

NEWS ARTICLES ON KEY ISSUES – JULY 13, 2023

LATEST STATISTICS

U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Encounters FY2019		
USBP	Demographic	Total
Southwest Border	Unaccompanied Alien Child	76,020
	Family Units	473,682
	Single Adult	301,806
Southwest Border Total Apprehensions		851,508

U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Encounters FY2020		
USBP	Demographic	Total
Southwest Border	Unaccompanied Alien Child	30,557
	Family Units	52,230
	Single Adult	317,864
Southwest Border Total Apprehensions		400,651

U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Encounters FY2021		
USBP	Demographic	Total
Southwest Border	Unaccompanied Alien Child	144,834
	Family Units	451,087
	Single Adult	1,063,285
Southwest Border Total Apprehensions		1,659,206

Data Sources:

<https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration/fy-2019> ; <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration-fy2020> ; <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-land-border-encounters>

U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Encounters FY2022														
USBP	Demographic	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	Total
Southwest Border	Unaccompanied Alien Child	12,625	13,745	11,704	8,607	11,779	13,892	11,857	14,420	14,929	13,003	10,993	11,539	149,093
	Family Units	41,556	43,279	49,437	30,419	25,165	34,052	37,082	51,166	44,071	42,851	39,305	44,579	482,962
	Single Adult	104,932	109,991	109,461	108,851	122,226	163,237	154,565	158,784	133,399	125,980	131,476	151,479	1,574,381
Southwest Border Total Apprehensions		159,113	167,015	170,602	147,877	159,063	211,181	203,504	224,370	192,399	181,834	181,774	207,597	2,206,436

Data Source: <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-land-border-encounters>

U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Encounters FY2023											
USBP	Demographic	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	Total	
Southwest Border	Unaccompanied Alien Child	11,652	12,780	11,829	9,034	10,419	11,853	11,064	9,458	88,089	
	Family Units	46,752	49,823	60,818	25,829	25,644	33,269	46,514	44,900	333,549	
	Single Adult	146,728	145,084	149,331	94,648	94,458	118,527	125,501	114,886	989,163	
Southwest Border Total Apprehensions		205,132	207,687	221,978	129,511	130,521	163,649	183,079	169,244	1,410,801	

Data Source: <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-land-border-encounters>

SOUTHERN BORDER MIGRANT CROSSINGS

BEFORE AND AFTER TITLE 42 WAS LIFTED ON THURSDAY, MAY 11, 2023



❖ Sources: <https://www.msnbc.com/morning-joe/watch/drop-in-migrant-border-crossings-after-title-42-causes-anxiety-at-shelters-174397509965> ; <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/border-patrol-encounters-10000-migrants-third-day-numbers-swell-before-title-42-drops>

LATEST NEWS

Number of Migrants Crossing U.S. Southern Border Is Down. But for How Long?

By Eileen Sullivan, *New York Times*, July 3, 2023

- ❖ Since May 12, the average number of daily illegal crossings has been around 3,360, according to Department of Homeland Security data. In March 2022, that average was about 7,100. Officials expected the expiration of the public health rule, known as Title 42, to bring an even higher number of illegal crossings, because they believed the change in policy could cause chaos if migrants who had not been able to seek asylum suddenly could. Those predictions, however, were made before the Biden administration introduced policies devised to blunt a potential spike. The increase in illegal crossings came in the days before the rule expired. But officials say this lull, after nearly two years of higher-than-usual crossings, is not going to last. Determining the factors for increases and decreases in migration is not an exact science. Global migration trends, legal challenges and political changes in the United States and in countries most migrants emigrate from could all have an effect on which way the numbers will go. But here are some informed theories from government officials and outside experts based on the current conditions. Officials believe that migrants have been in a wait-and-see mode since May 12, after the public health rule — which had been in effect for three years — was lifted and policies that restrict access to asylum and create new legal pathways were rolled out. The new policies are already facing legal challenges, creating the possibility that a judge’s ruling could change one of them, pause it temporarily or end it completely. So many migrants are waiting to see whether the policies are here to stay. In central and northern Mexico, migrants can gain access to a government app [CBP One App] on smartphones, where they can apply for an appointment at an official port of entry at the U.S. border. While there have been some technical problems with the app, nearly 30,000 used it to make appointments in May alone, according to recent government data. As of June 14, there were about 104,000 migrants in northern Mexico, about eight hours from the U.S. border, according to an intelligence estimate the Biden administration gave in a recent court filing. And there are more along the route from Colombia, where journeys typically begin in the Western Hemisphere.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/03/us/politics/migrants-mexico-border.html>

