

# *Thousands of asylum seekers head to Mexico to wait for U.S. hearing*

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Mexico City, July 22 (RHC)-- Thousands of Central American asylum seekers are being forced to head back south to Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, because the United States government won't let them remain in the country while their visa paperwork is processed, which could take months or years.

Just on the other side of the border from Laredo, Texas authorities in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas said that over the weekend thousands of asylum seekers, victims of U.S. President Donald Trump's newest immigration policy measures were streaming into the city with no where else to go.

The U.S. government announced Friday that it will expand its "Remain in Mexico" policy, which forces asylum seekers out of the country to await their hearings in Nuevo Laredo where dozens of makeshift camps are springing up, says Prensa Latina.

Under the policy, already being applied in San Diego, California and El Paso, Texas, asylum seekers are quickly processed and given a date to return to the U.S. for an immigration court hearing.

Since January, at least 18,000 migrants have been sent back to Mexico, according to Mexico's National Migration Institute (INM). The Department of Homeland Security of the United States (DHS) said it will also begin to apply send refugees processed in Brownsville, Texas into Matamoros, Mexico.

The newest chief of the Department of Homeland Security, Kevin McAleenan, says the raids on immigrants in 10 major cities that began last Sunday, will continue in order to "protect" the nation.

Migrants stranded in Nuevo Laredo have set up precarious camps on the border, exposing the vulnerable population to criminal groups involved in human trafficking and smuggling in the area, warn human rights organizations. Residents of the city have also warned about the health conditions women and children face there.

Contradicting what's going on 'on the ground', Mexican ambassador to the U.S., Martha Barcena, said: "we have said again and again that we are not ready to sign" any agreement to become a 'safe third country' for the United States.

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