

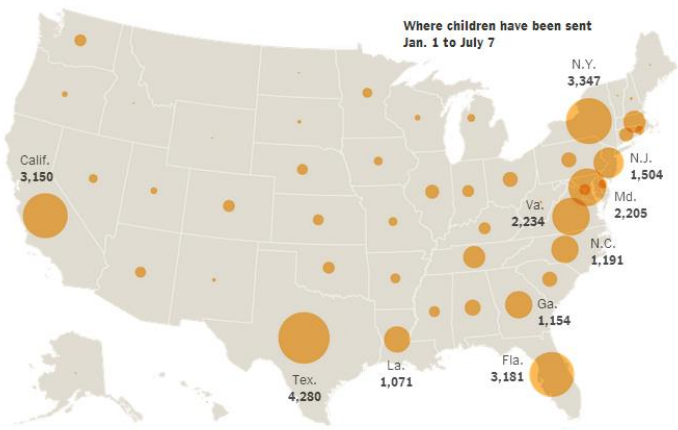
Q. and A.

Children at the Border

By HAEYOUN PARK **UPDATED** August 7, 2014

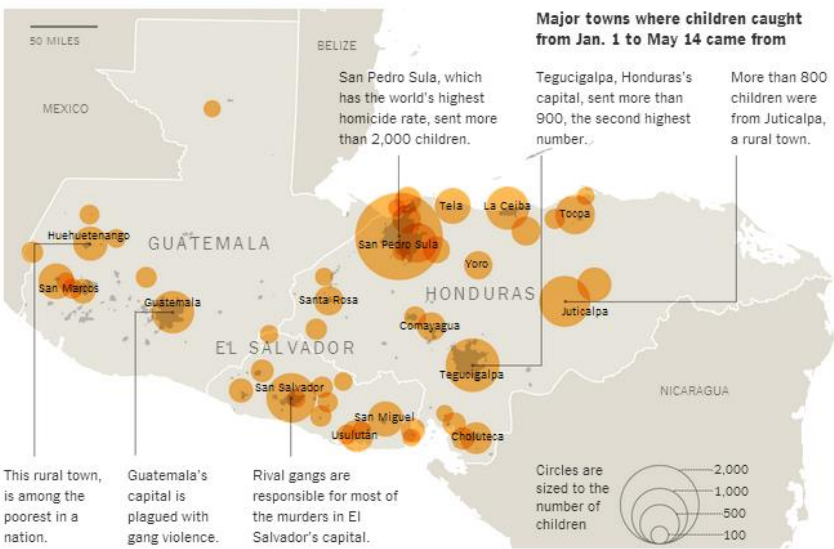
Nearly 63,000 children have been caught crossing the United States border alone since October — double last year’s number. President Obama has called the surge an “urgent humanitarian situation,” and lawmakers have called for hearings on the crisis.

Q. Where are the children going?



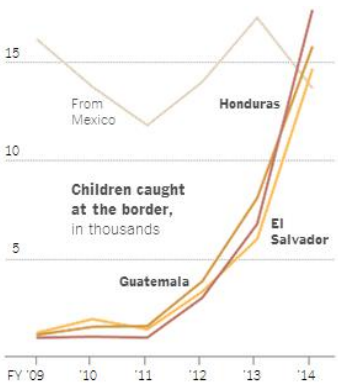
Since Jan. 1, more than 30,000 unaccompanied minors have been placed with sponsors, usually parents or relatives. They remain there while their cases are being processed. The majority of the children are in states where immigrants have traditionally settled, like Texas, New York, California and Florida. A large number have also been sent to Maryland, Virginia, Georgia and Louisiana.

Q. Where are the migrant children coming from?



More than three-quarters of the children minors are from mostly poor and violent towns in three countries: El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Children from Mexico, once the largest group, now make up less than a quarter of the total. A small number come from 43 other countries.

Q. When did the surge start?



The number of unaccompanied minors began to surge in 2012, mainly driven by an influx of children from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

Q. What caused the sudden increase in unaccompanied minors?

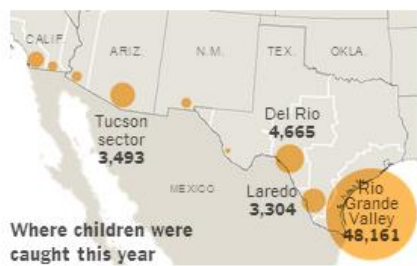


Although the reasons tend to depend on the child's home country, poverty, violence and family reunification are often cited as the main reasons. Honduras has the world's highest murder rate, while the Guatemalan children are from extremely poor rural areas. The Department of Homeland Security has acknowledged that because so many minors caught in the past few years were reunited with their families here and not immediately deported, many Central Americans were left with the perception that the United States was allowing children to stay.

Q. Why are the children not deported immediately?

Under an anti-trafficking statute adopted with bipartisan support in 2008, minors from Central America cannot be deported immediately and must be given a court hearing before they are deported. A United States policy allows Mexican minors caught crossing the border to be sent back quickly.

Q. Where are the children crossing the border?



Of the children who were apprehended, more than three quarters were caught crossing the Rio Grande Valley in Texas.

Q. How old are they? Are they mostly boys or girls?

Many of them are boys between ages 15 and 17, and the proportion who are girls and younger children has been increasing in the last year.

Q. What happens to the children after they are caught?

Immigration proceedings are started. The Department of Health and Human Services gives each child a health screening and immunizations, and assigns a short-term shelter. Children stay in a shelter an average of 35 days. Most are then placed with a family member or sponsor in the United States, where they remain during the process.

Q. Where are the shelters?

There are about 100 permanent shelters located mostly near the United States-Mexico border, which are run by the Department of Health and Human Services. But because of the sudden influx of children, three temporary shelters with a total of about 3,000 beds were opened on military bases in California, Oklahoma and Texas.

Q. What is being done to address the problem?

Mr. Obama urged Congress on July 8 to authorize \$3.7 billion in emergency funds to bolster border security, hasten deportations and deal with the humanitarian crisis in Central America. Congressional Republicans pushed back, saying that the border crisis is a result of Mr. Obama’s policy problems and lax enforcement at the border. Republican lawmakers are pushing to amend the 2008 law, which currently makes it difficult to return the children quickly to their home countries.

Sources: Department of Homeland Security, including an internal document first obtained by Breitbart News; Department of Health and Human Services; Washington Office on Latin America;; Pew Research Center; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; The WorldPop Project