

Biden administration begins mass deportation flights from Texas to Haiti

Patrick Martin
19 September 2021

Thousands of refugees dragged from a camp on the Texas-Mexico border began arriving in Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, Sunday afternoon, the first wave of mass deportations ordered by the Biden administration. Three flights arrived in Haiti on Sunday, each carrying 145 adults and children, and press reports citing US officials said this would be quickly increased to as many as eight flights a day.

Border Patrol Chief Raul L. Ortiz told a news conference Sunday that 3,300 people, nearly all from Haiti, have been taken from the makeshift camp under an underpass in Del Rio, Texas, to Border Patrol facilities and then to planes departing from San Antonio, Texas. He said that the remainder of the 12,600 migrants on site were to be removed by the end of this week.

Biden, who campaigned against Donald Trump's vilification of refugees and his deliberate separation of immigrant children from their parents, is responsible for actions equally inhumane and barbaric, and on an equally large scale.

The harrowing spectacle on the US-Mexico border gives the lie to all those who claimed that the Biden administration could be pushed to the left or the Democratic Party could become an instrument of social reform or progressive social change.

The Department of Homeland Security has cited the same legal ground as that employed by Trump throughout 2020, a disease-control provision called Title 42, which gives the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the power to expel migrants without any legal procedure, in the interests of public health during the coronavirus pandemic.

The speed of the mass expulsions is in part dictated by a legal loophole provided by the federal courts. On September 16, District Judge Emmet Sullivan issued an

order blocking the use of Title 42 against immigrant families, but he stayed the order for 14 days. The DHS apparently aims to remove all the Haitians before the stay expires.

The agency said "expulsion and removal flights" would take the migrants at Del Rio to Mexico, Ecuador, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, as well as Haiti.

Border Patrol Chief Ortiz said, "We are working around the clock to expeditiously move migrants out of the heat, elements and from underneath this bridge to our processing facilities in order to quickly process and remove individuals from the United States consistent with our laws and our policies."

He spoke as though he were doing the migrants a favor. The horrific reality is that the conditions in Port-au-Prince, to which they are being shipped *en masse*, are as bad or worse than those under the underpass where they were sheltering.

The head of Haiti's national migration office, Jean Negot Bonheur Delva, told the press, "The Haitian state is not really ready to receive these deportees." The first planeload were being processed at a tent near the airport set up by the International Organization for Migration, not the Haitian government.

A *New York Times* reporter on the spot observed the arrival at Toussaint L'Ouverture International Airport: "They looked dazed and tired as they climbed out of the aircraft. First came parents with babies in their arms and toddlers by the hand. Other men and women followed with little luggage save perhaps for a little food or some personal belongings... Some expressed dismay at finding themselves back in a place they had worked so hard to escape."

"I am asking for a humanitarian moratorium," Bonheur Delva said, referring to further flights from Texas. "The situation is very difficult." After the

returned refugees were fed rice and beans from Styrofoam containers, the official said they would be tested for COVID-19, but not quarantined regardless of the results. They will be given about \$100 in local currency and told to return to their homes throughout the country, although many would have nowhere to go to.

Most left the country after the devastating earthquake of 2010, migrating to work in various countries in South America. After the economic slump that followed the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, they began moving north towards the United States, where many have relatives. One refugee at the camp in Del Rio said his family had passed through ten countries on the way.

Since the migrants left Haiti, the country—already the poorest in the Western Hemisphere—has suffered a second major earthquake and has been hit repeatedly by powerful hurricanes. The country’s government, never able to provide even rudimentary public services, has virtually ceased to function after the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in July, a murder organized by rivals within the ruling elite, apparently including his appointed prime minister and interim successor.

The Biden administration is dispatching another 400 Border Patrol agents to Del Rio, promising they will arrive by Monday to ensure the mass deportations are carried out as quickly as possible.

Biden’s exercise in mass repression and mass deportation has only emboldened the Republican right and its fascistic leader Donald Trump. Texas Governor Greg Abbott turned the plight of the migrants in Del Rio into a photo-op to burnish his right-wing credentials. He ordered hundreds of state troopers to the border there and tweeted out a photo of dozens of police cars lined up to block passage from the river.

“The Texas Department of Public Safety is in full force along the border around the Del Rio area,” he boasted. “They have built a barricade with their squad cars and State Troopers. The National Guard is working with them to secure the border.”

Trump himself issued an openly racist diatribe, declaring that “America is rapidly becoming a cesspool of humanity,” and claiming that migrants were coming “from countries in Africa, even more so now than South America.

“Murderers, drug dealers and criminals of all shapes

and sizes are a big part of this massive migration,” wrote the criminal former president, who sought on January 6 to overthrow the US Constitution and keep himself in power, despite losing the 2020 election.

The American working class must oppose with all its energy the crimes that are being carried out by the American government against these most vulnerable of people, migrants and refugees fleeing poverty, natural disaster and imperialist oppression. Workers must raise the demand to release all detained migrants and grant them full legal status and citizenship.



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact