

*U.S. plans migrant processing centers in Latin America and rapid deportations from Mexico border*

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Washington, April 29 (RHC)-- The Joe Biden administration has announced plans to open processing centers across Latin America where asylum seekers would have to request permission to come to the U.S., blocking tens of thousands from seeking relief at the U.S.-Mexico border.

The first processing centers will be located in Guatemala and Colombia. Migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean will be forced to journey to one of the nearest centers to start an asylum application or ask for refugee status to then be resettled to either the U.S., Canada or Spain.

The U.S. has agreed to take in 20,000 refugees over the next two fiscal years, while doubling or tripling the rapid deportations of migrants who are deemed “not eligible” to enter the United States. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and Secretary of State Antony Blinken laid out the sweeping measures Thursday, threatening migrants at the southern U.S. border with harsher consequences, including possible criminal charges.

DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas: “Beginning on May 12, we will be — we will place eligible individuals who arrive at our southern border in expedited removal proceedings. Those who arrive at our border and do not have a legal basis to stay will have made the journey, often having suffered horrific trauma and having paid their life savings to the smugglers, only to be quickly removed. They will be removed most often in a matter of days and just a few weeks.”

This comes as the U.S. is preparing to lift the Trump-era Title 42 pandemic policy in May, which for the past three years has been used to expel some 2.7 million migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border without due process.

Immigrant justice advocates have denounced the Biden administration for violating international law and enforcing policies similar to those pushed by Donald Trump. The new measures exclude migrants from Africa. Eleanor Acer of Human Rights First said in a statement: “The Biden administration should focus on measures like increasing refugee resettlement and regular pathways and abandon its plan to impose an asylum ban that would be a legal, moral, and political mistake.”

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