Editorial: Greg Abbott’s Rio Grande border barrier won’t float

By the Express-News Editorial Board, *San Antonio Express-News*, June 14, 2023

- ❖ Around the world, buoys act as “road signs” along waterways. They provide critical safety information and mark the safest passage for boats and other watercraft. On Texas’ border with Mexico, these safety tools will soon be used for another purpose — to keep people out. The state plans to install chains of 4-foot-tall orange buoys along the Rio Grande to deter migrants from crossing the river. The barricades will have underwater mesh to try to prevent people from swimming under them. Yet instead of making the river safer, they will likely increase the risk for those desperate enough to cross. The proposal is the latest salvo in Gov. Greg Abbott’s relentless calls to secure the border and fight cartel-driven crime, illegal crossings, smuggling and human trafficking. The state will install its first buoy chain along 1,000 feet of river in Eagle Pass at a cost of at least \$1 million.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/opinion/editorial/article/editorial-abbott-s-border-barrier-won-t-float-18151810.php>

Abbott sued over plan to deploy buoys in the Rio Grande

By Jeremy Wallace, *Austin Bureau*, July 7, 2023

- ❖ Gov. Greg Abbott has his first legal challenge to his plan to deploy a buoy barrier in the Rio Grande near Eagle Pass to stop people from crossing the border. Within hours of the buoys arriving on the shore of the river on Friday [July 7], Eagle Pass resident and kayaking outfitter Jessie F. Fuentes filed a lawsuit in Travis County trying to stop them from ever hitting the water. Fuentes says in his lawsuit that Abbott does not have the legal authority to put the buoys in the water and that they will impede his business, Epi’s Canoe and Kayak Team, which provides boat rentals and guided tours of the river. “EPI will be unable to conduct tours and canoe and kayak sessions in Eagle Pass because of the installation of the buoys,” the Fuentes suit states. Laredo attorney Carlos E. Flores, who is representing Fuentes, said Abbott doesn’t have the power to disrupt the river. The legal move came just hours after Abbott tweeted new photos of the proposed 1,000-foot buoy barrier arriving in Eagle Pass by truck. The buoy barrier is the latest deterrent idea from Abbott in his attempt to stop people from crossing the Rio Grande into Texas near Eagle Pass. The area around Eagle Pass has become one of the most crossed areas of the river in the last year. The state already has set miles of razor wire on shore throughout the area and increased the number of Texas Department of Public Safety and National Guard troops to patrol the area as part of Abbott’s Operation Lone Star. The Texas Legislature recently approved \$5 billion for the border security program. DPS Director Steven McCraw said the first barrier being deployed will cost less than \$1 million and can be moved to other areas of the river as needed.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/politics/texas/article/abbott-border-buoys-lawsuit-18190059.php>

Texas deploys barrier of buoys, nets in Rio Grande to deter border crossings, amid protests

By *Jeremy Wallace, Austin Bureau, July 10, 2023*

- ❖ Gov. Greg Abbott put a barrier of buoys and netting into the Rio Grande on Monday, July 10, to block migrants from crossing from Mexico into Texas despite legal challenges to the plan. The move comes as attorneys for an Eagle Pass kayak outfitter seek an emergency meeting with a judge in Travis County to impose an injunction against Abbott to stop deployment of the 1,000-foot barrier that human rights groups said could lead to more drownings. Abbott has shrugged off the legal challenge filed over the weekend, saying he has every right to defend Texas and is ready to fight the case to the Supreme Court if necessary. “Texas has a constitutional right to secure our border,” he said. On Friday, July 7, the Texas Department of Public Safety and National Guard began preparing to deploy the buoy barrier near Eagle Pass, which has seen a surge of migrants over the last year. Abbott has already sent more DPS officers and troops to the same area to place miles of razor wire on the banks of the river under Operation Lone Star, a border security initiative he launched in early 2021. Jesse Fuentes, an Eagle Pass resident who runs Epi’s Canoe and Kayak Team, said in his lawsuit that Abbott does not have the legal authority to put the buoys in the water and that they will impede his business, which provides boat rentals and guided tours of the river. The buoys have webbing below the waterline to prevent people from swimming underneath them. Epi’s “will be unable to conduct tours and canoe and kayak sessions in Eagle Pass because of the installation of the buoys,” Fuentes’ suit states. Carlos E. Flores, the attorney representing Fuentes, said Abbott is misusing the state’s disaster declaration at the border to deploy the buoy barrier and enact other security measures along the river. He said nothing in the state’s disaster declaration allows Texas to create its own Department of Homeland Security to mimic the federal government’s jurisdiction over the border or immigration enforcement.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/politics/texas/article/texas-puts-border-barrier-buoys-nets-in-rio-grande-18192959.php>

Exclusive: Razor wire along the Rio Grande is blocking border agents from reaching at-risk migrants

By *Benjamin Wermund and Jeremy Wallace, San Antonio Express-News, July 11, 2023*

- ❖ Razor wire put up by the state of Texas along the Rio Grande is blocking Border Patrol agents from reaching at-risk migrants — including families with infants and unaccompanied children — and increasing the risk of

drownings, according to a Customs and Border Protection document obtained by Hearst Newspapers. The state has strung wire along much of the Rio Grande near Eagle Pass, a section of the border that has seen a surge of Venezuelan and Cuban migrants over the past year. It has gone up across gates that the Border Patrol uses to quickly reach the river, according to the document. The wire is preventing agents from getting to asylum-seekers — some of whom have said they have been stuck in the river for hours and



Migrants walk along the banks of the Rio Grande blocked with concertina wire south of Eagle Pass, Texas, July 10, 2023. Image Credit: Jerry Lara/San Antonio Express-News

days, exposed to the elements with little to no help from Texas Department of Public Safety officers, according to the document. Migrants are now traversing the banks of the river along spools of thick, sharp wire, increasing the chance of drownings, the document warns. And with water levels rising and some of the wire placed inside the river and not visible, there is a “high risk” of injury, it says. The document was dated just days before four migrants, including an infant, drowned in the Rio Grande near Eagle Pass. Officials have not said the wire played a role in the drownings. A Texas DPS spokesman has said the migrants were found floating along the river by state officials July 1. The Texas Department of Public Safety, meanwhile, has effectively shut down key designated areas that CBP identified as staging points to get asylum-seekers out of the elements, including extreme heat, and process and transport them to detention centers, the document says. Abbott has been deploying razor wire in Eagle Pass since 2021, blaming the Biden administration for not doing more to stop migrants from crossing the border. Abbott said at a news conference in May that he’s having to add more troops and razor wire because of “the chaos caused by Joe Biden lifting Title 42.”

- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/politics/texas/article/texas-border-razor-wire-memo-18193102.php>

