

Biden administration detained a record 2.3 million migrants at the US-Mexico border in 2022

Kevin Reed
24 October 2022

The administration of Democratic President Joe Biden apprehended more migrants in fiscal year 2022 than any other president in a single year on record, according to statistics published Friday by the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) division of the Department of Homeland Security.

In its annual statistical review of enforcement actions, dated October 21, CBP reported that more than 2.3 million migrants were apprehended at the US southern border during the 12 months ending September 30, 2022. This annual total represented an increase of 37 percent over the previous record of 1.7 million apprehensions set the year before by the CBP under Biden.

Prior to 2021, the record of 1.6 million apprehensions was set in 2000, before the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and in the final year of the Clinton administration. Records for border patrol actions stretch back to 1960, when the Eisenhower administration apprehended just 21,022 individuals at the southwest border.

In the inhumane bureaucratic language of US immigration policy, the total number of actions by CBP in 2022 was composed of Title 42 Expulsions, Title 8 Inadmissibles and Title 8 Apprehensions. Title 42 refers to a little-known section of US health law that permits the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to "prohibit" individuals seeking asylum in the US from entering the country when "there is serious danger of the introduction of [a communicable] disease into the United States."

The Title 42 assault on the rights of migrants was implemented by the Trump administration during the third month of the coronavirus pandemic. It is noteworthy that Trump took this measure despite maintaining the position that the virus was "under control" and the "risk is low to

average Americans" up to March 13, 2020 when he declared a national emergency.

One week later, he used his emergency powers to attack the fundamental right to asylum through border expulsions under the provisions of section 265 of Title 42 to forcibly return migrants back to Mexico or their home countries such as Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

According to the American Immigrant Council, "Despite the claim made by the [CDC] that this order was necessary from a public health perspective to protect the United States, public reporting has shown that the policy originated in the [DHS] and the Trump White House."

In the case of Title 8 actions, US law permits individuals to be characterized as inadmissible and deportable for a host of reasons such as having been convicted of a crime involving "moral turpitude related to property" or failure to appear "without reasonable cause" for an immigration proceeding.

However, it is equally significant that the apprehensions of the Biden administration have far surpassed those the Trump White House, which made xenophobia and the assault on the rights of immigrant workers a central plank of its far-right domestic political agenda. Although Biden claims to oppose Title 42 actions against asylum seekers, the administration is aggressively complying with court orders to keep it in place as part of political accommodation with far-right Republicans.

The 2022 CPB data shows that nearly a quarter of all border encounters were with families, while 6 percent involved children met by border patrol officials without parents or guardians. Nearly 70 percent of the apprehensions continued to be of single adults.

The brutality of the US border policy under both the Democrats and Republicans is manifest in the rising

number of deaths at the US-Mexico border. The year 2022 was the deadliest on record, with more than 800 people dying during their attempts to reach the US.

Although these statistics are not public, an unnamed senior border patrol official shared them with National Public Radio. The NPR report said, “Drownings are part of the reason why. Hundreds more have perished from extreme heat in remote borderlands, or in the backs of tractor-trailers.”

The CBP data shows that a growing number of migrants are from Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua while fewer are coming from northern Central America. When Biden was asked about this at a press briefing in September, he said that it was “not rational” to send these asylum seekers back to their home countries, but added, “we’re working with Mexico and other countries to see if we can stop the flow.”

According to a report in Yahoo News, the growth in migrant numbers from these countries “reflect deteriorating economic and political conditions” and that border patrol agents, especially in Texas, are sending immigrants without friends or family in the US to locations that have no idea that they are coming.

While most migrants are expelled immediately under Title 42, others are released with notices to appear in immigration court or under humanitarian parole. These migrants must tell agents where they will live, but most do not have any address to provide.

Lauren Wyatt, managing attorney with Catholic Charities of New York, told the Associated Press, “It almost seems as though, at the border, officials are simply just looking up any nonprofit address they can or just looking up any name at all that they can and just putting that down without actually ever checking whether that person has mentioned it, whether there's beds or shelter at that location, or whether this is even a location that can provide legal assistance.”



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact