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## FEATURED Q&A

# What's at Stake for Migrants in the U.S. Election?



Border and migration policy is set to be a central issues in the upcoming electoral contest between U.S. President Joe Biden and his challenger, former President Donald Trump. // File Photo: The White House.

**Q U.S. President Joe Biden and his rival, former President Donald Trump, made separate visits to the U.S.-Mexico border on Feb. 29. Migration has become a major campaign issue as record numbers of migrants have arrived at the border in recent months. What is at stake in this year's presidential election in the United States for migration policy and for migrants? What major policies are Biden and Trump likely to push related to migration? How much will the two candidates' actions on migration affect their campaigns and who wins the election in November?**

**A Richard Kiy, president & CEO of the Institute of the Americas:** "With historic numbers of migrants arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border and most seeking asylum, migration and border security issues have become major political flash-points in the upcoming election, evidenced by recent visits to the border by President Biden and former President Trump. Trump's incendiary, anti-immigrant rhetoric is further dividing voters on a fundamental issue that has historically been a bedrock of American values: immigration. A recent national poll by FAU-Mainstreet Research finds that 42 percent of Americans now feel that immigration has weakened American culture. The same poll also finds that 50 percent do not trust our immigration courts. While there is consensus that immigration reform is needed, the issue remains a political football and has long served special interests on both sides of the aisle, evidenced by recent House Republicans' efforts to kill passage of proposed bipartisan immigration reform legislation. If Trump is elected, we can expect him to follow through on campaign promises

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## TODAY'S NEWS

### POLITICAL

## Former Honduran First Lady Says Presidential Candidacy Likely

Ana García Hernández, the former first lady of Honduras, announced Tuesday her plan to run for the presidency next year despite her husband's recent conviction.

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### ECONOMIC

## February Inflation in Brazil Exceeded Estimates

Consumer prices in Brazil rose more than anticipated in February and reached the highest monthly figures in a year, according to government statistics agency IBGE.

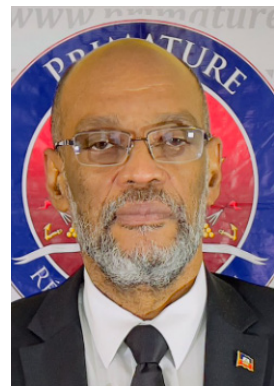
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### POLITICAL

## Violences Pauses in Haiti Amidst Uncertainty

Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, saw gang attacks on government offices and police pause on Tuesday following the news of Prime Minister Ariel Henry's resignation. The country's political future remains uncertain.

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Henry // File Photo: @DrArielHenry via X.

## POLITICAL NEWS

## Violence in Haiti Calms Amidst Political Uncertainty

Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, settled into an uneasy calm on Tuesday as the nation braced for political change, with a cessation of gang attacks on government offices and police following the resignation of Prime Minister Ariel Henry late Monday night, Reuters reported. Local Haitian news outlet Le Nouvelliste reported Tuesday that the besieged main CPS cargo port had reopened and there were signs of a withdrawal of armed gang members from the capital's airport, although it remained closed, Reuters reported. Gang violence had previously been rapidly escalating across the Caribbean nation, with gangs breaking into the country's two largest prisons to free some 4,000 inmates and attacking the country's main international airport, preventing the return of Henry, who had been away on a trip abroad. Caribbean leaders and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met in Jamaica on Monday and agreed to a joint proposal to establish a transitional council to oversee the formation of a new government in Haiti, with Henry's resignation following shortly thereafter. U.S. officials said Tuesday that members of the transitional council would be appointed in the next two days, Reuters reported. Michel Boisvert was serving as Haiti's acting prime minister while Henry was abroad last week, and U.S. State Department officials confirmed Tuesday that he is willing to facilitate a transition, Reuters reported. Officials in Kenya announced Tuesday that plans for a deployment of 1,000 Kenyan police officers to Haiti to help fight gangs is on hold until the Caribbean nation can form a new government, The New York Times reported. Kenya had previously agreed to leading the U.N.-backed, multinational peacekeeping force with the former prime minister, but Henry's resignation from office Monday night has resulted in widespread uncertainty about the nation's political future. U.S. authorities also announced today that an elite Marine unit would be sent to Haiti to help

secure the U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince, The Washington Post reported.

## ECONOMIC NEWS

## El Salvador Approves Reform on Foreign Money Income Taxes

El Salvador's Legislative Assembly on Tuesday approved a reform that would do away with income taxes on money from abroad, including money flows such as remittances and investments in companies, Reuters reported. The ambitious reform signals an attempt by Salvadoran lawmakers to attract more foreign investment in the Central American nation. Previously, incomes equal to or greater than \$150,000 were taxed at 30 percent at the time of entry into the country. Congress voted 69 to zero to cut the tax rates, with five abstentions, according to a post by the legislature on the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, Bloomberg News reported.

