

METERING UPDATE

AUGUST 2022



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INTRODUCTION

In April 2018, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) leadership issued guidance that allowed officers to limit asylum seekers' access to ports of entry. This guidance permitted CBP officers stationed at the United States' international boundary with Mexico to inform arriving asylum seekers that U.S. ports of entry were full. Simultaneously, CBP officers also began accepting a specified number of asylum seekers each day, in a process that is known as metering. Two months later, in June 2018, then-DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen signed a memo that authorized port directors to begin metering at all U.S. ports of entry.¹

As metering spread across the border and a subsequent backlog of asylum seekers grew in Mexico's border cities, Mexican authorities and civil society groups responded by providing humanitarian assistance and creating informal waitlists. Since November 2018, the Robert Strauss Center for International Security and Law at the University of Texas at Austin—at times in collaboration with the Center for U.S.-Mexico Studies at the University of California San Diego and the Migration Policy Centre at the European University Institute—has documented these informal lists through quarterly updates.

As the Covid-19 pandemic began in March 2020, CBP stopped processing asylum claims at ports of entry. This change took place via a Center for Disease Control's (CDC) regulation based on Title 42 authority and an order that blocked entry for individuals—including asylum seekers—attempts to enter the United States through Mexico without valid travel documents.² On April 1, 2022, the CDC announced that it would terminate its Title 42 public health order on May 23, 2022, which would restart asylum processing at U.S. land ports of entry. However, just before the stated deadline, a federal judge in Louisiana blocked the CDC's termination of Title 42, and the public health order currently remains in place.³

Despite the Title 42 public health order blocking asylum processing at ports of entry, a number of individuals continue to enter the United States through various pathways. One of these pathways is Title 42 exceptions, which is a process that allows vulnerable individuals in Mexican border cities to enter the United States and request asylum. Over the past three months, the number of individuals seeking to be processed as Title 42 exceptions has exceeded CBP's daily slot allowance for this pathway. In response, the individuals and groups facilitating these exceptions have created waitlists.

In a shift from past metering reports, this August 2022¹ update also includes numbers from Title 42 exception waitlists. In many cities, Title 42 exception waitlists have replaced the asylum waitlists that were closed or dissolved in March 2020, when Title 42 began. By including these Title 42 exception lists, this report aims to provide a more accurate picture of the number of individuals waiting in Mexican border cities. Title 42 waitlists are similar to the asylum waitlists documented in previous metering updates, as both reflect individuals waiting to claim asylum in the United States.

However, there are also differences between Title 42 exception waitlists and previous asylum waitlists. For example, all of the earlier asylum waitlists were ordered chronologically by registration date and there were generally no restrictions on who could add their name. By contrast, Title 42 exception waitlists are structured

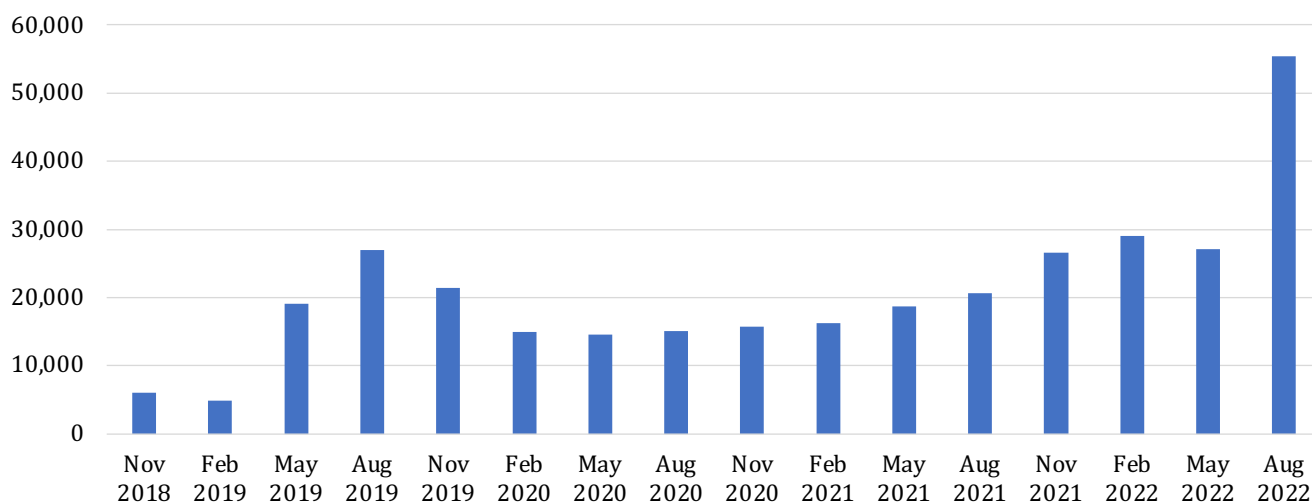
1. A special thanks to Taylor Levy for her assistance and support during this August 2022 metering update.

