

# Guatemala Human Rights Commission / USA

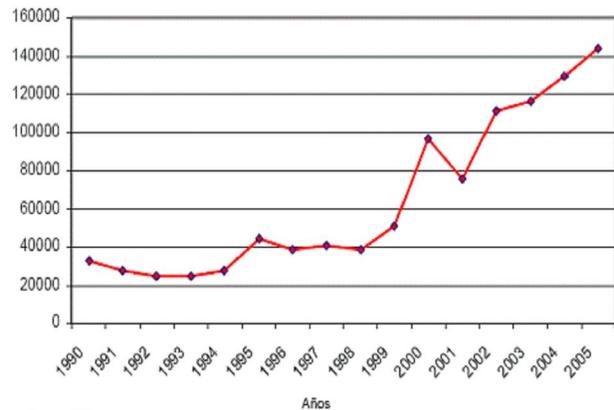
## Fact Sheet: Immigration



The United States has:

- ❖ tripled in Latino population since 1980 to more than 45 million in 2008.
- ❖ approximately 12 million undocumented immigrants in 2009.
- ❖ about 1.2 million Guatemalans in 2007 and 1.6 million in 2008, with an estimated 60% undocumented.

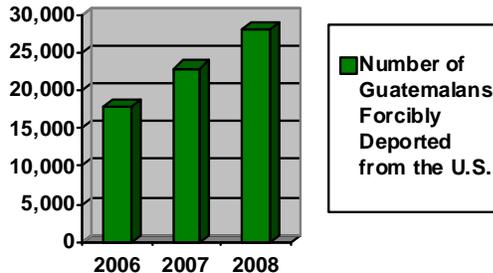
Gráfica No. 4 TENDENCIA DE LA MIGRACION DURANTE EL PERÍODO 1990-2005\*



The graph above, “Migration Trends, 1990-2005,” portrays the additional number of Guatemalan immigrants to the U.S. per year. These numbers are now slightly declining, most likely due to the current economic crisis.

### Documentation and Deportation

As seen in the graph to the right, the number of Guatemalans forcibly deported from the U.S. is on the rise, with 18 thousand in 2006, 23 thousand in 2007, and 28 thousand in 2008. Several controversial raids by immigration authorities have recently occurred, including:



- ❖ Baltimore City, Maryland, January 23, 2007: In the parking lot of a 7-11, 24 “day workers” were arrested after being offered employment by disguised agents. Video surveillance cameras show Latinos, both workers and bystanders, racially targeted while others are ignored.
- ❖ Postville, Iowa, May 12, 2008: At the Agriprocessors meatpacking plant, 389 workers, the majority of them Guatemalan, were taken into custody for falsified documentation and the misuse of Social Security numbers, considered a federal crime. The sudden incarceration of more than 10% of the town’s population left half the school’s children at home the next day, as their parents were unexpectedly retained.



Founded in 1982, the Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA (GHRC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, humanitarian organization that monitors, documents, and reports on the human rights situation in Guatemala, advocates for survivors of human rights abuses in Guatemala, and works toward positive, systemic change.

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- ❖ Laurel, Mississippi, August 28, 2008: At Howard Industries, immigration authorities took 600 people into custody, making it the largest raid in U.S. history. Citizens of an historically racist town, the non-Hispanic employees cheered as they watched their colleagues being escorted away. Meanwhile, the migrants' 300 children under the age of five and 187 school-age children were left



- without caretakers or notification that their families wouldn't be coming home.
- ❖ Greenville, South Carolina, October 7, 2008: At Raeford's Columbia Farms chicken plant, 330 people were arrested, many of them also Guatemalan. Testimonies of town's citizens and plant workers all agree that the plant knowingly hired undocumented workers and helped them forge documents.

### Reform Demands of the Migrant Population Supported by the GHRC

- ❖ An immediate halt to disruptive and ineffective raids, retentions, and deportations until Congress's approval of an integrative immigration policy.
- ❖ A clear division between the duties of local authorities and those of federal immigration authorities.
- ❖ The suspension of the E-Verify Employment Eligibility Verification System, which presents serious problems, including database errors resulting in legal immigrants and U.S. citizens being denied work, high costs for small businesses, and misuse of the system by some employers.
- ❖ Respect for immigrant workers' rights and an end to discrimination against immigrant workers

### Remittances

- ❖ 1/3 of Guatemalans receive financial assistance from remittances sent by family members in other countries.
- ❖ 97.7 % of these remittances come from the United States, and 63% of their beneficiaries are women.
- ❖ In 2008, Guatemalans sent \$4.1 billion home to their families.
- ❖ The increase in U.S. remittances to Guatemala has declined to 4.5% in 2008, the lowest growth since 1999.
- ❖ In 2008 remittances from abroad contributed to between 9 and 10 percent of Guatemala's GDP.
- ❖ Moderate poverty in Guatemala decreased 5% from 2000 to 2006, but the number of people in extreme poverty remains relatively unchanged.

