

DETERRENCE: HOW HAS IT IMPACTED BORDER RELATED DEATHS?

BRIEFING 3 for the Expert Panel

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**BORDER CROSSING
OBSERVATORY**
BORDERS, CRIME, JUSTICE

When deterrence measures fail to deter, border crossers face significant additional risks because of their illegal status. (Weber and Pickering, 2011)

Deterrence and Border Control

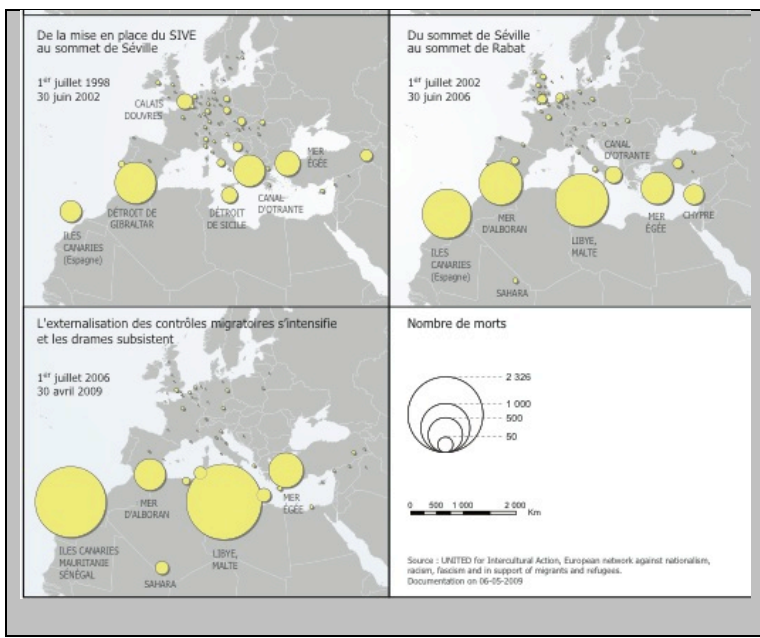
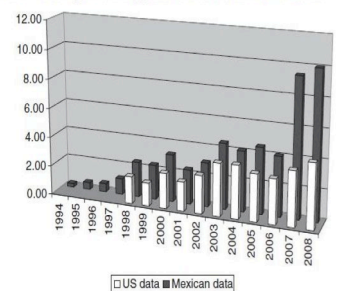
Deterrence has predominantly been used for the purposes of border control to limit the numbers of people making irregular border crossings. It has not only been applied at the physical border but in a range of other 'border sites' both pre embarkation and post arrival: all are sites at which deaths can and do occur. This briefing focuses on its use at the physical border. Deterrence of irregular border crossings does not necessarily decrease border related deaths. Evidence suggests in some contexts it displaces deaths to another site and/or changes the demographics of who dies (Weber and Pickering, 2011).

Deterrence and Border Related Deaths

Significant empirical research, including that conducted by the US Government has found a relationship between deterrence policies aimed at preventing irregular border crossing and an increased number of border deaths. For example when Operation Hold the Line and Operation Gatekeeper were announced by President Clinton it was always contended that border control would rely on the increased risk of death in environmentally hazardous conditions to deter crossings. Instead migrants were effectively 'funnelled' into the most dangerous crossings and deaths dramatically increased (Nevins 2010).

Research has found a symbiotic relationship between increased border control, the role of organised criminal networks and increasingly risky border crossings (see refs below). The data demonstrates that as apprehensions along the US-Mexico border increased, the risks taken by those crossing increased. In Europe the increasing number of deaths on the Mediterranean have been tracked by UNITED and Migreurop (below diagram). From this data deaths can occur at a number of crossing points and are increasingly dispersed. While recent efforts by FRONTEX have seen a reduction in Mediterranean crossings there has been an increase in land crossings across the Turkey/Greece border and an increase deaths crossing the Evros River and along the coast of Turkey.

Figure 7.1 Deaths per 10,000 apprehensions across US-Mexico border



KEY STUDIES

Carling, J. (2007) 'Migration control and migrant fatalities at the Spanish-African borders', *IMR*, 41(2): 316-43.

Jimenez, M. (2009) *Humanitarian crisis: Migrant deaths at the US-Mexico border*, American Civil Liberties Council of San Diego and Imperial Counties, Mexico's National Commission of Human Rights.

Nevins, J. (2003) 'Thinking out of bounds: A critical analysis of academic and human rights writing on migrant deaths in the US Mexico Border region', *Migraciones Internacionales*, 2(2): 171-90.

Nevins, J. (2010) *Operation Gatekeeper and beyond*, 2nd edition, New York, Routledge.

Spijkerboer, T. (2007) 'The human costs of border control', *European Journal of Migration and Law*, 9: 127-39.

Weber, L. and Pickering, S. (2011) *Globalization and Borders: Death at the Global Frontier*, Palgrave Macmillan.