at the list managers' discretion, and may be restricted to those who are deemed to be vulnerable due to security, medical, or other concerns.

In practice, there are a wide range of Title 42 exception waitlist structures. Some lists are organized by registration dates and others are based on list managers' determination of migrants' vulnerabilities. Additionally, some lists include only those individuals who are slotted to cross into the United States in the coming days or weeks, while other lists include all potential individuals who may qualify for Title 42 exceptions in the future.

This report provides an update on all waitlists, asylum seekers, and migrant shelters along the U.S.-Mexico border. It documents 55,445 individuals on waitlists in eleven Mexican border cities. This is an approximately 104 percent increase from May 2022, when there were 27,135 asylum seekers on waitlists. However, this increase does not necessarily point to a large spike in the number of people waiting at the border. Rather, it reflects the inclusion of a more diverse range of waitlists.

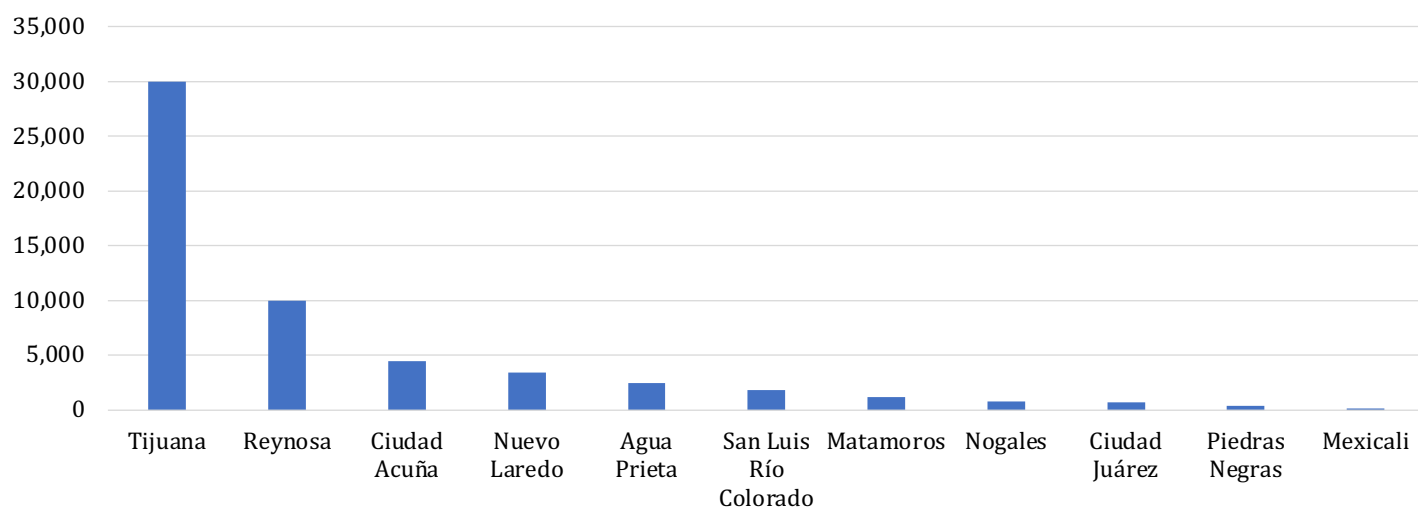
Figure 1: Number of People on Asylum Waitlists (November 2018 - August 2022)



Author's elaboration. Data collected from November 2018 to August 2022.

