News



A large crowd gathers as Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum speaks during a rally at Zocalo Square in Mexico City March 9, 2025. She had convened the event to announce retaliatory measures to tariffs imposed on Mexico five days earlier by U.S. President Donald Trump, but Trump lifted those tariffs until April 2, prompting Sheinbaum to rebrand the rally a celebration. (OSV News/Reuters/Quetzalli Nicte-Ha)



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The Mexican bishops' conference reiterated a call for unity as the country deals with threats from U.S. President Donald Trump, who promises to impose 25% tariffs on Mexican exports if migrants continue crossing the U.S. border and fentanyl is not stamped out.

The bishops also called on Mexico to confront "the culture of death and throwaway culture," as violence convulses swaths of the country.

Speaking in a video released March 10, the bishops raised the contents of a February statement on national unity, saying, "We cannot help but consider that the policy of the new president of the United States of America towards Mexico in particular, and towards the world in general, is worrying."

The bishops pointed out Trump's demands: combating drug cartels, addressing migration through Mexico and dealing with economic issues the U.S. president considers unfavorable "according to his criteria."

"Each of these issues can be resolved in a climate of unity among the different Mexican political forces to foster respectful dialogue and prudent openness toward the U.S. government to agree on mutual collaboration," the bishops said.

"We Mexicans are called to work together in the face of adversity, summoned by our different political authorities, starting with the president's office, to overcome division and social confrontation, to continue with the dialogues in the construction of peace, to promote greater investments for economic development with better

working conditions."

The bishops' admonishment for unity followed President Claudia Sheinbaum convening a mass rally March 9 in central Mexico City, where she planned to announce retaliatory measures to tariffs imposed on Mexico five days earlier. Trump lifted those tariffs — on both Canada and Mexico — until April 2, prompting Sheinbaum to rebrand the rally a celebration.

"We are neighbors. We have the responsibility to collaborate and coordinate," Sheinbaum said, continuing, "We cannot cede up our sovereignty nor can our people be affected by decisions made by foreign governments or hegemons."

She added, "I am sure that with information and respectful dialogue we can always achieve a respectful relationship. It has been like this so far."

The Mexican President has deftly dealt with Trump. She objects to some of his assertions — such as the White House stating the Mexican government maintained an "intolerable alliance" with drug cartels — doesn't criticize Trump and always offers dialogue. But she quietly agrees with many of Trump's demands, too.

Mexico has detained more than 10,000 high-impact criminals, she said, decommissioned synthetic drug labs and sent 29 drug cartel bosses to the United States. Mexico has also stopped record numbers of migrants.

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Preliminary figures from U.S. Customs and Border Protection show just 8,326 migrant encounters with U.S. officials in February, the lowest total ever recorded.

That low figure "depends substantially on Mexico," Jesuit Fr. Brian Strassburger, who works with migrants in northern Tamaulipas state and the Rio Grande Valley, told OSV News. "They have been moving people to the south, keeping them in the south and not letting them go north." Shelters in his part of the border have "gone into hibernation" he added.

Mexico opened shelters along the border to receive Mexican deportees. Those facilities are empty, Strassburger said, because returnees are being sent to southern Mexico "to make it hard" for them to return to the U.S. border.

Sheinbaum's approval rating has increased since taking office in October, reaching 85% in the latest survey by the newspaper El Financiero. Analysts described the rally, which brought partisans in from all corners of the country, as a show of strength and a longtime practice in Mexican politics during times of crisis.

The bishops' video cautioned, however, "We must accept and recognize that the real enemy is in our own country, where we need true national unity to overcome our serious internal problems that have not been properly addressed for years and are becoming increasingly worse."

Violence ranks among the problems with atrocities occurring regularly, but failing to generate national outrage. A group of searchers, who scour the countryside for clues on their missing kin, discovered three ovens used as a crematorium on March 5 in western Jalisco state, along with charred human remains.

Mexico's bishops issued a March 5 statement, decrying, "the culture of death" in Mexico, "which injures the heart of our society." They called for the "formation of consciousness."

"These manifestations of death, which have been taking hold in our country, threaten human dignity, dehumanize our coexistence and leave a deep wound in people's consciences," the statement said.

"The culture of death and disposable culture has permeated in various ways: from the decriminalization and promotion of abortion, to the crisis of uncontrolled violence, organized crime and the scourge of drug trafficking that has turned entire regions into war zones."

The bishops continued, "Let us be messengers of hope and life, rehabilitating those who have fallen into the clutches of crime. Human dignity has been seriously damaged by kidnapping, extortion and violence. Furthermore, at this time, we must be messengers of hope and life with migrants, as the Holy Father exhorts."