

Migrants rush Yuma border crossing as 'Remain in Mexico' policy reinstated

(The Center Square) - The Yuma County Sheriff's office is distributing video of crowds of immigrants that approached the U.S. border wall over the weekend, with some migrants saying they aimed to enter before President Joe Biden reinstates a Trump-era immigration crackdown.

U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) began reimplementing a version of former President Donald Trump's Migrant Protection Protocol (MPP), commonly referred to as "Remain in Mexico," earlier in December in Texas. The administration reached an agreement with the Mexican government to expand the program so the only other port of entry would be in San Diego, starting Dec. 6.

First announced by the Trump administration in December 2018, MPP requires migrants seeking asylum to remain in Mexico while they wait for an immigration hearing. CBP suspended the policy under Biden but later was ordered by a judge in Texas to reimplement it. The administration is appealing the ruling. Around 71,000 immigrants were turned away because of MPP, according to immigration activists. Under Biden's version of MPP, border agents will offer a COVID-19 vaccination before turning migrants away to wait for a hearing.

Yuma County Sheriff Leon Wilmot's office is reporting around 4,000 migrants waiting to be processed, according to reporters on the border. In a video provided by the sheriff's office, one migrant told officers he and others were aware of the MPP change.

"A lot of people who were planning to come here but, because of this new law, they need to come here as soon as possible," the man said through the border wall gap.

A CBP spokesperson told The Center Square on Tuesday the department will "continue to treat all migrants with dignity and respect" but will keep turning migrants away under Title 42 authority.

“Unscrupulous smugglers continue to exploit vulnerable migrants. CBP’s message is clear: Our borders are not open,” the spokesperson said. “People should not make the dangerous journey. Yuma Sector and our partners across CBP are working expeditiously to screen and process those encountered. Local non-governmental organizations are providing basic needs for the migrants still waiting to be taken into custody along the border.”

CBP agents in the Del Rio sector of Texas encountered 3,541 undocumented migrants over the weekend, according to a release.

Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey tweeted about the surge in migrants.

“Yuma is facing an escalating humanitarian and border crisis - and it’s a direct result of the Biden administration’s poor communication, lack of organization and complete disregard for border protection,” he said Monday. “These individuals and families are crossing the border in droves because the Biden administration is not taking any real action.

“They announce ending the ‘Remain in Mexico’ policy, without actually ending it. Creating incentives for people to migrate before it takes effect. It’s the latest in a long line of incompetence, from the same administration that botched Afghanistan. Their inaction is overwhelming the talented law enforcement professionals who have worked under previous administrations to keep Arizona and our country safe.”

The policy shift brought condemnation from immigrant rights activists who insist Biden cannot implement the MPP in a humane manner.

“The Biden administration has broken its promise to restore access to a humane asylum system at the border. As DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas has acknowledged, there is no humane way to implement the Remain in Mexico program and provide people the protections they are guaranteed by law,” said Jorge Loweree, policy director at the American Immigration Council. “The Remain in Mexico program eliminated due process for 70,000 people and forced vulnerable families to run a gauntlet of kidnappers and extortionists just to get to the courtroom door. Now the Biden administration will again send vulnerable people into the lion’s den.”

Cole Lauterbach is a regional editor for The Center Square covering Arizona, California, and Nevada. For more than a decade, Cole has produced award-winning content on both radio and television.

Source:

https://www.thecentersquare.com/arizona/migrants-rush-yuma-border-crossing-as-remain-in-mexico-policy-reinstated/article_2c2f46d4-579e-11ec-8579-4b77f1c6970a.html

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