

U.S. says 5,000 soldiers deployed along Mexico border and could soon send more



Washington, February 14 (RHC)-- A U.S. Army general has announced there are currently about 5,000 active-duty soldiers along the country's southern border with Mexico, as part of President Donald Trump's overall push to crack down on immigration.

General Gregory Guillot, the head of U.S. Northern Command, told lawmakers on Thursday he expects that number could increase further. He also revealed that the military has heightened its activities in the domain of cross-border intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR). Drug cartels were the primary target.

"We have also increased some uniquely military capabilities that will get after ... the cartels, which are driving the illegal migration," said Guillot. "That is primarily through airborne ISR to get more information on those and figure out how we can counter their actions."

The presence of thousands of U.S. soldiers along the border with Mexico fulfils a campaign pledge made by President Donald Trump to declare a "national emergency" at the southern U.S. border.

On January 20, the first day of his second term, Trump signed an executive order that directed military leaders to send "as many units or members of the Armed Forces" as needed to the border, to obtain "complete operational control" of the area. He also called on the U.S. secretary of transportation to waive restrictions on "unmanned aerial systems" within eight kilometres (five miles) of the border.

During his time as a politician, Trump has leaned into nativist rhetoric that frames undocumented immigration as an "invasion" and the people involved as "criminals." Shutting the border to irregular crossings has been a cornerstone of his campaign for re-election, as has launching a "mass deportation" campaign.

[SOURCE: PRESS TV and ASSOCIATED PRESS]

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