Similar to previous metering updates, the number of individuals on waitlists should not be taken as the definitive number of asylum seekers at the border. Some asylum seekers registered on lists have entered the United States between ports of entry, been returned or removed to their countries of origin, or moved to other cities in Mexico. Additionally, some individuals waiting in Mexican border cities may not have been able to place their name on a Title 42 waitlist because list managers may not consider them to be vulnerable or because the Mexican city where they are currently waiting does not have Title 42 exception processing. Finally, other asylum seekers may be registered on multiple lists.

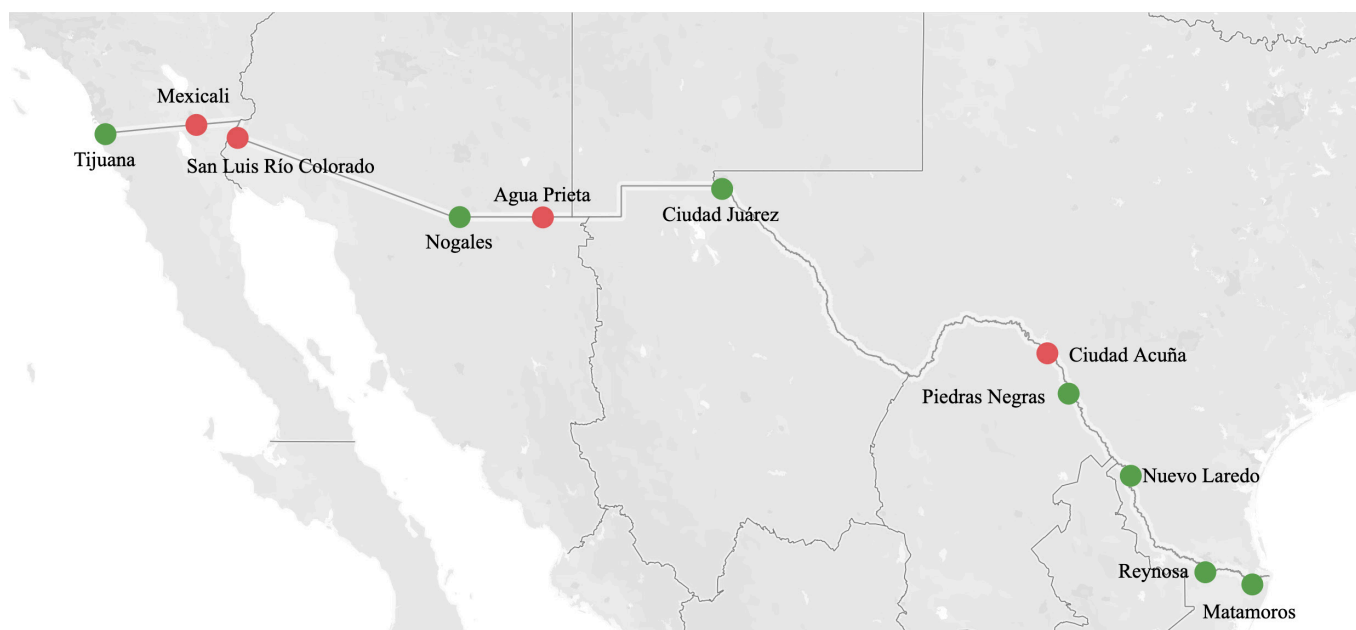
Figure 2: Number of People on Asylum Waitlists by City (August 2022)



Author's elaboration. Data collected from August 4, 2022 to August 12, 2022.

In August 2022, Title 42 exceptions were not standardized across the border. Figure 3 shows the status of Title 42 exceptions by Mexican border city. Green circles indicate cities where Title 42 exceptions are currently being processed and red circles indicate cities without Title 42 exception processing.

Figure 3: Mexican Border Cities By List Status (August 2022)



Author's elaboration. Data collected from from August 4, 2022 to August 12, 2022.

