

The Honorable Alejandro N. Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

October 14, 2022

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

We, the undersigned organizations committed to the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, write to express our deep disappointment and shock at the [announcement](#) that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is expanding the use of Title 42 to expel Venezuelans seeking refuge at the U.S.-Mexico border. While we welcome steps to provide safe processing for some Venezuelans, the creation of safe pathways should never be wielded to deny other people seeking protection access to asylum. We are also troubled that the announcement refers to attempted entry at the southern border by Venezuelans as “illegal.” Seeking asylum is legal under both U.S. and international law.

Access to the U.S. asylum process must not hinge on an individual’s nationality, pre-existing ties to the country, financial means, or manner of entry. Title 42 expulsions violate U.S. and international law, have [no basis as a public health measure](#), and return people seeking asylum to [grave human rights abuses](#). Evading actual refugee law, the Title 42 policy facilitates discriminatory denials of access to asylum based on nationality and race and has long inflicted grave and disparate harms on Haitian and other Black asylum seekers. While litigation has forced the continuation of the Title 42 policy, this administration bears sole responsibility for expanding the policy and negotiating with Mexico to increase turn-backs. Inevitably, this will push [many asylum seekers](#) to dangerous crossings away from official border posts and leave them even more vulnerable to human trafficking. Utilizing punitive and unlawful measures such as Title 42 to attempt to deter future migration is not only unlawful but also goes against the rights-respecting commitments made by the United States and 20 other countries in the hemisphere who signed the [Los Angeles Declaration](#) on Migration and Protection earlier this year. Sacrificing the protection of people seeking refuge will not appease those spreading anti-immigrant rhetoric, but it will undermine the protection of refugees globally with far-reaching and long-term dire consequences.

Instead of coupling the parole program to Title 42, DHS can and should take all legally permissible steps to restore access to asylum at ports of entry, regardless of the asylum seeker’s nationality or other factors, and to cease—not expand—Title 42 expulsions. The Biden administration should also redouble efforts to rebuild and strengthen the pace and capacity of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program to process more refugees from Venezuela and other countries.

We welcome steps to create more safe pathways for individuals to access the U.S. asylum system and stand ready to work with your department in this important work.

Respectfully,

ADL (Anti-Defamation League)  
Al Otro Lado  
Aldea - the People's Justice Center  
Alianza Americas  
America's Voice  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)  
Arizona Justice for Our Neighbors  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC  
Asylum Access Mexico  
Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP)  
AVAN (Adelanto Visitation & Advocacy Network)  
Ayuda  
Bellevue Program for Survivors of Torture  
Black Alliance for Justice Immigration  
Bridges Faith Initiative  
Cabrini Immigrant Services of NYC, Inc.  
California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice  
Capital Area Immigrants' Rights (CAIR) Coalition  
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC)  
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies  
Center for Law and Social Policy  
Center for Popular Democracy  
Center for Safety & Change  
Center for Victims of Torture  
Central American Refugee Center (CARECEN-NY)  
Central American Resource Center- CARECEN- of California  
Central American Resource Center of Northern CA - CARECEN SF  
Church World Service  
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)  
Columbia Law School Immigrants' Rights Clinic  
Communities United for Status & Protection (CUSP)  
Community Asylum Seekers Project  
Community Resource Center  
Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel  
Doctors for Camp Closure  
Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington, DC  
ECDC  
El Calvario Immigrant Advocacy Center  
Envision Freedom Fund  
Espacio Migrante  
Esperanza United  
Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc. (ECDC)  
Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project  
Florida Immigrant Coalition  
Franciscan Action Network  
Galveston-Houston Immigrant Representation Project (GHIRP)  
Grassroots Leadership  
Haitian Bridge Alliance  
HIAS  
Hope Border Institute | Instituto Fronterizo Esperanza

Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative  
Human Rights First  
Human Rights Watch  
Immigrant Action Alliance  
Immigrant ARC  
Immigrant Defenders Law Center  
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project  
Immigrant Legal Resource Center  
Immigration Equality  
Immigration Hub  
Innovation Law Lab  
Institute for Women in Migration  
Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity  
International Refugee Assistance Project  
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA  
Justice Action Center  
Justice & Equity Team/Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara  
Justice for Our Neighbors El Paso  
Kids in Need of Defense  
Kino Border Initiative  
La Conexion  
Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center  
Latin America Working Group  
Lawyers for Good Government  
Legal Aid Justice Center  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service  
Migrant Center for Human Rights  
Minnesota Freedom Fund  
Mobilization for Justice, Inc.  
MomsRising  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Education Association  
National Immigrant Justice Center  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Immigration Project (NIPNLG)  
National Justice For Our Neighbors  
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights  
National Partnership for New Americans  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
New York Immigration Coalition  
North Carolina Justice Center  
NW Ohio Immigrant Rights Network  
OC Rapid Response Network (OCCRN)  
Physicians for Human Rights  
Presbyterian Church USA  
Project Lifeline  
Public Counsel  
Public Law Center  
Quixote Center  
RAICES  
Rainbow Railroad

Refugee Congress  
Refugee Council USA  
Refugee Health Alliance  
Refugees International  
Rian Immigrant Center  
Rockland County Immigration Coalition  
Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network  
Safe Harbor Clinic, Brooklyn Law School  
Save the Children  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team  
Southern Border Communities Coalition  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice  
Tahirih Justice Center  
Texas Civil Rights Project  
The Advocates for Human Rights  
The Episcopal Church  
The Sidewalk School  
The Workers Circle  
UCLA Center for Immigration Law and Policy  
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice  
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants  
Union for Reform Judaism  
University of California, San Diego  
VECINA  
Voice for Refuge Action Fund  
Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)  
We Are All America  
#WelcomeWithDignity  
Welcoming America  
Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration (WJCI)  
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center  
Witness At The Border  
Women's Refugee Commission  
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights