

LATERAL EXPULSION FLIGHTS ALONG THE BORDER

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INTRODUCTION

In March 2021, Border Patrol agents began bringing hundreds of asylum-seeking Central American families out of processing facilities in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas and onto waiting planes. These individuals often had little, if any, information regarding where they were heading, with some believing that they were about to be reunited with family in the United States. However, instead of being released, the planes traveled to San Diego or El Paso and most of these families were led into Mexican border cities.

The Border Patrol uses these “lateral flights”—which shuffle people from one part of the border to another—to “decompress” their holding centers and expel certain populations. For nearly two decades, the Border Patrol has used flights to move Mexican single adults from one part of the border to another. But these recent flights mark the first time that the agency has systematically used them to transfer Central American asylum-seeking families. It also is the first time that these flights were based on Border Patrol’s capacity to expel people to certain parts of Mexico.

In July 2021, these lateral flights began to arrive in Tucson, Arizona. Once the planes landed in Arizona, most of the families were bussed south to Nogales, Arizona and sent across the border into Nogales, Sonora. Without a network or any previous experience in Nogales, these families arrived at the Kino Border Initiative—a civil society organization that provides humanitarian services to migrants and asylum seekers in Nogales, Sonora—in search of assistance.

This Kino Border Initiative and Robert Strauss Center report on lateral flights is the first publication to focus exclusively on the population that was transferred out of South Texas. The report describes the Border Patrol’s lateral flights and bussing, highlights the transferred population’s demographics, and describes these individuals’ experiences during the expulsion process. It relies heavily on the Kino Border Initiative’s intake forms, but also includes Witness at the Border data on lateral flights and interviews with civil society organizations.

METHODOLOGY

This report uses a mixed methodology to document lateral flights. The primary data source are Kino Border Initiative’s intake forms, which were provided to this report’s authors in an anonymized spreadsheet. When individuals arrived at the Kino Border Initiative’s facility in Nogales, staff and volunteers filled out an intake form for each person. These intake forms cover demographic information, reasons for migrating, and mistreatment and violence that the arriving person may have experienced throughout their journey, among other variables. In late July 2021, the Kino Border Initiative began documenting laterally transferred individuals through their regular intake process and in August 2021, the organization added intake questions that were specific to lateral flights and expulsions.

Between July 29, 2021 and November 11, 2021, the Kino Border Initiative documented 369 individuals (140 families) who were expelled to Nogales. Among this group, 364 people (138 families) reported that they were flown to Tucson from the Rio Grande Valley, and then were expelled to Nogales. Another five people (two families) reported that they were laterally bussed from El Paso to Nogales in August 2021 and then expelled.

This report utilizes additional sources of information to supplement the Kino Border Initiative intake forms. This includes Witness at the Border reports on likely Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Air flights, which Thomas Cartwright compiles and publishes each month. The information in these reports is compiled from various flight-tracking websites and smartphone applications and is the only source that tracks lateral flights along the border. The report also relies on newspaper articles that covered lateral flights, and interviews with service providers in San Diego and El Paso to better understand lateral flights to these cities.

LATERAL FLIGHTS ALONG THE BORDER

For almost 20 years, the U.S. government has put arriving migrants on planes and flown them to different parts of the border. This practice began with Mexican single adults, to break the ties with their smugglers. However, in 2021, these flights expanded to include Central American families who entered the United States to seek some form of protection.

Lateral Flights of Mexican Nationals. In September 2003, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) began experimenting with lateral flights through a Lateral Repatriation pilot program. This program was aimed at separating migrating individuals from their smugglers and moved Mexican nationals from the Sonora-Arizona region to several ports of entry in Texas.¹ At the time, Mexican officials expressed human rights concerns and demanded an end to the pilot program. The program wrapped up soon after it started.²

Five years later, in 2008, DHS restarted and solidified lateral flights. This program was named the Alien Transfer Exit Programme (ATEP), which repatriated Mexicans to different sectors of the border from where they originally crossed. Similar to the 2003 pilot program, this was an attempt to separate individuals from their smugglers and reduce recidivism. In 2011, DHS expanded the program to eligible Mexican nationals who were encountered at ports of entry and noted that it was a first step in the agency's larger Consequence Delivery System. In fact, the following year, DHS put 29 percent of apprehended Mexicans into ATEP.³ While the number of Mexicans placed in the program fell in the following years and certain repatriation routes were suspended indefinitely, it remains in limited use.⁴

Lateral Flights of Non-Mexican Nationals and Title 42. In recent years, the Border Patrol has also begun lateral flights for non-Mexican nationals. In May 2019, the Border Patrol used lateral flights for non-Mexicans while dealing with severe overcrowding in processing sites in South Texas and a flu outbreak.⁵ These flights moved arriving individuals to other locations where they could be processed and then released into the United States' interior. These individuals were not expelled into Mexican border cities.