Editorial: Another death, more Operation Lone Star silence

By the Express-News Editorial Board, July 10, 2023

- ❖ At least eight Texas guardsmen have now died while participating in Operation Lone Star, the highest cost of Greg Abbott's controversial border mission. And like so much about the mission, the state remains quiet about the details. Here's the latest: On June 28, Spc. Anthony Hernandez-Dominguez, 21, from Houston, died near Bakersfield, a tiny town 277 miles west of San Antonio. The Texas Military Department (TMD) released a statement the next day characterizing the death as a "non-duty related incident," but the agency did not identify the soldier until Thursday, more than a week later and at a relatively sleepy time following the July Fourth holiday. TMD has released few other details. The delay in identifying this soldier exemplifies the state's lack of transparency and its heavy-handed efforts to control the narrative of Abbott's border security operation that has mobilized thousands of troops since it began in spring 2021. Beyond the human toll, the state has poured more than \$2 billion into the border mission so far. And earlier this year the Texas Guard said it would need \$459.3 million to continue the operation through Aug. 31. Hernandez-Dominguez is believed to be at least the eighth Operation Lone Star soldier to have died since the mission began, but even that number is murky. Operation Lone Star soldiers have perished from suicides, accidents, natural causes and a drowning, but TMD rarely responds to questions about the operation and its people. By comparison, U.S. Department of Defense policy allows information about the deceased to be released 24 hours after next of kin are notified. The 24-hour delay came years ago after some families were hearing about loved ones' deaths before the military could notify them.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/opinion/editorial/article/editorial-another-death-more-operation-lone-18192382.php>

2nd bus carrying asylum seekers from Texas arrives in Los Angeles

By the Associated Press, July 1, 2023

- ❖ A bus carrying migrants from a Texas border city arrived in downtown Los Angeles on Saturday, July 1, for the second time in less than three weeks. The office of Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass was not formally notified but became aware on Friday [June 30] of the bus dispatched from Brownsville, Texas, to L.A. Union Station, Bass spokesperson Zach Seidl said in a statement. The bus arrived around 12:40 p.m., and the 41 asylum-seekers on board were welcomed by a collective of faith and immigrant rights groups. Eleven children were on the bus, according to a statement by the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights. The asylum seekers came from Cuba, Belize, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua and Venezuela. They received water, food, clothing and initial legal immigration assistance at St. Anthony's Croatian Parish Center and church. The city received a bus carrying 42 migrants from Texas on June 14. Many were from Latin American countries, including Honduras and Venezuela, and they were not provided with water or food. Earlier in June, the state of Florida picked up three dozen migrants in Texas and sent them by private jet to California's capital.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/article/los-angeles-migrants-bus-texas-a35bfd8b2b3ac3efac113c0483a2eff7>

Migrant Workers Flee Florida as New Immigration Law Takes Effect

By Deborah Acosta, Wall Street Journal, July 3, 2023

- ❖ Florida's agricultural and construction industries say they are experiencing a labor shortage because a new immigration law that took effect July 1 is leading migrant workers to leave the state. The law, signed in May by Florida Gov. and GOP presidential candidate Ron DeSantis, seeks to further criminalize undocumented immigration in the state. It makes it a third-degree felony for unauthorized people to knowingly use a false identification to obtain employment. Businesses that knowingly employ unauthorized workers could have their licenses suspended, and those with 25 or more employees that repeatedly fail to use the E-Verify system to check their immigration status can face daily fines. In addition to increasing penalties on employers and workers, the new law requires hospitals that accept Medicaid to question a patient's immigration status, and invalidates out-of-state driver's licenses issued to people unauthorized to be in the U.S. It makes it a third-degree felony to knowingly transport into Florida a person who is undocumented and illegally entered the U.S. The law also adds \$12 million to the amount of money the state has earmarked for its migrant-relocation program, bringing the total to \$22 million this year. In 2019 there were an estimated 772,000 undocumented immigrants living in Florida, according to the Migration Policy Institute. Since then, there has been a massive influx of immigrants into the country, and last year Florida's population grew more than any other state, according to census data.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/migrant-workers-flee-florida-as-new-immigration-law-takes-effect-94796abf>

Mexico blasts new Florida immigration law; vows to help migrants

By Reuters, July 1, 2023

- ❖ Mexico's government on Saturday, July 1, slammed a tough new state immigration law in Florida spearheaded by Republican Governor and U.S. presidential contender Ron DeSantis, and the country vowed to help protect undocumented Mexicans in that state. According to DeSantis' website, the new law includes allocating funds to move migrants without lawful status out of the state; restricting access to ID cards; and requiring more businesses to use an electronic system to validate a person's eligibility to work. Mexico's Foreign Ministry in a statement said the provisions could prompt discrimination and racial profiling, and give rise to hostile environments, intimidation and hate crimes. "Criminalization is not the way to resolve the phenomenon of undocumented migration," the ministry said, describing the new measures as driven by xenophobia and white nationalism.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/mexico-blasts-new-florida-immigration-law-vows-help-migrants-2023-07-02/>

