

Biden restricting asylum access at Mexico border as Title 42 ends



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Washington, May 10 (RHC)-- The United States rolled out a new regulation on Wednesday that will deny asylum to most migrants crossing the US-Mexico border illegally, a key part of President Joe Biden's enforcement plan as COVID-19 border restrictions known as Title 42 end this week.

The final version of the regulation, which becomes effective on Thursday, has no major changes from a draft published in February, a senior Biden administration official told reporters on Tuesday evening. The regulation creates a new presumption that migrants arriving at the border are ineligible for asylum if they passed through other nations without seeking protection elsewhere first or if they failed to use legal pathways for US entry.

The new restrictions will apply to the vast majority of non-Mexican migrants since they typically pass through multiple countries en route to the United States.

The Biden administration is preparing for possible increase in already record levels of unauthorized border crossings when the COVID-19 restrictions, first implemented in March 2020, are lifted on Thursday just before midnight. Migrants have been amassing in Mexico this week as thousands crossing into the US have strained border cities.

The Title 42 restrictions allow U.S. authorities to rapidly expel many non-Mexican migrants to Mexico without the chance to seek US asylum. Mexicans, the nationality most frequently caught crossing, are able to be quickly returned to Mexico under bilateral agreements that predated the COVID-19 restrictions.

Republicans have criticized Biden, a Democrat running for re-election in 2024, for rolling back the hardline policies of Republican former President Donald Trump, the current front-runner for his party's nomination.

Biden's new regulation restricting asylum access at the border resembles similar measures implemented under Trump that were blocked by US courts. The move also counters previous statements Biden made in 2020 on the campaign trail, saying he thought it was "wrong" for people not to be able to seek asylum on American soil.

Some Democrats and immigration advocates have said the regulation undercuts the ability to seek asylum at US borders as required by U.S. law and international agreements. The American Civil Liberties Union has already signaled it will sue over the Biden policy.

In addition to the bar on asylum seekers, which could ramp up deportations, Biden officials said in late April that they are expanding legal pathways for migrants abroad in order to provide alternative ways to enter the United States and discourage illegal crossings.

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