

Number of refugee children in U.S. 'border facilities' soars amid growing border crisis



Asylum seeking unaccompanied minors are transported in a U.S. Border Patrol vehicle after crossing the Rio Grande into the United States. (Photo: Reuters)

San Diego, March 13 (RHC)-- The number of refugee children being held in U.S. border facilities is more than four times the number in late February, highlighting a growing humanitarian and political crisis for President Joe Biden's administration.

More than 3,600 migrant children, up from around 800 on February 22, were held in the “facilities” as of Thursday morning, U.S. officials said. Some reports, however, said the number of detained asylum seeking children is much higher.

An estimated 8,800 migrant children who came to the United States alone are in federal care facilities, a US Health and Human Services (HHS) spokesperson told Sputnik on Friday.

Biden vowed to undo many of the immigration policies of former president Donald Trump when he assumed the presidency in January. Detentions, however, on the U.S. border have surged since January as the number of asylum seeking unaccompanied minors has spiked, with more children transferring to increasingly crowded notorious federal shelters.

Last week, U.S. health officials lifted coronavirus-related capacity restrictions on shelters for unaccompanied minors and this has posed a serious COVID-19 health risk to children and staff.

The Biden administration has been sharply criticized by both fellow Democrats and Republicans for its handling of the refugee crisis at the border. Republicans have ripped the president for rolling back Trump’s hardline policies, saying his administration has encouraged illegal immigration.

Democrats criticized Biden for using notorious Trump-era detainment facilities in Texas to house migrant children. Democrats had used the detainment facilities to accuse Trump of putting “kids in cages.”

A dozen Republicans led by House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy will travel to the US-Mexico border in Texas on Monday to address what they say is a dire crisis. McCarthy requested a meeting with Biden last week to discuss the border refugee crisis, but said he has not heard back from the president.

Mexico has blasted Biden for stoking illegal immigration by rolling back Trump’s immigration policies, saying the U.S. president has created business for organized crime. “They see him as the migrant president, and so many feel they’re going to reach the United States,” Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said of Biden after a virtual meeting with his U.S. counterpart on March 1.

Mexican officials said Biden's new immigration policy turned people into a "commodity" for human trafficking gangs.

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