, said the US knows to "never draw conclusions based on day-to-day fluctuations" on migrant numbers and said the countries would stay in close contact in 2024, an election year in both.

The number of people seeking to enter the US without authorisation had shot up this month to around 10 000 a day, nearly double the number from before the pandemic.

Few migrants are Mexicans, with the bulk in recent years fleeing Central America, which has been ravaged by extreme poverty, rampant violence and failing crops worsened by climate change.

There has also been an uptick in migrants heading through Mexico from Haiti, which has been devastated by gang violence and a lack of a functioning government, and Venezuela, where basic goods have fallen in short supply after years of economic chaos.

Lopez Obrador said before the meeting that Mexico was "helping a lot" on addressing migration but that the solution was job creation.

The leftist leader said:

People leave their towns out of necessity and there's a lot of economic and social crisis in the world. A new caravan of hundreds if not thousands of people has been heading by foot toward the US border since the past weekend.

"Nobody's going to stop migration," activist and caravan organizer Luis Garcia Villagran said, complaining that migrants were being treated as "currency" by the US and Mexican governments.

"A budget of billions of dollars is being settled right now to mitigate migration. With all the gold and money in the world they cannot stop people seeking better living conditions," he told reporters in southern Mexico.

US border authorities have been so overwhelmed that they have suspended several legal crossings to focus on processing undocumented migrants.

Reopening those crossings "is a priority for us" given the close trade links between the two countries, Mexican Foreign Secretary Alicia Barcena told reporters after the talks, which she described as "excellent".

Mexico, under agreements with both Biden and his Republican predecessor Donald Trump, has agreed at least temporarily to take in migrants seeking to cross into the US.

The package proposed by Biden to Congress would also fund 1 300 additional Border Patrol agents to help address migration.

The Biden administration has warned that without a deal, Ukraine will soon run out of weapons needed to repel the nearly two-year-old Russian invasion, and on Wednesday announced its final package of arms under existing authorisation.

Republican hardliners have shown little sign of compromise.

Trump, the frontrunner for the Republican nomination to challenge Biden next November, is again campaigning on stridently anti-immigrant rhetoric, accusing foreigners of "poisoning the blood of our country", language that critics pointed out was similar to that of Adolf Hitler.

Andrew Rudman, director of the Mexico Institute at the Wilson Centre in Washington, said that politicians around the world wanted a "short-term solution" to the long-standing issue of migration.

"The Biden administration wants to show for its own domestic political reasons that they're doing everything they possibly can," he said.

"There is no magic wand."