

# *Smugglers seen dropping children over U.S.-Mexico border wall*



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Santa Teresa, April 1 (RHC)-- Two little Ecuadorian girls were hoisted over and dropped from the top of a four-metre (14 feet) wall on the U.S.-Mexico border in the middle of the night before being picked up by U.S. officers.

The children, ages 3 and 5, were taken to a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) station in Santa Teresa, New Mexico, to be evaluated by medical personnel, then were transported to a local hospital as a

precaution. The CBP said the girls remain in the agency's custody.

"On Tuesday evening, a Santa Teresa agent utilising camera technology observed a smuggler dropping two young children from the top of the approximately 14-foot-high (four-metre-high) border barrier," the CBP said in a statement on Wednesday. "I'm appalled by the way these smugglers viciously dropped innocent children from a 14-foot border barrier last night," chief patrol agent Gloria Chavez said in the statement.

Chavez said U.S. agents are working with Mexican authorities to identify those responsible. "If not for the vigilance of our agents using mobile technology, these two tender-aged siblings would have been exposed to the harsh elements of desert environment for hours," Chavez said.

The U.S. is facing an increase of migrant and refugee arrivals at the country's southern border, mostly Central Americans fleeing poverty and violence in their own countries. Recently, there has been an average of 500 unaccompanied children crossing each day.

President Joe Biden's administration is coming under pressure to address the situation and criticism of how unaccompanied minors are being cared for in U.S. government custody. According to Raul Benitez Manaut of the National University of Mexico, the change of residents at the White House gave immigrants and refugees hope, increasing the number of people who try to cross the border.

"One of the key elements of Biden's policy is about unaccompanied minors," he told Al Jazeera, adding that this led to an increase in children arrivals from Latin American countries. According to official statistics, the Department of Health and Human Services had 12,918 migrant and refugee children in their care as of Tuesday, while CBP was responsible for the care of another 5,285.

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