

JUSTICE NEWS

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Department of Justice Announces New Priorities to Address Surge of Migrants Crossing into the U.S.*Justice Department Proposes Establishing Legal and Law Enforcement Advisors to Aid in Disrupting and Dismantling Immigrant Smuggling Operations*

Deputy Attorney General James Cole announced today that the Justice Department will implement a series of steps to help address the influx of migrants crossing the southern border of the United States. These include refocusing immigration court resources to adjudicate the cases of recent migrants; providing support and training to help address violence in Central America; and redoubling efforts to work with other federal agencies and the Mexican government to investigate and prosecute those who smuggle migrants to the United States.

“Individuals who embark on the perilous journey from Central America to the United States are subject to violent crime, abuse, and extortion as they rely on dangerous human smuggling networks to transport them through Central America and Mexico,” Deputy Attorney General Cole said. “We have an obligation to provide humanitarian care for children and adults with children who are apprehended on our borders, but we also must do whatever we can to stem the tide of this dangerous migration pattern. The efforts we are announcing today are intended to address the challenges of this influx in a humane, efficient and timely way.”

Cole announced that the department’s Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) will refocus its resources to prioritize cases involving migrants who have recently crossed the southwest border and whom DHS has placed into removal proceedings -- so that these cases are processed both quickly and fairly to enable prompt removal in appropriate cases, while ensuring the protection of asylum seekers and others.

“This refocusing of resources will allow EOIR to prioritize the adjudication of the cases of those individuals involved in the evolving situation at the southwest border,” said EOIR Director Juan P. Osuna. “Although our case management priorities are shifting, our immigration judges will continue to evaluate and rule upon cases consistent with all substantive and procedural rights and safeguards applicable to immigration proceedings.”

To augment its capacity to adjudicate cases as promptly as possible, EOIR is committed to hiring more immigration judges. EOIR this week will also publish a regulation allowing for the appointment of temporary immigration judges. Further, EOIR plans both to expand its existing legal access programs, and enhance access to legal resources and assistance for persons in removal proceedings.

Cole also announced that the Department is seeking new funding, as a part of the President’s emergency supplemental appropriations request, to assist Central American countries in combatting transnational crime and the threat posed by criminal gangs. This regional strategy for law enforcement capacity building would be aimed at addressing the issues that have been a factor in forcing many migrants to flee Central America for the United States.

The department will also redouble its efforts to work with Mexican authorities to identify and apprehend smugglers who are aiding unaccompanied children in crossing the U.S. border. Later this week, the Deputy Attorney General will also be meeting with the five U.S. Attorneys who represent the southwest border districts to strategize on ways to disrupt and dismantle criminal organizations on the border that are facilitating the transportation of unaccompanied minors and others.

Today, Deputy Attorney General Cole will go to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's McAllen Station and processing facility to see the urgent situation at the border. EOIR Director Osuna will be testifying before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee to highlight the Justice Department's efforts to aid in the administration-wide response to the migrant influx.

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- [Fact Sheet](#)

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Office of the Deputy Attorney General