

Obama deported a record 438,421 people last year

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The Obama administration deported a record 438,421 people last year, the highest number of annual deportations in US history, according to official figures published by the Department of Homeland Security Wednesday.

The Obama White House has already deported more people than any other presidency, based on projections for 2014. In Obama's six years in office, he has deported more people than Bush in his entire eight-year tenure, and more than twice as many people as Clinton.

The number of deportations in 2013 was 20,000 higher than in 2012, and 78,000 higher than in 2008, the last year of the Bush administration.

A significant share—44 percent—of the deportations were so-called “expedited removal orders,” in which deportees are summarily booted out of the country without even a court hearing. The share of these types of deportations has been steadily rising over the last several years, and is up from 31.6 percent of deportations in 2011.

The share of deportations that have gone through the courts or extended administrative reviews fell by half—from 36.2 percent to 17.1 percent between 2011 and 2013.

Of the 438,421 total immigrants deported, 314,904 came from Mexico, while another 46,866 came from Guatemala, 36,526 came from Honduras and 20,862 came from El Salvador.

On Thursday evening, the day after the release of the shocking deportation figures, Obama addressed a dinner hosted by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus in Washington, D.C., in which he sought to paint his administration as a defender of immigrant rights despite the record number of deportations and his refusal to take any action to reduce them.

Obama's appearance was met by protests and pickets outside the building. One of the organizations that called the demonstrations, the National Day Laborer Organizing

Network, issued a statement denouncing Obama's visit, noting that Obama “recently announced he would delay executive action and deport another estimated 60,000 people while his Party campaigns for reelection in the midterms.”

In his speech, Obama urged the audience to vote for Democrats in the upcoming election, and promised unspecified immigration reform “between the November elections and the end of the year.”

Obama was heckled and denounced by members of the audience as he spoke. “I know that there's deep frustration in many communities around the country and I share it,” he said in response, pausing briefly as demonstrators were dragged out by security. He then went on to blame congressional Republicans for the continuing prevalence of mass deportations.

The reality is that the Democratic administration has undertaken the most draconian anti-immigrant policies in recent history.

The recent arrival on the southern border of tens of thousands of children from Central America fleeing poverty, violence and the social devastation wrought by a century of US imperialist interventions in the region, has led to crowding and inhumane conditions at border detention facilities, which were documented in a series of shocking photographs made public earlier this year. The humanitarian crisis created by the growth in the number of child migrants, far from eliciting government social aid, has prompted an even further militarization of the border and a police state crackdown on immigrants.

In July, the Obama administration asked Congress to allocate \$3.7 billion in funding to “support a sustained border security surge through enhanced domestic enforcement,” along with additional staff to speed up deportations, including the hiring of administrators and prosecutors to kick families and individual children out of the country.

Obama's proposal included \$40 million for air surveillance, including additional funds to significantly expand the use of military drones within the borders of the United States.

The Obama administration and Congress are working to construct an enormous new "Family detention facility" in south Texas, which will cover 50 acres of land and is expected to have up to 2,400 beds. The creation of the facility will double the existing federal capacity to house immigrant families.

The new facility is to be operated by Corrections Corporation of America, the world's largest private prison company, which has a history of allegations of abuse and violence at other facilities. Over half of the detained immigrants in the US are in facilities run by for-profit prison corporations, compared to just 8 percent of state and federal prisoners.

In its latest immigration policy initiative, the administration has announced it will set up "in-country refugee processing centers" in Central America, where children seeking to reunite with parents in the US can be denied entry before they even attempt to make the dangerous journey north and cross the border.

"These programs will not be a pathway for children to join undocumented relatives in the United States," a White House spokesman clarified.

The *Latin Post* reported Wednesday that children under five years old have appeared in New York immigration courts without any form of legal representation. New York City Council speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito described the conditions confronting children facing the immigration courts in the newspaper. "It is, to say the least, distressing—traumatized children standing before a judge without a lawyer," she said.

In June, Obama promised that he would take executive action to slow deportations, but subsequently reneged on his promise and said that any action to slow deportations would wait until after the November election.



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