

ICE deports illegal immigrants to Central America, brings back Americans stranded under coronavirus measures

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Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is using flights deporting illegal immigrants to two Central American countries to bring back Americans stranded by restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic.

ICE, working with the State Department, has brought home 209 U.S. citizens on the return leg of two deportation flights to El Salvador and Honduras, the agency said in a statement. Those flights took place on March 22 and 24, respectively.

TRUMP IMMIGRATION AGENDA ROLLS ON: CORONAVIRUS THREAT FUELS NEW BORDER CRACKDOWN

Acting Deputy Homeland Security Secretary Ken Cuccinelli touted the moves in a series of tweets where he posted pictures of the Americans being brought home.



Acting Deputy Secretary Ken Cuccinelli@HomelandKen

This was an ICE flight repatriating Hondurans to Honduras, & ICE arranged your bring stranded Americans home on the return flight from Honduras.



“This was an ICE flight repatriating Hondurans to Honduras, & ICE arranged your bringing stranded Americans home on the return flight from Honduras,” he tweeted.

Both countries have placed significant restrictions on movement and travel over the coronavirus, with Honduras closing its borders entirely — leaving some foreigners stranded.

A U.S. women's tackle football team was airlifted out of Honduras on Friday by the U.S. military after being stuck there for nearly a week.

US RESTRICTS NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL WITH MEXICO AND CANADA: WHAT THAT MEANS

The Trump administration last year made a number of Asylum Cooperative Agreements with Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, which includes greater cooperation for returning migrants to their countries.

ICE said in a statement that it will continue to use flights from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala to return U.S. citizens. The agency said that such operations could also be expanded to countries outside the Northern Triangle.

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The U.S. has placed a number of restrictions on non-essential incoming travel at the northern and southern border, as well as from Europe, China, and Iran, but those restrictions do not apply to U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents.

On illegal immigration, the Trump administration has said it will change procedures in order to protect officers and the general public while continuing to apprehend and deport illegal immigrants.

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