Asylum seekers—both on and off waitlists—continue to face unstable living conditions and security risks in Mexican border cities. Many shelters are full, and some shelters continue to operate at a reduced capacity due to Covid-19 restrictions. In San Luis Río Colorado, shelters are still operating at 50 percent capacity at night. Along the border, a number of individuals are renting rooms, staying in hotels, or sleeping on the street.

Certain groups of asylum seekers continue to experience additional challenges. Civil society organizations report that Black, LGBTQ+, and Indigenous asylum seekers have faced targeted discrimination by local authorities while waiting in Mexican border cities. In addition, parents have also reported difficulties enrolling their children in schools or finding childcare that would enable them to work and earn a salary.

The August 2022 metering update draws on phone and WhatsApp interviews with asylum seekers, government officials, civil society organizations, and legal service providers on both sides of the border from August 4, 2022 through August 12, 2022. It also relies on local news articles to fill in any gaps.

Metering & Asylum Waitlists: August 2022

Mexican City	Waitlist Status	# of Asylum Seekers on List	Recent Changes
List Administrator		Date Recorded	
Matamoros, Tamaulipas <i>Civil society organizations and legal service providers</i>	Open: Title 42 Exception Processing	~1,200 people <i>August 8-12, 2022</i>	<p>Civil society organizations in Matamoros are facilitating Title 42 exceptions based on security and medical vulnerabilities. Eligible individuals sign up in Matamoros and wait up to several months before being able to cross.</p> <p>There have been significant changes for shelters in the city. In June 2022, the Mexican federal government opened its third shelter along the border: the “Valentina Ramírez Avitia” Centro Integrador para Migrantes (CIM). The CIM has an initial capacity for 676 people but is currently housing around 400 people.⁴ The Mexican government’s other two federal shelters are located in Ciudad Juárez and Tijuana.</p> <p>Additionally, in July 2022, the Casa Paz Shelter closed, and in August 2022, the Dulce Refugio Shelter closed. The remaining individuals from Dulce Refugio Shelter were sent to the new CIM. Local civil society members are planning to open an additional “Casa de Migrantes” shelter for 200 people. This was in response to a perception that migrants believe the new CIM is located too far from the border and because other shelters in the city are closing.⁵</p> <p>Currently, the city’s shelters are full and migrants who are unable to find space in a shelter are staying in rented rooms and motels.</p> <p>The majority of migrants in Matamoros are from Mexico’s southern states (particularly Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Chiapas), as well as Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala.</p>
Reynosa, Tamaulipas <i>Senda de Vida migrant shelter, civil society organizations, and legal service providers</i>	Open: Title 42 Exception Processing	~10,000 people <i>August 9-11, 2022</i>	<p>The Senda de Vida migrant shelter manages a Title 42 exception waitlist for asylum seekers in Reynosa. The wait time for the Senda de Vida Title 42 exception list is several months.</p> <p>Legal service providers and civil society organizations are also assisting individuals with medical emergencies or security concerns as part of separate Title 42 exception waitlists in the city.</p>

Metering & Asylum Waitlists: August 2022 (continued)

Mexican City <i>List Administrator</i>	Waitlist Status	# of Asylum Seekers on List <i>Date Recorded</i>	Recent Changes
Reynosa, Tamaulipas <i>(continued)</i>			<p>The true number of asylum seekers in Reynosa may be fewer than the number noted on the lists, with one civil society estimate of around 5,000 people. The majority of the asylum seekers in Reynosa are from Haiti.</p> <p>As of August 3, 2022, the Senda de Vida I shelter (the original shelter) and the Senda de Vida II shelter were both at capacity. The other migrant shelters in Reynosa, such as Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe and Kaleo Internacional, were also at capacity.</p> <p>Individuals have set up tents outside shelter walls to wait for a space to open. Other people have set up tents outside in public areas and are sleeping on the streets, as temperatures consistently reach 100°F (38°C).</p>
Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas <i>Network of migrant shelters managing separate lists (one per shelter)</i>	Open: Title 42 Exception Processing	~3,450 people <i>August 9-11, 2022</i>	<p>In Nuevo Laredo, nine migrant shelters manage separate waitlists for Title 42 exceptions. Some of the shelters get two days every two-week-cycle to present migrants at the port of entry and other shelters get one day per cycle.</p> <p>Additionally, legal service providers also process Title 42 exceptions each day for those individuals who are deemed to be particularly vulnerable.</p> <p>The shelters in Nuevo Laredo are at or past capacity. In July 2022, the shelter Casa Nazareth announced that they would begin construction on a second expansion of their shelter.⁶</p> <p>The majority of the migrants in the city are from Honduras, Haiti, El Salvador, and Mexico with smaller numbers of people from Venezuela and Cuba. Most of the shelters primarily house people from just one nationality.</p>

