



United States and Mexico Resume Voluntary Humanitarian Interior Repatriation Program

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Office of the Press Secretary
Contact: 202-282-8010

Tucson, Ariz.—The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Mexican Ministry of the Interior announced today that the Mexican Interior Repatriation Program (MIRP)—a bilaterally beneficial voluntary program that ensures the safe and swift return of Mexican nationals found to be in the Sonora Arizona desert region of the United States unlawfully to their places of origin in the Mexican interior—has resumed for the sixth consecutive summer.

“MIRP reflects our mutual commitment to strong and effective enforcement of both nations’ immigration laws, and this program is proof that we can do so in a humanitarian way,” said Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement John Morton. “This program prioritizes the humane treatment of detainees throughout the removal process.”

“Over the years, MIRP has served as an example of what we can achieve through bilateral efforts guided by the principle of shared responsibility,” said Ambassador of Mexico Arturo Sarukhan. “It is also a reminder and an opportunity to deepen and widen our cooperation towards achieving safe, orderly, legal and humane migration flows between our countries.”

MIRP was designed in 2004 as a bilateral effort between the United States and Mexico to reduce the loss of human life and combat organized crime linked to the smuggling, trafficking and exploitation of persons.

Under MIRP, Mexican nationals apprehended in U.S. Border Patrol’s Yuma and Tucson Sectors are taken to DHS facilities in Nogales and Yuma, Ariz., where candidates are medically screened, meet with officials from Mexican Consulate and are offered the opportunity to voluntarily participate in the program.

As a humanitarian program, candidates for MIRP also include those who are identified as “at risk” due to criteria like age, physical condition or distance from their hometowns, as these populations are particularly vulnerable to heat or risk of victimization by criminals operating in border regions. Criminal aliens convicted of violent crimes are ineligible to participate in MIRP.

Those who volunteer to participate in the program are flown to Mexico City via daily flights coordinated by DHS from Tucson International Airport and provided bus transportation to their hometowns in the interior of Mexico.

This year’s first repatriation flight departed Tucson International Airport on Aug. 22, and flights are scheduled to continue this year through Sept. 28.

More than 82,558 Mexican nationals have been safely returned under MIRP over the program’s previous five summers.

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