

## US southern border arrests break record

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August 17, 2022

US border agents have arrested a record 1.94 million migrants at the southern border in the first 10 months of fiscal year 2022, surpassing the total border arrests of 1.73 million for 2021, according to newly released figures from US Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

With two months remaining for the government's fiscal year 2022, the number likely will easily exceed 2 million, a historical record.

One reason for the surging number of arrests is Title 42, a COVID-19 pandemic-related policy put in place under the Trump administration. It allows border agents to turn away some of the migrants without processing and penalty. As a result, many make repeated border crossing attempts.

CBP said that for July, agents stopped 199,976 migrants; 22 percent of the arrests involved individuals who had at least one prior encounter in the previous 12 months.

The July number was down 3.8 percent from 207,933 in June and down 6.8 percent from 213,593 in July 2021, CPB said.

"While the encounter numbers remain high, this is a positive trend and the first two-month drop since October 2021," said Commissioner Chris Magnus.

Rafael Ruiz, a 54-year-old Mexican, told The Wall Street Journal that he has already tried to cross the border three times and vows to keep trying. "I won't give up. I have nothing here" in Mexico, he told the Journal.

The Biden administration sought to end Title 42 in May, but that was blocked by a federal judge after several Republican-led states, including Texas, filed a lawsuit. The policy will likely stay in place for months as the case is appealed. If Title 42 is eventually removed, the number of border crossings is expected to drop, but the number of asylum-seekers is expected to rise.

Current data show that about 70 percent of migrants are single adults looking for job opportunities in the US, according to the Journal.

While Mexico and Central American countries remain the primary source of migrant crossings, the numbers are increasing for migrants from Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, reported the Journal.

Authorities said they stopped Mexicans, Guatemalans, Hondurans and El Salvadorans less in July than in June.

Mexico has agreed to take people from all those countries who are expelled under Title 42.

Migrants from those countries can't be deported because the US doesn't have working relationships with their governments. Most of them are either detained or released into the community while going through the asylum-seeking process.

As a result, that attracts more people from those countries to make the long journey to the US. David Bier, a migration expert at the Cato Institute, told the Journal that the US needs migrants to help fill some 11 million job openings, most of them low-wage, nonfarm jobs in sectors such as construction, poultry processing and restaurants.

"What we see at the southern border is a reflection of demand for labor in the US," he said.

Currently, undocumented immigrants can obtain legal status only through marrying a US citizen, obtaining asylum status, a visa for victims of crimes, and DREAMers green card by becoming a candidate for higher-skilled jobs with higher education. There is no legal pathway for low-wage jobs.