Supreme Court Revives Biden Immigration Policy on Deportation

By Jan Wolfe, Jess Bravin and Michelle Hackman, Wall Street Journal, June 23, 2023

- ❖ An 8-1 Supreme Court revived a Biden administration policy that prioritizes deportation of people in the country illegally who pose a public-safety risk, saying Texas and Louisiana lacked legal standing to challenge the policy as too lenient. In a separate immigration case, the court rejected a First Amendment challenge to a federal law that criminalizes inducing noncitizens to enter the U.S. illegally. At issue was a Biden administration policy change in September 2021 that set relatively narrow targets for immigration enforcement, rather than directing deportation officers to arrest anyone in the country illegally they could find. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas issued the new guidelines, telling agents to give priority to the deportation of individuals deemed a threat to national security and public safety, as well as recent border crossers. The Republican attorneys general of Texas and Louisiana last year convinced a lower court to block the policy nationwide. U.S. District Judge Drew Tipton, a Trump appointee in Corpus Christi, Texas, said the Biden administration had stretched nonenforcement discretion too far, in conflict with immigration mandates set by Congress. The Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals declined to put Tipton's judgment on hold. The Supreme Court's ruling Friday reversed the judge's decision. Under the Biden administration's approach, both arrests and deportations of immigrants living in the country illegally have fallen below average levels under the Trump and Obama administrations, though that is partly because U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement limited its jail capacity due to Covid-19. In the 2022 fiscal year, ICE made 143,000 arrests and 72,000 deportations. By comparison, ICE carried out 267,000 deportations in the 2019 fiscal year, the high point of Donald Trump's presidency. In its second immigration decision, a 7-2 Supreme Court rejected arguments that a federal prohibition on encouraging noncitizens to enter and stay in the U.S. illegally is so broad as to criminalize speech protected by the First Amendment.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/supreme-court-revives-biden-immigration-policy-on-deportation-2510f63d>

REMEMBERING THE MIGRANTS WHO DIED IN A SWELTERING TRACTOR-TRAILER IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

One year later, migrants' deaths in trailer mourned

By Guillermo Contreras, San Antonio Express-News, June 27, 2023

- ❖ On the one-year anniversary of the country's worst human smuggling disaster — in which 53 migrants died in a sweltering tractor-trailer on San Antonio's Southwest Side — one defendant in the criminal case pleaded guilty and authorities said they had arrested four of five new suspects. Seven people are named in a new federal indictment that was partially unsealed Tuesday afternoon. Two of the suspects have been in custody since the incident, and authorities had detained four others as of Monday, federal prosecutors said at a press conference on Tuesday. The new suspects included Riley "Cholo" Covarrubias-Torres; Felipe Orduna-Torres, also known as Cholo, Chuequito or Negro; Luis Alberto "Cowboy" Rivera-Leal; and Armando Gonzales-Ortega, also known as "El Don" or "Don Gon." They are identified as being either from San Antonio, Houston or Marshal. All seven defendants are charged with conspiracy to transport undocumented immigrants resulting in death, and related crimes. Each faces up to life in prison if convicted. Three of the new suspects made initial appearances in San Antonio's federal court on Tuesday afternoon, while the fourth was scheduled to appear in court in Houston. Another suspect had not been arrested as of Tuesday. A year ago, police were called to 9637 Quintana Road where they found dozens of migrants dead or dying in an abandoned tractor-trailer or nearby. Eleven were transported to area hospital but later died, pushing the death toll to 53. Eight of them were children, U.S. Assistant Attorney General Kenneth Polite Polite said during Tuesday news conference. Another 11 migrants were injured.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/houston-texas/texas/article/migrant-deaths-anniversary-18174025.php>