## Inflation in Brazil Exceeded Estimates for February

Consumer prices in Brazil rose slightly more than anticipated in February and reached the highest monthly figure in one year, government statistics agency IBGE said Tuesday, Reuters reported. The IPCA index measured inflation at 0.83 percent in February, the highest rate recorded since February 2023 when inflation reached 0.84 percent. The increase was driven by education prices, as well as an increase in food and beverage prices. An expansion in exports from Latin America's largest economy resulted, last month, in sugar exports climbing 162 percent and coffee shipments shooting up 77 percent, Reuters reported. Tuition for schools and universities, which rose 4.98 percent between January and February, accounted for a significant portion of the change shown

## NEWS BRIEFS

## Former Honduran First Lady Announces Potential Presidential Candidacy

Honduras's former first lady, Ana García Hernández, announced on Tuesday her plan to run for the presidency next year, the Associated Press reported. Her husband, former President Juan Orlando Hernández, was convicted on Friday in a federal court in Manhattan of conspiring with drug traffickers moving cocaine into the United States. The former president was arrested in his home in Tegucigalpa in 2022, three months after leaving office.

## Inflation in Argentina Slowed During February

The monthly inflation rate in Argentina decelerated to 13.2 percent in February, a much-needed boon to the nation with the world's fastest-rising prices, Reuters reported Wednesday. The figures, released Tuesday, indicate a slowdown from January, when prices rose 20.6 percent and December, when they were up by 25.5 percent. Argentina President Javier Milei's pro-austerity policies have included reductions in state spending, trimming welfare programs and subsidy cuts for utilities and transportation.

## Czech Energy Firm Solek Plans Construction of New Solar Plant in Chile

Solek, a Czech solar energy group, announced Tuesday that it plans to build a 95.2 MW solar facility in Chile's central Valparaíso region, Renewables Now reported. The plant, known as Leyda, is Solek's largest project to date and is expected to span 120 hectares and produce 185 GWh of clean electricity annually, as well as eliminate 71,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year. A power purchase agreement for 15 years is already in place with ENEL Generación Chile.

by the data. The headline inflation, measured across 12 months, decreased from a rate of 4.51 percent, recorded in January, to 4.50 percent. Economists initially expected a rate of 4.44 percent. Next week, the central bank's monetary policy committee will hold a meeting to set the benchmark interest rate, which is currently at 11.25 percent. "The inflation picture remains benign in Brazil, and we still believe the headline rate will continue to fall during the second quarter," Andres Abadia, Chief Latam Economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, wrote in a note to clients, Reuters reported.

## BUSINESS NEWS

# Bayer Rejects Claim by Brazilian Farmers Over Royalties

Germany's Bayer rejected on Tuesday the claim made by Brazilian soybean farmers that their country's top court finds the company liable for \$2 billion in royalties, Reuters reported on Wednesday. According to a statement made by Aprosoja-MT, a state farmers lobby in Brazil's Mato Grosso region, the Supreme Court ordered Bayer to pay back farmers royalties regarding two patents of a genetically modified organism that farmers had been paying to Bayer since 2018. The GMO, known as Intacta RR2 PRO, was first developed by Monsanto and later purchased by Bayer. Bayer said in a statement that the court's decision affirms that the company must present a procedural guarantee to the court in the event it loses the case in the future, Reuters reported. These statements constitute only the latest round of disputes in a protracted legal battle between the company and farmers that has lasted over two decades and involves the extensions of patents. Brazil's Supreme Court ordered Bayer to return \$252 million in GMO soy royalties one year ago, Reuters reported last year. Mato Grosso farmers sued Monsanto seven years ago in an attempt to cancel its patent protections of the same genetically modified seed, Reuters reported.

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of sweeping migrant raids, giant camps and speedy mass deportations, although there will be court challenges. Biden, in turn, calls for ongoing bipartisan efforts for "tough but fair" immigration reform, something that is desperately needed. Migration is not going away. So, more must be done by the U.S. to promote expanded trade, investment, rule of law and job creation across Latin America & the Caribbean. APEP is a start. The majority of migrants, after all, would prefer to stay put where they're from. Most risk their lives and migrate because they have no other choice."

**A Robert Munks, senior Americas analyst at Verisk Maplecroft:** "Migration has become a leading campaign issue, still behind the economy in voters' priorities but heavily exploited by the Republican camp to chip away at President Biden's vulnerability on the issue—and perceived inability to control the southern border. So regardless of whichever candidate emerges victorious in November, campaign promises will need to be fulfilled, meaning that changes to migration policy are inevitable in 2025. Former president Donald Trump's approach would be uncompromising and immediate. The construction of migrant holding camps and the attempted mass deportation of undocumented migrants would likely generate headlines from day one of his administration. A definitive end to initiatives to regularize the status of the remaining 'dreamer' generation would be likely, as would the restoration of the 2019 'Remain in Mexico' program and further border wall construction. But all of this would run into legal challenges. Biden would likely opt for subtler changes to current policies, seeking to finally achieve routes to citizenship for illegal residents—such as the remaining undocumented 'dreamers'—and improving processes for issuing visas. Entrenched positions on approaches to migration in the United States mean that the two candidates' policies will not affect core

votes on either side. But with the issue firmly center-stage, it could prove to be a pivotal issue among many swing voters in the six or seven states where the election's outcome will most likely be decided, most notably in Arizona and Nevada. For that reason, expect both candidates to seek more photo opportunities at points along the southern border as the campaigning intensifies."

**A Vincent T. Gawronski, professor of political science at Birmingham-Southern College:** "The last substantive comprehensive immigration reform was the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). President Ronald Reagan signed IRCA because it bundled increased border enforcement, legalization of status for unauthorized migrants and market demands for migrant labor. He said immigrants are '...one of the most important sources of America's greatness.' However, IRCA did not address the root causes of forced migration. Over the next four decades, neoliberal policies, economic crises, government corruption, disasters, political repression, human insecurity and violence linked to gang activity and drug trafficking forced millions of people to migrate. Just days before the 9/11 attacks, Mexico's President Vicente Fox visited President George W. Bush on a three-day state visit. They agreed to address the root causes of migration with economic opportunity programs in Mexico and reform the immigration system '...to ensure it is safe, orderly, legal and dignified.' Increasing numbers of migrants from countries outside the Americas are seeking asylum due to wars, conflict and persecution. Climate change will increase migration pressures. Highly polarized politics make immigration reform impossible. If Donald Trump becomes POTUS again, draconian deportation policies and a highly militarized U.S.-Mexico border can be expected. Trump will never address the root causes of forced migration. If Joe Biden wins a second term and Democrats control the House and the

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Senate, comprehensive immigration reform is likely. Biden must work with the new female President of Mexico (Claudia Sheinbaum or Xóchitl Gálvez) and the Central American governments. People are forced to migrate when life is unlivable.”

**A** **Gretchen Kuhner, director of the Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración A.C.:** “President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump have opposing perspectives and have implemented vastly different migration policies during their administrations. Biden understands that he must guarantee access to asylum and that migration is positive for the economy. In contrast, Trump utilizes migration in his political discourse to manipulate his base into believing that migrants represent a threat to the United States, contrary to evidence. Regrettably, Biden has responded to the Republican ‘unsafe border’ narrative by proposing legislative changes that would limit access to asylum, particularly along the U.S.-Mexico border. Ironically, Trump won’t support the restrictive legislation because he doesn’t want Biden to have a ‘legislative success,’ demonstrating that Trump’s interest is in campaign rhetoric, not the actual issues. If Biden wins, he will be able to continue with the longer-term actions such as his root cause development program for Central America, humanitarian parole programs, as well as executive decisions that have extended TPS, and DACA, barring litigation. If Trump wins, he has threatened more walls, massive detention and deportation, travel bans against certain nationalities and support for state level participation in enforcement. Unfortunately for Mexico, both presidents have pressured the government to deter migrants and asylum seekers from reaching the Mexico-U.S. border, leading to brutal enforcement actions that have left hundreds of thousands of families trapped in Mexico, vulnerable to smugglers, kidnapping and gender-based violence. Although the U.S. presidents have different policies,

the impact in Mexico has been devastating under both administrations and the Mexican government has done very little to improve the situation.”

**A** **Francisco Alba Hernandez, professor at El Colegio de Mexico:** “There’s no question that migration and borders are going to be an important part of the political discussion. The migration issue will probably be a key issue in the campaigns. Explicitly or implicitly, the debate is going to revolve, perhaps without saying it, on Mexican migration and migrants transiting through Mexico on their way to the United States. Trump’s policies are already known. He is going to propose, openly, a sort of militarization of the Southern border and seek to further the path already set out during his presidency: build the wall and expel more than just a few migrants already settled in the United States. Biden’s policies, coincidentally, will depart from the initial position, taken at the start of his administration, of a more welcoming America. His final positions may be a soft replica of Trump’s. An indirect casualty of the political discussion on migration and of the above migration positions and policies will probably be the Mexico-U.S. bilateral relationship. There is a risk that the president of Mexico might be tempted to enter directly and openly into U.S. politics during the final months of his administration. That possible Mexican intervention on U.S. politics might trigger an open conflict. Domestically, I do not think that Biden’s recent migration postures will affect him, particularly because he does not have much credibility on this matter, and he will remain vulnerable on immigration. On the contrary, Trump’s postures will probably play in his favor because of a greater credibility. As one might say: ‘and the winner is... Trump.’”

*The Advisor welcomes comments on its Q&A section. Readers can write editor Gene Kuleta.*

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