

The Honorable Joseph Biden
President of the United States

Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas
Department of Homeland Security

Amb. Susan Rice
Domestic Policy Council

Jake Sullivan
National Security Advisor

Cc: Secretary Antony Blinken
Department of State

Secretary Xavier Becerra
Department of Health and Human Services

Submitted via email August 13, 2021

Re: Joint Letter to President Biden on Expulsion Flights to Southern Mexico and Forthcoming Changes to Asylum Processing

Dear President Biden, Secretary Mayorkas, Amb. Rice and Advisor Sullivan:

We, the 102 undersigned organizations, write to express our profound disappointment at Secretary Mayorkas's [remarks](#) yesterday that outlined plans to increase prosecutions of families and individuals arriving at our border and maximize expulsions. Far from fulfilling its [commitment](#) to build a "safe, orderly, and humane immigration system," your administration continues to pursue cruel, unlawful, and ineffective deterrence-based policies that extend rather than dismantle the previous administration's approach to migration. Since your administration took office in January 2021, there have been more than [3,000 documented kidnappings, extortions, rapes, and other attacks](#) suffered by families and individuals expelled from the southern border.

We are gravely concerned by [reports](#) that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) plans to send 24 expulsion flights per month of Central American families and adults seeking protection at the U.S.-Mexico border to southern Mexico. In the last week, [hundreds of migrants expelled on the first such flights have reportedly been denied access to protection](#) and forced by Mexican authorities into remote areas of Guatemala. DHS has also resumed [lateral expulsion flights](#) along the U.S.-Mexico border and expulsion flights to Haiti. These expulsions make a mockery of public health and human rights as they intentionally and systematically return people to harm in violation of U.S. law and [international obligations](#) of *non-refoulement*.

As it is finalizing forthcoming changes to asylum policy, we adamantly urge the administration to abandon consideration or adoption of policies which aim to [deter or punish](#) people for crossing the U.S. southern border to seek protection. The administration should also firmly reject any approaches that would return individuals to Mexico to await their U.S. immigration hearings under INA section 235(b)(2)(C). We applaud your decision to end and unwind the Trump administration's Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), under which more than [70,000 individuals](#) were sent to cities where they experienced grave human rights violations, including kidnapping, sexual assault, and murder, at the hands of bad actors. Our organizations vehemently oppose any

future iteration of a MPP-style policy which would unquestionably put individuals in danger and violate U.S. asylum law.

We further call on the administration to immediately [end its use of the public health order](#) known as Title 42 to expel individuals and families back to danger, through expulsions at the border, lateral expulsion flights, and expulsion flights to southern Mexico and Haiti. As [public health experts](#) and [UNHCR](#) have made clear since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary and possible to protect public health and ensure access to asylum at the same time.

Your administration has the responsibility to restore the U.S. immigration system and uphold U.S. refugee law and treaty obligations. The administration's recent actions highlighted above are in direct contravention of the goal to repair the broken immigration system you inherited. We urge your administration to immediately change course and reaffirm the U.S.'s commitment to protecting people fleeing persecution and allow families and adults their legal right to seek asylum in the U.S.

Sincerely,

5 Site Council

Al Otro Lado

ABQ Faith Works Collaborative

Aldea - The People's Justice Center

American Friends Service Committee

American Immigration Lawyers Association

Amnesty International USA

Angry Tias and Abuelas of the RGV

Arizona Justice For Our Neighbors

Asylum Access México (AAMX) A.C.

Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP)

Austin Border Relief

Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)

Border Kindness

Bridges Faith Initiative

Casa del Migrante en Tijuana, A.C.

Caravan for the Children

Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.

Center for Civic Policy

Center for Democracy in the Americas

Center for Gender & Refugee Studies

Central American Resource Center (CARECEN-LA)

Central American Resource Center Of Northern CA -CARECEN SF
Church of the Brethren, Office of Peacebuilding and Policy
Church World Service
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Desert Support for Asylum Seekers
Detention Watch Network
Diocesan Migrant & Refugee Services, Inc.
ELCA AMMPARO
Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project
Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement
First Focus on Children
Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project
Freedom For Immigrants
Global Labor Justice-International Labor Rights Forum
Haitian Bridge Alliance
HIAS
Hispanic Federation
Hope Border Institute
Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative
Human Rights First
Humanitarian Outreach for Migrant Emotional Health (H.O.M.E.)
Immigrant Defenders Law Center
Immigrant Legal Defense
Innovation Law Lab
Interfaith Welcome Coalition
International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)
International Rescue Committee
Japanese American Citizens League
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Justice for Our Neighbors El Paso
Kino Border Initiative
La Raza Centro Legal San Francisco
La Raza Community Resource Center
La Unión del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)
Laredo Immigrant Alliance
Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center
Latin America Working Group
LUPE (La Union Del Pueblo Entero)

Madres e Hijos
Mercy Immigrant Advocate Group
Migrant and Immigrant Community Action Project
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Immigration Law Center
National Immigration Project (NIPNLG)
National Justice for Our Neighbors
National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New York Immigration Coalition
New York Justice for Our Neighbors, Inc.
Oxfam America
PolicyLink
Project Corazon, Lawyers for Good Government
Public Counsel
Quixote Center
Rainbow Bridge Asylum Seekers
Refugees International
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network
Save the Children
Seguimos Adelante
Sin Fronteras IAP
Sisters of Mercy Laredo, Texas
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
South Texas Human Rights Center
Southern Border Communities Coalition
Southern California Immigration Project
SPLC Action Fund
Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice
Taylor Levy Law
Team Brownsville Inc
Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors
The Advocates for Human Rights
The Sidewalk School
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
VECINA
Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)

We Are All America

Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center

Witness at the Border

Women's Refugee Commission