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[Mexican President Calderón: 'Illegal immigration is not a crime in Mexico.'](#)

By [Andrea Nill](#) on May 20th, 2010 at 7:14 pm

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Yesterday, on CNN, host Wolf Blitzer probed Mexican Felipe Calderón about his country's own immigration laws. Blitzer quoted a Washington Times [article](#) entitled "Mexico's illegals laws tougher than Arizona's," which states that "under the Mexican law, illegal immigration is a felony, punishable by up to two years in prison." The Washington Times then quotes Rep. Steve King (R-IA), Sen. Jon Kyl (R-AZ), and Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX) calling Calderón "arrogant and hypocritical." However, the Washington Times and its GOP sources are relying on dated information. As Calderón informed Blitzer last night, Mexico has enacted its own immigration reform:

BLITZER: I read an article in The Washington Times the other day. I'm going to read a paragraph to you and you tell me if this is true or not true. ... "Under the Mexican law, illegal immigration is a felony punishable by up to two years in prison. Immigrants who are deported and attempt to reenter can be imprisoned for 10 years. Visa violators can be sentenced to six year terms. Mexicans who help illegal immigrants are considered criminals." Is that true?

CALDERON: **It was true, but it is not anymore.** We derogate or we erased that part of the law...Not anymore, since one year ago. And that is the reason why we are trying to establish our own comprehensive public policy talking about, for instance, immigrants coming from Central America. [...]

BLITZER: **Immigration is not a crime, you're saying?**

CALDERON: **It's not a crime.**

Watch it:



In 2008, the Mexican Congress voted unanimously with [393 votes](#) to decriminalize undocumented immigration to Mexico. Undocumented immigration is now a minor offense punishable by fines equivalent to about \$475 to \$2,400. However, just because Mexico reformed its laws doesn't mean its law enforcement authorities got the memo. Amnesty International recently issued a [report](#) saying there is still "widespread abuse of migrants in Mexico," largely because [Article 67](#) of Mexico's immigration law still requires law enforcement to demand that foreigners prove their legal presence in the country — which is nearly identical to provisions in Arizona's immigration law. The Interior Department is reportedly working to [repeal Article 67](#) "so that no one can deny or restrict foreigners' access to justice and human rights, whatever their migratory status." However, rather than seeing it as a source of hypocrisy, the U.S. would be wise to examine Mexico's experience with illegal immigration as an extreme, but poignant case study of the deputization of immigration law and what can happen when it turns immigrants into criminals.

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