Metering & Asylum Waitlists: August 2022 (continued)

Mexican City	Waitlist Status	# of Asylum Seekers on List	Recent Changes
<i>List Administrator</i>		<i>Date Recorded</i>	
Piedras Negras, Coahuila <i>Municipal government in coordination with local shelters</i>	Open: Title 42 Exception Processing	~400 people <i>August 8, 2022</i>	<p>In May 2022, the Piedras Negras municipal government opened a Title 42 exception waitlist. The list is operated in coordination with local shelters. As of August 8, 2022, there were 90 adults and 60 families (an estimated 330 people in total) on the municipal waitlist.</p> <p>Civil society organizations, including those based in other cities, also assist in processing Title 42 exceptions in Piedras Negras for individuals who are deemed vulnerable but are not on the municipal government list.</p> <p>Local groups estimate that there are between 2,000 and 3,000 migrants in the city. However, this number includes individuals who are not participating in the Title 42 exception process.</p> <p>In May 2022, the shelters in Piedras Negras reopened after being closed for more than two years under the municipal government's COVID-19 guidelines. Since reopening, the shelters have been at or past capacity. Migrants are also sleeping in abandoned houses and on the street despite temperatures consistently reaching 100°F (38°C).</p> <p>The majority of people arriving to Piedras Negras are from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, with fewer individuals also arriving from Venezuela and Nicaragua.⁷</p>

Metering & Asylum Waitlists: August 2022 (continued)

Mexican City <i>List Administrator</i>	Waitlist Status	# of Asylum Seekers on List <i>Date Recorded</i>	Recent Changes
Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila <i>Civil Protection (Protección Civil)</i>	Closed	4,497 people <i>August 9, 2022</i>	<p>There is no Title 42 exception processing in Ciudad Acuña.</p> <p>Civil Protection (Protección Civil) continues to maintain two asylum waitlists in Ciudad Acuña that are organized by registration date. One list is for families and one is for adults. Civil Protection closed both of these lists on January 18, 2022, and no additional names have been accepted. When the lists closed, there were approximately 4,497 people on the lists, including 1,125 individuals and 843 families.</p> <p>Asylum seekers continue to arrive in the city. The majority of these new individuals are from El Salvador and Guatemala. Migrants in Ciudad Acuña report staying in shelters and sleeping on the street.⁸</p>
Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua <i>State Population Council (Consejo Estatal de Población, COESPO) in coordination with local shelters, and a civil society organization</i>	Open: Title 42 Exception Processing	~700 people <i>August 10, 2022</i>	<p>Local groups are processing Title 42 exceptions in Ciudad Juárez. The State Population Council (Consejo Estatal de Población, COESPO) facilitates Title 42 exceptions for vulnerable individuals through referrals from local shelters. A local civil society organization also processes additional vulnerable individuals through a separate waitlist.</p> <p>Title 42 exception waitlists in Ciudad Juárez only capture some vulnerable individuals and do not reflect the total number of migrants living in the city. Currently, there are close to 3,000 people staying in the 26 shelters across Ciudad Juárez. Although, these include individuals who are not participating in the Title 42 exception process. Estimates suggest that thousands more people may also be living outside of the shelters.</p> <p>The migrants in Ciudad Juárez are mainly from Mexico (particularly Michoacán, Guerrero, Zacatecas, and Jalisco), as well as Honduras, Guatemala, Haiti, and El Salvador.</p>

