

Human rights groups call U.S. expulsion of Haitians obscene

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?U.S. forcibly deports Haitian migrants camped on the border with Mexico, riding in on horses and roping men, women and children as if they were cattle??

Washington, September 21 (RHC)-- Human rights groups in the United States have blasted the Biden administration for its planned expulsion of some 12,000 mostly Haitian migrants and asylum seekers who have been camped under a bridge in Del Rio, Texas, after wading across the Rio Grande River from Mexico.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said on Monday that 6,500 migrants and asylum seekers have been taken into custody in advance of processing and removal from

the United States. On Sunday, the first flights carrying migrants landed in Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince.

"It's completely unconscionable," Steven Forester, immigration policy coordinator at the US-based Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, told Al Jazeera. "There's no way Haiti can handle the people that are in Haiti now given the conditions there. It can't provide for these people."

Images during the weekend showed hundreds of Haitian migrants trudging waist-deep across the Rio Grande while carrying their belongings over their heads to reach the U.S., heaping pressure on the Biden administration to rethink its immigration policies.

DHS said the vast majority of the migrants will be expelled under Title 42, a Trump-era health order that cites the coronavirus pandemic as a reason to quickly expel people seeking asylum at the U.S. border.

"If you come to the United States illegally, you will be returned," Mayorkas said during a news conference in Del Rio on Monday, adding that the U.S. would conduct up to three deportation flights a day. "Your journey will not succeed and you will be endangering your life and your family's lives."

Rights groups for months have blasted Title 42 as inhumane, not based on science, and a violation of Washington's own immigration laws – and they have been calling on US President Joe Biden to reverse the policy since he took office in January.

"They should stop deportations," said Alix Desulme, who is Haitian and serves on city council in the city of North Miami, home to a large Haitian community. "It's been a cry way before this happened," Desulme told Al Jazeera, referring to the planned expulsions from the Texas-Mexico border encampment, "and Title 42 needs to be repealed."

Haitian President Jovenel Moise was assassinated in July, thrusting a country already grappling with political turmoil into deeper uncertainty. A month later, a 7.2-magnitude earthquake struck, killing over 2,000 people and devastating the southern region of the small Caribbean island.

Even before those events, the U.S. had acknowledged the potential dangers Haitian migrants could face if they are deported back to their country. On May 22, the Biden administration announced an 18-month Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitians, shielding them from deportations. But the measure only applies to those in the U.S. before July 29.

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