

Opinion of U.S. Improving

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Washington, DC - As Felipe Calderón's term as Mexico's president draws to a close, Mexicans continue to strongly back his policy of deploying the military to combat the country's powerful drug cartels, finds a new survey from the Pew Global Attitudes Project. Eight-in-ten say this is the right course, a level of support that has remained remarkably constant since 2009.

The survey, conducted face-to-face with 1,200 adults from across the country between March 20 and April 2, finds support for Calderón's strategy continues despite limited confidence that the government is winning the drug war, and widespread concerns about its costs. Just 47% believe progress is being made against drug traffickers, virtually identical to the 45% who held this opinion in 2011. Three-in-ten today say the government is actually losing ground against the cartels, while 19% see no change in the stand-off between the authorities and crime syndicates.

At the same time, the public is uneasy about the moral cost of the drug war: 74% say human rights violations by the military and police are a very big problem. But concern about rights abuses coexist with continued worries about drug-related violence and crime – both of which strong majorities describe as pressing issues in Mexico.

When asked who is to blame for the drug violence in their country – Mexico or the United States – a majority of Mexicans (61%) say both countries bear responsibility. About one-in-five (22%) say the U.S. is mostly to blame, while 14% point to Mexico. The number of Mexicans blaming both countries is up 10 percentage points compared with 2009, when the question was first asked.

Overall, a majority of Mexicans say they have a positive opinion of the U.S. Attitudes toward the U.S. have improved since the passage in 2010 of the highly publicized Arizona immigration law, but have yet to return to levels seen before the law's enactment.

Although many Mexicans believe life is better for those who emigrate to the U.S., most say they would not move to the U.S., even if they had the means and opportunity to do so. Among the substantial minority (38%) who would move, half say they would emigrate without authorization (19% of the total population). These attitudes are unchanged since last year.

For the full report, visit <http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/06/20/mexicans-back-military-campaign-against-cartels/>. The report is for immediate release and is available on our website at <http://pewglobal.org/>.

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