Metering & Asylum Waitlists: August 2022 (continued)

Mexican City	Waitlist Status	# of Asylum Seekers on List	Recent Changes
<i>List Administrator</i>		<i>Date Recorded</i>	
Agua Prieta, Sonora <i>CAME migrant shelter</i>	Closed	2,500 people <i>August 9, 2022</i>	<p>In August 2021, the CAME migrant shelter closed its asylum waitlist in Agua Prieta with approximately 2,500 names on it.</p> <p>There is no Title 42 exception processing in Agua Prieta. The CAME migrant shelter refers vulnerable families to Nogales for Title 42 exception processing. As of August 8, 2022, only four families that the shelter had referred to Nogales had been processed into the United States.</p> <p>The CAME shelter is not currently at capacity. The majority of the asylum seekers arriving to Agua Prieta are from Mexico and Central American countries.</p>
Nogales, Sonora <i>Civil society organizations and legal service providers</i>	Open: Title 42 Exception Processing	~750 people ⁹ <i>August 12, 2022</i>	<p>Civil society organizations and legal service providers facilitate Title 42 exception processing in Nogales for migrants who are deemed to be vulnerable.</p> <p>Migrants are arriving in Nogales from other Mexican states (primarily Guerrero, Michoacán, and Chiapas), Guatemala, and Honduras. More than three fourths of individuals recently arriving in the city have told the Kino Border Initiative (KBI), a local civil society organization, that they were migrating due to violence.</p> <p>Migrants in Nogales continue to report that they face high rent prices, denial of medical care, difficulties enrolling their children in school, and discrimination in the job market.</p>

Metering & Asylum Waitlists: August 2022 (continued)

Mexican City	Waitlist Status	# of Asylum Seekers on List	Recent Changes
List Administrator		Date Recorded	
San Luis Río Colorado, Sonora <i>Casa del Migrante La Divina Providencia</i>	Closed	1,798 people <i>August 8, 2022</i>	<p>There is no Title 42 exception processing in San Luis Río Colorado.</p> <p>In mid-November 2020, the Casa del Migrante La Divina closed its asylum waitlist with approximately 1,798 names on the list.</p> <p>Local civil society reports that asylum seekers continue to arrive in the city. These asylum seekers are primarily from Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba, Haiti, various African countries, and Mexico.</p> <p>The Casa del Migrante La Divina is generally operating at a 50 percent overnight capacity. However, the shelter is operating at full capacity for daily activities, such as providing meals, clothing, and daytime stays.</p>
Mexicali, Baja California <i>Grupo Beta</i>	Closed	150 people <i>August 10, 2022</i>	<p>In March 2020, Grupo Beta closed the asylum waitlist with 150 asylum seekers on the list.</p> <p>There is currently no Title 42 exception processing in Mexicali. Individuals in Mexicali who are eligible for Title 42 exceptions are processed in Tijuana. On average, about 20 people are leaving Mexicali each week to participate in the Title 42 exception process in Tijuana.</p> <p>The number of people arriving in Mexicali's shelters has increased in recent months. The majority of these individuals are from Haiti, along with people from Mexico (mostly from Guerrero and Michoacán), Honduras, and Guatemala.</p> <p>Mexicali's shelters are open and have some capacity to receive more people. Shelters have noted that the high temperatures (more than 100°F or 38°C) have pushed people in the city to seek relief in the shelters.¹⁰</p>

Metering and Asylum Waitlists: August 2022 (continued)

