



U.S. Department of Homeland Security

# DHS Announces New Migration Enforcement Process for Venezuelans

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***Venezuelans who seek to enter the U.S. illegally will be returned to Mexico; New lawful pathway created for some Venezuelans***

WASHINGTON – Today, as part of the Biden-Harris Administration’s ongoing work to build a fair, orderly, and secure immigration system, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is announcing joint actions with Mexico to reduce the number of people arriving at our Southwest border and create a more orderly and safe process for people fleeing the humanitarian and economic crisis in Venezuela.

Almost four times as many Venezuelans as last year attempted to cross our southern border, placing their lives in the hands of ruthless smuggling organizations. Meanwhile, irregular migration from northern Central America is down by a quarter from the level encountered last year. The actions the United States and Mexico are announcing today are intended to address the most acute irregular migration and help ease pressure on the cities and states receiving these individuals.

Effective immediately, Venezuelans who enter the United States between ports of entry, without authorization, will be returned to Mexico. At the same time, the United States and Mexico are reinforcing their coordinated enforcement operations to target human smuggling organizations and bring them to justice. That campaign will include new migration checkpoints, additional resources and personnel, joint targeting of human smuggling organizations, and expanded information sharing related to transit nodes, hotels, stash houses, and staging locations. The United States is also planning to offer additional security assistance to support regional partners to address the migration challenges in the Darién Gap.

Our comprehensive effort to reduce the irregular migration of Venezuelans also includes a new process to lawfully and safely bring up to 24,000 qualifying Venezuelans into the United States. The United States will not implement this process without Mexico keeping in place its independent but parallel effort to accept the return of Venezuelan nationals who bypass this process and attempt to enter irregularly.

“These actions make clear that there is a lawful and orderly way for Venezuelans to enter the United States, and lawful entry is the only way,” **said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas**. “Those who attempt to cross the southern border of the United States illegally will be returned to Mexico and will be ineligible for this process in the future. Those who follow the lawful process will have the opportunity to travel safely to the United States and become eligible to work here.”

This effort is intended to enhance border security by reducing the number of Venezuelans seeking to irregularly enter the United States. It is derived from the success of the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) program, which decreased flows at the border by creating an orderly process for the entry of Ukrainians fleeing Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

DHS will closely monitor the implementation of this process, and Mexico’s independent and parallel efforts, and may consider expanding it in the future.

To be eligible, Venezuelans must:

- have a supporter in the United States who will provide financial and other support;
- pass rigorous biometric and biographic national security and public safety screening and vetting; and
- complete vaccinations and other public health requirements.

Venezuelans are ineligible if they:

- have been ordered removed from the United States in the previous five years;
- have crossed without authorization between ports of entry after the date of announcement;
- have irregularly entered Mexico or Panama after the date of announcement, or are a permanent resident or dual national of any country other than Venezuela, or currently hold refugee status in any country; or
- have not completed vaccinations and other public health requirements.

Venezuelans should not travel to Mexico to pursue entry into the United States.

Venezuelans approved via this process will be authorized on a case-by-case basis to travel to the United States by air directly to an interior port of entry, thus relieving pressure at the border. Once in the United States, they will be eligible to apply for work authorization.

DHS will administer the process, working with communities and other partners. Any U.S.-based individual with lawful status, including representatives of businesses or other organizations or entities, can support a potential beneficiary from Venezuela. A supporter must prove that they have the means to provide financial and other support for the beneficiary. In the coming days, potential supporters can apply to DHS to support individual eligible Venezuelans via [www.uscis.gov/Venezuela](http://www.uscis.gov/Venezuela) (<http://www.uscis.gov/Venezuela>). Individuals and representatives of organizations seeking to apply as a supporter must declare the organization's financial support and they must pass security background checks to protect against exploitation and abuse.

The State Department will also engage in a robust in-region messaging campaign to communicate about this new process and the consequences of attempting irregular entry.

More information will be available at [www.uscis.gov/Venezuela](http://www.uscis.gov/Venezuela) (<http://www.uscis.gov/Venezuela>) in the coming days.

Today's actions are part of the Biden-Harris Administration's ongoing efforts to reduce irregular migration throughout the Western Hemisphere, including through the U.S. Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration and the multinational Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection. The process announced today is one more element of the United States' multilateral approach to addressing irregular migration that is impacting countries throughout Latin America, and it is premised on pairing increased enforcement in response to irregular immigration with the development of lawful and safe pathways for qualifying individuals.

Venezuelans have been migrating throughout the hemisphere since approximately 2014, yet the level of irregular migration of Venezuelans has increased dramatically throughout the hemisphere in the past several years. There are currently 2.4 million Venezuelans residing in Colombia. More than 25% of Venezuela's population has left the country. The United States is seeing a rising rate of Venezuelans encountered at our border over the past two years, which has surged in the last few months. Average monthly unique encounters of Venezuelan nationals at the land border totaled 15,494 in FY 2022, rising further to over 25,000 in August and 33,000 in September, compared to a monthly average of 127 unique encounters from FY 2014–2019. Of note, unique encounters of Venezuelan nationals rose 293 percent between FY 2021 and FY 2022, while unique encounters of all other nationalities combined increased 45 percent. Panama is currently seeing more than 3,000 people, mostly Venezuelan nationals, crossing into its territory from Colombia via the Darién jungle each day.

The United States, in partnership with Mexico, also is committing to further expanding lawful labor pathways for Mexican and Northern Central American nationals. This last year, the United States doubled the number of H-2 visas issued to nationals of the Northern Central American countries of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Today, we are [announcing](https://www.dhs.gov/news/2022/10/12/dhs-supplement-h-2b-cap-nearly-65000-additional-visas-fiscal-year-2023) (<https://www.dhs.gov/news/2022/10/12/dhs-supplement-h-2b-cap-nearly-65000-additional-visas-fiscal-year-2023>) the largest H-2B supplemental in history for Fiscal Year 2023: nearly 65,000 new H-2B visas, including a set-aside of 20,000 to nationals of Northern Central American countries and Haiti. Historically, approximately 90% of these visas have been used by Mexican nationals. This increase is coupled with strong measures to protect both U.S. and H-2B workers. Concurrent with this announcement, the Biden-Harris Administration is launching a White House-led Worker Protection Task Force to ensure ethical recruitment and dignified labor standards for foreign workers alongside protections for U.S. workers.

The United States also is renewing its commitment to tackle the root causes of migration and support countries in the region that are most impacted by these flows. For that reason, the United States has announced nearly \$817 million in new assistance since September 2022 under the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection. This includes more than \$240 million in new regional humanitarian and security assistance, \$376 million in additional humanitarian assistance for people affected by the Venezuela regional crisis, and more than \$199 million in additional humanitarian assistance for Mexico and Central America.

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## Keywords

[SECRETARY ALEJANDRO MAYORKAS](#) (/KEYWORDS/SECRETARY-ALEJANDRO-MAYORKAS)

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