

## 80 Mexican migrants deported from Vancouver

Workers promised jobs in Canada had paid up to \$3,000

**Andy Ivens**

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Eighty Mexicans who were cheated into paying up to \$3,000 each on the promise of a job in Canada were deported from Vancouver yesterday after spending a weekend in detention centres.

The migrants arrived at Vancouver International Airport on a flight from Mexico on Friday, but didn't have the proper documentation to enter the country, Canada Border Services Agency spokeswoman Faith St. John confirmed.

"All 80 Mexican nationals were refused admission to Canada," St. John said yesterday.

"It's not unusual to refuse admission to someone, but it is unusual for a group in such large numbers to come on one flight."

Juan José Salgado, deputy consul-general for the Mexican Consulate in Vancouver, said the migrants, mainly from the central Mexican state of Hidalgo, were hoodwinked.

"A person in Mexico told these guys that there were opportunities for working in Canada and they had to pay some money to come to Canada," he said.

"I think these guys paid between \$1,500 and \$3,000 for the trip and the possibility of a job here in Canada," said Salgado.

The average per-capita income in Mexico is \$12,500.

While illegal migration from Mexico into the U.S. is a well-known problem, Salgado said: "This is new in the case of Canada."

"They had passports, so they thought everything was OK," he said.

Salgado said a Mexican tour operator "made all the arrangements through legitimate tourist agencies."

"When they arrived in Vancouver, Immigration [authorities] realized they didn't come to Vancouver as tourists and they were cheated by somebody in Mexico," he said, adding it appears the migrants were told someone would contact them in Vancouver with the proper documents to work here.

An investigation by the authorities in Mexico is under way, said Salgado.

The Mexican and Canadian governments are working on programs to bring temporary workers to Canada, but these migrants did not go through proper channels, he said.

[aivens@png.canwest.com](mailto:aivens@png.canwest.com)

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