

U.S. now forcing asylum seekers from Brazil to wait in Mexico



Washington, January 30 (RHC)-- In the U.S., the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said that it has started sending Brazilians back into Mexico amid a surge of people from the South American country seeking refuge in the United States.

DHS said in a statement announcing the change that the number of Brazilian migrants arriving at the southern border had tripled over the past year. Many have said they are fleeing persecution, gang violence and economic hardship. They will join about 55,000 migrants waiting in Mexico for rulings on their asylum claims, decisions that can take months or even years.

Previously, migrants presenting themselves at the southern border or apprehended while trying to enter the country were, if they met the initial threshold for asylum, often released on parole in the US to await a final determination by an immigration judge.

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration began forcing them to stay in Mexico under the "Migrant Protection Protocols" (MPP) as part of a broader effort to reduce what DHS calls "irregular migration" to the United States.

Advocates for immigrants have sued the federal government to halt the policy, known informally as "remain in Mexico", arguing it deprives people of the right under international law to seek asylum and

makes it harder for them to press their legal cases in backlogged immigration courts.

The U.S. began returning migrants from Central America to Mexico last year. In December, acting Customs and Border Patrol Chief Mark Morgan pledged to try to shut down asylum for migrants from outside the immediate region, noting migrants from Haiti, Brazil and African countries.

Immigrant rights advocates went to immigration courts to document the number of migrants and asylum seekers who are in court without legal support or representation. They also denounced the "Remain in Mexico" policy, saying it equals "rape," "violence" and rights violations.

"By having to remain in MX these families have no access to legal support or ability to truly present their case for asylum," tweeted one Twitter user. "Moms wiped tears away as they asked the judge to repeat questions they didn't understand."

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