

## Upcoming Meetings & Events

### USCRI'S SECOND QUARTERLY POLICY BRIEFING: CURRENT MIGRATION FLOWS IN THE SUDANS – FEB 18

On Thursday, February 18 at 11:00 AM EST, join USCRI for our second quarterly briefing on migration flows in the Sudans. The briefing will feature top experts in the field who will discuss the most pressing issues facing the region, including the influx of Ethiopian refugees in eastern Sudan, mounting violence in Darfur, and the UN's decision to withdraw aid for displaced persons in South Sudan. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

### MIGRATION AND THE FUTURE OF WORK VIRTUAL CONFERENCE – FEB 22-25

Between Monday, February 22 and Thursday, February 25, the Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) in Migration and Integration will host its second annual international conference. The online conference will investigate the impact of technological change on the future of work and how this is transforming labor migration around the world. Each day will feature multiple panels and roundtable discussions. For more information and to register, click [here](#).



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## United States Issue Updates

### • Haitians Deported in Apparent Defiance of Moratorium

On February 8, reports surfaced that one day before the new Administration's 100-day moratorium on all deportations resumed, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) deported at least 72 people to Haiti on February 7. Of the 72 people, 21 were children, including a 2-month-old baby. The two flights left from Texas to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, where the U.S.-backed Haitian president has refused to leave office, triggering a political crisis. The expulsions were carried out under a 77-year-old public health statute, called Title 42, first invoked by the former administration after the start of the pandemic. A spokesperson for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said that the current policy would continue for new arrivals at the border until there had been a review and facilities for housing migrants had been restored.

### • First Circuit Upholds Border Searches of Phones and Laptops

On February 9, the First Circuit Court of Appeals in Massachusetts issued a [decision](#) ruling that government agents at the U.S. borders can search any person's phone, laptop, or other digital device for no articulable reason and may confiscate the device for weeks, even if they have no reason to suspect wrongdoing. Current government policy is that agents can rummage through phones and laptops for no reason, although they cannot access the internet while they search and they must have reasonable suspicion to hook up the device to an external machine to extract data or to view deleted or encrypted files. They can also keep a device for a "reasonable" period, although they must get a supervisor's approval to keep it after the person crosses the border and additional approval to keep it for more than 15 days. "Electronic devices may contain a trove of sensitive personal information," U.S. Circuit Judge Sandra Lynch wrote for the court, but "the government's interest in preventing crime at international borders is at its zenith."

## Upcoming Meetings & Events (cont'd)

### A NEW ERA IN IMMIGRATION? PART 1 – MAR 3

On Wednesday, March 3 at 1:00 PM EST, St. Edward's University Social Work Program, the Texas Law Immigration Clinic, and the William Wayne Justice Center for Public Interest Law at Texas Law will host part 1 of its 3-part webinar series on immigration law and policy changes under the new Administration. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

## United States Issue Updates (cont'd)

### • **Senators Introduce Bipartisan Legislation to Authorize Reimbursements for Border Communities**

On February 5, Senators Martin Heinrich (D-NM), John Cornyn (R-TX), and Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM) introduced the bipartisan Southern Border Communities Reimbursement Act of 2021, [legislation](#) to authorize funding through the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) to reimburse localities and non-governmental organizations in the future when they provide humanitarian care to migrants at the United States – Mexico border. The Act would authorize an additional \$30 million for Fiscal Years (FYs) 2021, 2022, and 2023 within the EFSP for reimbursement funding if future costs are incurred from providing humanitarian relief at the border. Of these funds, \$25 million will be allocated to entities in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas.

### • **Texas U.S. District Court Judge Extends Temporary Restraining Order Against Deportation Moratorium**

On February 9, Judge Drew Tipton of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas extended a temporary restraining order ([TRO](#)) by two weeks against the Administration's 100-day moratorium. The judge stated in his decision that he found it necessary to extend his order while the case continues to be litigated, citing potentially "irreparable" harm to Texas, which brought the lawsuit, if the Administration is allowed to put its moratorium into effect. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton brought the lawsuit last month in response to a U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) directive to pause most deportations while the agency conducts a review of its operations.

### • **House Democrats Push DHS to Stop Working with Local Police on Immigration**

On February 11, a group of 60 House Democrats wrote a [letter](#) urging the recently-confirmed Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas to end programs at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that allow for state and local police officers to take on the role of federal immigration enforcement. In addition, the group wants to end a program started in the early 2000s that gives federal agents access to the fingerprints of individuals booked into jail by local and state authorities. Further, the group called for DHS to end the use of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainers — requests issued for local enforcement agencies to get information or hold an individual for up to 48 hours after they are scheduled for release, affording ICE extra time to facilitate deportation.

### • **U.S. Department of State Exempts Foreign Students from Travel Restriction**

On February 10, the U.S. Department of State (DOS) [announced](#) that foreign students studying in the United States will be able to return to the country automatically, despite travel restrictions, under a set of new exemptions. All travelers (age 2 and older) are still required to present a negative viral COVID-19 test taken within three days prior to departure on their U.S.-bound flight itinerary.

# Around the World in International Migration

## • Guatemala Establishes New Asylum Unit

Guatemala has established a new asylum unit which will have expanded capacity to receive, process, and adjudicate asylum claims in the country. Guatemala is a country of origin, transit, and asylum for people forced to flee their homes. In 2020, a total of 487 people applied for asylum in the country, an 85 percent increase from 2018. On February 6, the United States terminated Asylum Cooperative Agreements (ACAs) with the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Many, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), had expressed concern over the ACAs as most countries in Central America do not currently have the capability to process and protect most asylum seekers, thus creating a risk for refoulement. The new Refugee Status Recognition Department of Guatemala's Migration Institute (IGM) will be staffed with psychologists, social workers and lawyers, attending to the needs of asylum seekers and will process their claims.

## • Ethiopia Closes Two Tigray Camps Housing Eritrean Refugees

On February 11, the government of Ethiopia reported that it had closed two refugee camps housing Eritrean refugees in the Tigray region and relocated their occupants. However, according to the state-appointed human rights body, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), Shimelba and Hitsats camps "had been destroyed and the refugees inside the camps dispersed." This latest act comes as part of the ongoing conflict in the Tigray region that began in early November as a result of the Ethiopian government's attempt to quell regional rebellion. The systematic destruction of refugee camps in Ethiopia has caused thousands of refugees to flee, with many now missing. On February 9, the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), issued a statement calling for an independent United Nations investigation into the disappearance of refugees from the region.

## • Colombia Offers Temporary Protection Status to 1.7 Million Displaced Venezuelans

On February 8, the government of Colombia issued a decision to provide ten-year temporary protection status to Venezuelans in the country. Colombia is host to 1.7 million Venezuelans, which represent more than 37 percent of the estimated 4.6 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean. More than half of the Venezuelan population in Colombia lack regular status, affecting their ability to access essential services, protection, and assistance. The Temporary Protection Status will also provide access to basic services including the national health system and COVID-19 vaccination plans. Regularization is also key to long-term solutions, including access to the job market, which in turn serves to lessen the dependency of people on humanitarian assistance while also contributing to the country's post COVID-19 socio-economic recovery.

## • Hungary Continues to Violate European Court of Justice Decision on Deportations of Refugees

In December, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) found that Hungary's policy of deporting refugees to Serbia was unlawful. In particular, the Court found that, "restricting access to the international protection procedure, unlawfully detaining applicants for that protection in transit zones and moving illegally staying third-country nationals to a border area, without observing the guarantees surrounding a return procedure, constitute infringements of European Union (EU) law." However, based on the website of the Hungarian police, 2,824 refugees were apprehended near the border fence and forced to return to Serbia in January this year alone – a direct violation of the decision. Hungary's prime minister and several members of the government have repeatedly confirmed that they intend to continue the practice.

# Whispers from Washington

## Current Capitol Hill Considerations

### DHS to Begin MPP Processing

Beginning on February 19, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will begin phase one of a program to restore safe and orderly processing at the southwest border with Mexico. DHS will begin processing people who had been forced to “remain in Mexico” under the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP). Approximately 25,000 individuals in MPP continue to have active cases.

Through a whole-of-government approach, DHS, the Department of State (DOS), and the Department of Justice (DOJ) will collaborate with international partners—including the government of Mexico and international non-governmental organizations—to safely process eligible individuals to pursue their cases in the United States.

This new process applies to individuals who were returned to Mexico under the MPP program and have cases pending before the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). Individuals outside of the United States who were not returned to Mexico under MPP or who do not have active immigration court cases will not be considered for participation in this program and must await other action. Similarly, those individuals in the United States with active MPP cases will receive separate guidance at a later date.

Time will only tell if migrants who were forced to wait under the MPP will receive adequate asylum processing.

## Global Gigabyte

*Canadian Immigrant Magazine* and Windmill Microlending have partnered to launch the *Skilled Immigrant Career Success Guide*, a new resource to help skilled immigrants overcome employment barriers in Canada.

It can take years for skilled immigrants to re-establish themselves in their professional field in Canada due to barriers to employment such as foreign credentials recognition and lack of Canadian work experience. To help them navigate these challenges, the *Skilled Immigrant Career Success Guide* offers a step-by-step roadmap for internationally trained professionals to achieve career success in Canada. It provides the information they need to transfer their skills into the Canadian labor market and learn strategies to help them achieve career success.

“The rate of immigration in Canada will continue to increase in order to grow Canada's population and economy now and after these difficult times,” said Sanjay Agnihotri, publisher of *Canadian Immigrant*, a national multimedia platform to help immigrants succeed in Canada. “Our goal is to set newcomers up for success with the information and tips they need.”

Read more about the story [here](#).

If you have any questions  
or comments, please  
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