San Antonio plans permanent memorial honoring migrants who died in sweltering trailer

By Jordan Elder, News 4 San Antonio, June 27, 2023

- ❖ It has been one year since 64 migrants were found in the back of a tractor trailer in Southwest San Antonio. The temperatures inside were likely well over a hundred degrees. 53 people died after being trapped in the severe heat, the youngest victim just 13 years old. Plans are already in motion to create a permanent memorial for the lives lost in this incident. Right now, flowers, flags, and 53 wooden crosses bearing the names of those who lost their lives are set up in honor of the victims along Quintana Road. "I think that this was another eye opening situation because of the sheer number," District 4 Councilwoman Adriana Rocha Garcia said of the tragedy. "This is the deadliest human smuggling incident in the history of the United States." The community came together to build the memorial along Quintana Road, but city officials say they want to see something more permanent. And it likely won't be right here. "That area requires a lot of investment in terms of the infrastructure that would be needed for the big memorial," Rocha Garcia said. "Just to fix the street along that area and make sure that there was lights etc., it was going to be \$15 million. And that's not really a trafficked street." Rocha Garcia says there will be a marker placed at the spot where the migrants were found, but you could eventually see a full memorial somewhere else in District 4. The goal is to illustrate the role San Antonio often plays as migrants move through the state and country, and the lives lost trying to fulfill the American Dream. The whole process could take about two years to complete. A mural could cost around \$350,000. A sculpture is estimated to be about \$500,000. It's something the city could potentially use bond money for. Two bond projects passed in the 2022 election are near the tragedy site. In the meantime, the current memorial will stay. It will also be recreated online.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://news4sanantonio.com/news/local/san-antonio-plans-permanent-memorial-honoring-migrants-who-died-in-sweltering-trailer-tractor-heat-crime-police-53>

OPERATION LONE STAR

Operation Lone Star Cracks Down On Criminal Trespassing

By the Office of the Texas Governor, Press Release, June 30, 2023

- ❖ Since the launch of Operation Lone Star, the multi-agency effort has led to over 386,000 illegal immigrant apprehensions and more than 30,000 criminal arrests, with more than 28,000 felony charges reported. Texas has also bused more than 10,200 migrants to our nation's capital since April 2022, over 8,700 migrants to New York City since August 5, more than 3,000 migrants to Chicago since August 31, more than 1,600 migrants to Philadelphia since November 15, over 200 migrants to Denver since May 18, and over 40 migrants to Los Angeles since June 14.
- ❖ Press Release Source: <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/operation-lone-star-cracks-down-on-criminal-trespassing>

ASYLUM SEEKERS

Four migrants, including an infant, drowned in the Rio Grande River over 3-day period, official says

By Raja Razek and Elizabeth Wolfe, CNN, July 4, 2023

- ❖ Law enforcement officers in Texas have recovered the bodies of four drowned migrants, including an infant, from the Rio Grande River along the US-Mexico border since Saturday [July 1], an official said. The drownings come just days before Texas officials are expected to begin establishing a floating water barrier along parts of the Rio Grande in an attempt to deter illegal border crossings. The first 1,000 feet of the barrier are set to be deployed near Eagle Pass beginning July 7, Governor Gregg Abbott and other officials announced last month. An unidentified woman and infant girl were found unresponsive in the river on Saturday, July 1, and a dead male and female were recovered on Sunday, July 2 and Monday, July 3, respectively, Lieutenant Christopher Olivarez, a spokesperson for the Texas Department of Public Safety, said in a tweet. None of the deceased migrants possessed identifying documents and their identities are unknown, according to Olivarez. 2022 was the deadliest year so far for migrants crossing the US-Mexico border, with at least 748 people dying at the border, CNN has reported.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/04/us/migrant-drownings-texas-mexico-border/index.html>

Internal report details rampant diarrhea among children at overcrowded border facility

By Hamed Aleaziz, *Los Angeles Times*, June 28, 2023

- ❖ Diarrhea was rampant, children were losing weight, and parents had to clean soiled clothing in sinks because guards would not provide them with clean items, mothers at an overcrowded Texas border facility in Laredo told Department of Homeland Security investigators last month, according to an internal report obtained by The Times. The crisis at the Laredo facility is detailed in the first of two May memos by the Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman. The memos, meant for agency leadership, include details on conditions in many facilities along the southern border this spring. The second report, which was also obtained by The Times, describes alleged deficiencies in medical care at a detention facility in Donna, Texas, that held an 8-year-old Panamanian girl who later died in Border Patrol custody. The memo noted that the Laredo facility was holding about 2,500 people — despite having a capacity of under 1,000 — and that some housing areas for single men were “very cramped, with sleeping mats directly touching other sleeping mats and no space around the mats to walk.” Even so, the memo, said the facility was “airy, open, and clean, and felt calm and orderly.”
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2023-06-28/border-diarrhea-children-overcrowded>

New Migrants Have a Year to Apply for Asylum. Many Won't Make It.

By Hurubie Meko and Raúl Vilchis, *New York Times*, July 3, 2023

- ❖ As migrants have fanned out across the United States, many leaders and immigrant advocates have begun referring to the newcomers as asylum seekers, not simply immigrants. In the fiscal year that ended in September, a record 250,000 asylum applications were filed nationwide, increasing the total number of pending applications to nearly 1.6 million, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University. New York City has become the top destination for newly arrived migrants. Between March and May of this year, nearly 39,000 new immigration court cases were filed in New York City, compared with about 11,000 in Miami-Dade County, Fla., and about 16,000 in Los Angeles County, according to the clearinghouse's data. As of June 25, more than 81,200 migrants had arrived in New York since last spring, and 50,000 are housed in city shelters, according to city data. People who formally seek asylum are allowed to remain in the country to await a decision in their case, and applicants can apply for temporary employment authorization 150 days after successfully filing their application. The application itself can be incredibly difficult: It is 12 pages long, in English, and includes questions like the last five addresses where the applicant lived, the names and addresses of relatives and a portion to explain — in detail — what harm or mistreatment they have faced. Missing one question can result in the return of an application. Additionally, new arrivals must quickly engage with the immigration court system to avoid being immediately deported. But they often discover that critical immigration documents have been sent to incorrect addresses, meaning they miss important court dates, putting them at risk of being deported. Some new arrivals have also reported receiving initial court hearing dates that are long past their deadline to apply for asylum.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/03/nyregion/migrants-asylum-nyc.html>

Migrants in Mexico fall victim to rampant scams on their way to the US

By the Associated Press, *June 28, 2023*

- ❖ Latin American migrants making their often-arduous journey to the United States frequently fall victim to scams that can amount to thousands of dollars in losses paid to fraudulent businesses that spread disinformation and prey on the vulnerable. The scammers range from human traffickers — often referred to as coyotes — to social media influencers, and many of them fraudulently pose as work recruiters, legal advisors or immigration coaches. Most of the impostors take advantage of the many twists and turns in U.S. immigration policy, tricking migrants into paying for fake legal advice, work visas, political asylum or alternative ways to cross the U.S.-Mexico border. About a quarter of migrants surveyed earlier this month said they received messages offering immigration services and jobs, mainly via Facebook and WhatsApp. Two thirds of the 210 surveyed said they fell victim to some sort of fraud or disinformation. One migrant said he spent \$1,500 on a form that turned out to be fake. In Mexico, 5,684 complaints of crimes against migrants were reported from 2016 to November 2022, according to Mexico's interior ministry. Of these, 1,849 were classified as illicit trafficking, 2,655 as theft and only eight as fraud. Migrants can lose anywhere from \$1 to \$20,000 per person overall in the scams, according to social media posts monitored during May and June and testimonies collected from migrants in early June.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/article/migrants-misinformation-999462e93876c4181a9759974d10ff18>