Mexican City	Waitlist Status	# of Asylum Seekers on List	Recent Changes
<i>List Administrator</i>		<i>Date Recorded</i>	
Tijuana, Baja California <i>Civil society organizations</i>	Open: Title 42 Exception Processing	~30,000 people ¹¹ <i>August 12, 2022</i>	<p>Various civil society organizations facilitate Title 42 exception processing in Tijuana.</p> <p>The primary Title 42 exception list in Tijuana is run by a civil society organization through a survey form. This form has garnered tens of thousands of submissions since it was created in 2020. Individuals are selected from this list based on vulnerability, but there is also processing based on registration date. Currently, the individuals being processed off of this list have been waiting for more than a year.</p> <p>Additional civil society organizations facilitate Title 42 exception processes in collaboration with local migrant shelters.</p> <p>Many Tijuana shelters have turned into long-term residences, which means that there is less space for newly arrived individuals.¹² People who are not staying in shelters are renting rooms and, at times, sleeping on the street. Additionally, water prices have recently increased in the city and some shelters have reported limited or no water supply.¹³</p> <p>Migrants in Tijuana are primarily from Haiti, Mexico, Honduras, and Guatemala. Smaller numbers of individuals are arriving from other countries across Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Europe.</p>

**The numbers should be interpreted as a general range rather than an exact figure.*

ENDNOTES

1. Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General, “CBP Has Taken Steps to Limit Processing of Undocumented Aliens at Ports of Entry,” October 27, 2020, <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2020-10/OIG-21-02-Oct20.pdf>.
2. The order allows Border Patrol agents to immediately expel all apprehended individuals, including asylum seekers, to the near-est Mexican city or to their home countries. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “Control of Communicable Diseases; Foreign Quarantine: Suspension of Introduction of Persons Into United States From Designated Foreign Countries or Places for Public Health Purposes,” March 24, 2020, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/03/24/2020-06238/control-of-communicable-dis-eases-foreign-quarantine-suspension-of-introduction-of-persons-into>.
3. The lawsuit was brought by state attorneys from Missouri, Arizona, and Louisiana.
4. Alfredo Peña, “Abre en Matamoros albergue para migrantes que solicitan asilo en EU,” *Excelsior*, July 6, 2022, <https://www.excelsior.com.mx/nacional/abre-en-matamoros-albergue-para-migrantes-que-solicitan-asilo-en-eu/1525040>.
5. Ángel Arias, “Habrá nueva Casa del Migrante en Matamoros,” *Hoy Tamaulipas*, July 7, 2022, <https://www.hoytamaulipas.net/notas/501534/Habria-nueva-Casa-del-Migrante-en-Matamoros.html>.
6. “Crearán nuevo refugio para migrantes en Nuevo Laredo,” *Milenio*, July 8, 2022, <https://www.milenio.com/videos/politica/comunidad/crearan-nuevo-refugio-para-migrantes-en-nuevo-laredo>.
7. Karina Andrew Herrera, “Migrantes continúan llegando a Piedras Negras, Coahuila, para cruzar a EEUU; buscan asilo,” *Televisa*, July 18, 2022, <https://noticieros.televisa.com/ultimas-noticias/migrantes-llegan-piedras-negras-coahuila-cruzar-eeuu-buscan-asilo/>.
8. Elliot Spagat, “Asylum wait lists at US border frustrate, confuse migrants,” *Associated Press*, July 13, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/biden-covid-health-donald-trump-united-states-1456bf91a33ccfd1c97b6f12474a1070>.
9. This number reflects the estimate of the number of individuals in Nogales who are waiting for the Title 42 exception process, rather than a specific number on waitlists.
10. Yuriria Sierra, “Migrantes en Mexicali padecen las altas temperaturas,” *Imagen TV*, July 28, 2022, <https://www.imagentv.com/noticias/imagen-noticias-con-yuriria-sierra/migrantes-en-mexicali-padecen-las-altas-temperaturas>.
11. This includes people who signed up on the Spanish and Creole-language forms and who have not yet been processed through Title 42 exceptions. While some of these names may be duplicates, the true number on the list could be even higher since many of the people who submitted their information are traveling with family members.
12. Sofia Mejías-Pascoe, “Migrantes que se quedan más tiempo en Tijuana tensan la capacidad en los albergues,” *iNews Source*, June 21, 2022, <https://inewssource.org/2022/06/21/migrantes-que-se-quedan-mas-tiempo/>.
13. Yolanda Morales, “Albergues sin agua en Tijuana,” *KSDY*, July 22, 2022, <https://ksdy50.com/albergues-sin-agua-en-tijuana/>.