U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION CBP ONE APP

US halts online asylum appointments at Texas crossing after extortion warnings

By Valerie Gonzalez and Julie Watson, Associated Press, June 12, 2023

- ❖ The Biden administration has stopped taking mobile app appointments to admit asylum-seekers at a Texas border crossing that connects to a notoriously dangerous Mexican city after advocates warned U.S. authorities that migrants were being targeted there for extortion. U.S. Customs and Border Protection gave no explanation for its decision to stop scheduling new appointments via the CBP One app for the crossing in Laredo, Texas. Several asylum-seekers told The Associated Press that Mexican officials in Nuevo Laredo, across the border from Laredo, Texas, had threatened to hold them and make them miss their scheduled asylum appointments unless they paid them. Humanitarian groups in Laredo say they had recently warned CBP of the problems and that certain groups were controlling access to the international crossing on the Mexican side. Migrant advocates say the situation in Nuevo Laredo, which is plagued by cartel fighting and other problems, casts doubt on the administration's argument that Mexico is a safe place for the record number of people fleeing violence in Central America and elsewhere. Rafael Alvarez, 29, who fled Venezuela, said that after he landed in Nuevo Laredo in early June, Mexican immigration authorities at the airport seized his travel documents, including a printout of the email confirming his CBP One appointment, and demanded he pay 1,000 Mexican pesos, about \$57. He was held with other migrants. "They would tell us covertly, 'You're going to put the money in this envelope and pass it to us,'" Alvarez said, recalling what officials told him and other migrants. The officials, he said, threatened to hold them so they would have their appointments canceled. Alvarez, whose appointment was the next day, said he refused to pay and was eventually released, but five Russians who were held with him paid a total of 5,000 pesos, about \$290. They initially were asked to fork over double that amount, but they told officials they did not have that much, he said. The government said it would continue to open 1,250 appointments daily by reallocating the slots for Laredo to the seven other crossings along the U.S.-Mexico border. It vowed to honor online appointments issued for the Laredo crossing before the June 3 change. The government schedules appointments two weeks out.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/article/mexico-border-cbp-one-laredo-bfccf8c3f52d9cec2563b40da905a391>

CBP One app appointment capacity expands to 1,450 daily

By Tyler Wornell, NewsNation, July 3, 2023

- ❖ Customs and Border Protection is increasing the number of available appointments that can be booked through its CBP One mobile app, the second such expansion in as many months. The agency will now offer 1,450 appointments per day for migrants, up from 1,250, according to a news release. The 1,450 is a nearly 50% increase from May 12, when CBP was processing 1,000 appointments per day. From May 12 through June 23, more than 49,000 noncitizens have presented at southwest border ports of entry through scheduled appointments, the agency said. Making an appointment does not guarantee entry, and determination of admissibility is made on a case-by-case basis. In order to request and schedule an appointment, noncitizens must first be located in central or northern Mexico.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.newsnationnow.com/us-news/immigration/cbp-one-app-appointment-capacity-increase/>

DEVELOPING STORIES

Neobank For Immigrants Expands To The U.S.-Mexico Border

By Anne Field, Forbes, June 23, 2023

- ❖ When Magnus Larsson came to the U.S. around 20 years ago, he learned just how hard it was for immigrants to open a bank account, much less navigate the U.S. financial system. Eventually, in 2019, he co-founded MAJORITY, a neobank aimed at making it easier for new arrivals to get access to mobile banking services. Central to MAJORITY's services are "meetups", spaces in areas with large immigrant populations that MAJORITY targets. There they can meet in-person with advisors who often are also originally from those countries and can help them understand the nuances of life in the U.S. They can also attend workshops and other events with compatriots. To that end, Larsson just announced the opening of a new meetup space—its fifth—in Laredo, Tex., the better to provide financial services and other aid for migrants crossing the border from Mexico. Situated in a visible spot, "It will be the first thing you see when you pass the border," says Larsson. So far, the Laredo location has hired about ten advisors. They will help with everything from how to get a drivers license to signing up for a credit card. "We think about the whole migrant journey," says Larsson.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/annefield/2023/06/23/neobank-for-immigrants-expands-to-the-us-mexico-border/?sh=377e5b30121c>