However, the past year's lateral flights have involved expulsions. The legal authority for these expulsions lies with the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) March 2020 public health order that invoked Title 42 authority during the COVID-19 pandemic. This order allows Customs and Border Protection (CBP)—of which Border Patrol is a component agency—to bypass normal immigration proceedings and immediately expel all apprehended individuals to Mexico or to their home countries. DHS officials claim that Title 42 is necessary to continue to protect the public from the introduction of COVID-19 into the United States through ports of entry, Border Patrol stations, and ICE detention centers.

These Title 42 expulsions are undertaken through cooperation with Mexico. As part of this cooperation, Mexico accepts all expelled Mexicans and a certain number of Central Americans a day through land ports of entry. The number that each Mexican border city accepts is between 50 and 100 people a day. Mexico has also set limits on the nationalities that it accepts via Title 42 expulsions, and, for example, does not accept Haitians or Brazilians.

In late January 2021, the Mexican state of Tamaulipas—which borders South Texas—and particularly the cities of Matamoros and Reynosa stopped accepting expelled Central American minors under the age of seven years old. Tamaulipas officials explained this change by pointing to November 2020 updates to Mexico’s Migration Law (*Ley de Migración*). These officials noted that Article 99 now stated that children and families should not be held in the country’s immigration detention centers, and, instead, should be held in shelters run by the Comprehensive Family Development agency (*Desarrollo Integral de la Familia*, DIF).⁶ In Tamaulipas border cities, DIF shelters simultaneously reported that they were full.⁷

When the Border Patrol became unable to expel families with small children back to Tamaulipas, they began releasing some of these families into the U.S. interior. In March 2021, they also began to transport some of these families to other cities along the U.S.-Mexico border that would accept children aged six years old and younger, including via lateral flights and buses.

From March 2021 through October 2021, an estimated 221 flights moved individuals from the Rio Grande Valley to other cities along the border. This included 130 estimated flights to El Paso, 69 to San Diego, and 22 to Tucson / Nogales. Each of these flights held 135 people, and for each flight, the Border Patrol expelled 100 people and released 35 people into the interior. In Nogales, Sonora, Mexican officials only accepted 50 expelled Central Americans per day. To meet this requirement, Border Patrol agents expelled 50 people to Nogales on the day of the lateral flight, another 50 people the following day, and released 35 people into the U.S. interior. In total, an estimated 22,100 people were expelled to Mexico as a result of these lateral flights.⁸

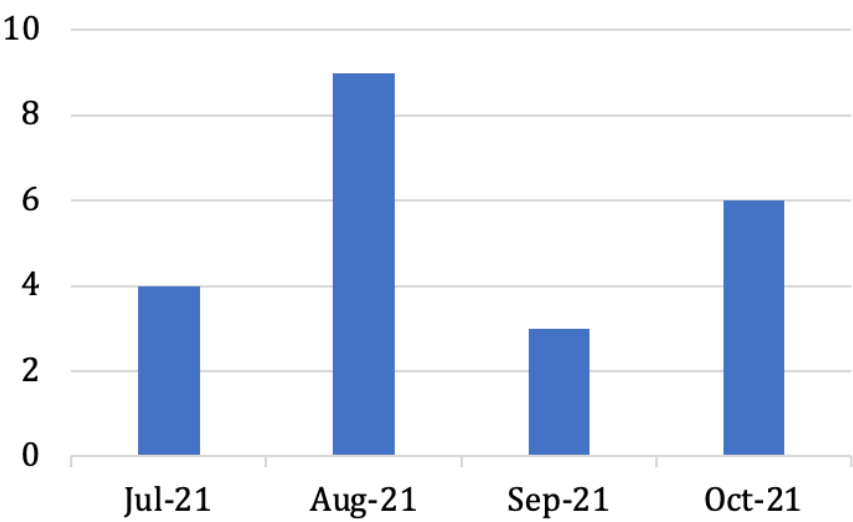
Table 1: Estimated Lateral Flights of Non-Mexican Individuals (2021)

| Origin | Destination | Dates ⁹ | Total Flights ¹⁰ | Estimated Number of People Expelled |
|-------------------|------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Rio Grande Valley | El Paso | March 2021 ¹¹ - May 2021 ¹² July 2021 - September 2021 | 130 | 13,000 |
| Rio Grande Valley | San Diego | March 2021 ¹³ - May 2021 ¹⁴ July 2021 - August 2021 | 69 | 6,900 |
| Rio Grande Valley | Tucson / Nogales | July 2021 - October 2021 | 22 | 2,200 |

Source: Witness at the Border Data

Specifically for flights from the Rio Grande Valley to Tucson / Nogales, Witness at the Border documents 22 flights between the months of July and October. This timeline generally aligns with Kino Border Initiative data, where intakes of expelled individuals began in late July and ended in early to mid-November. However, for these November intakes, it is possible that some of the families were expelled in October but did not arrive at the Kino Border Initiative for several days or weeks.

Figure 1: Lateral Flights from the Rio Grande Valley to Tucson / Nogales



Source: Witness at the Border Data

Lateral Bussing of Non-Mexicans. From March 2021 through May 2021, the Border Patrol moved Central American families from the Rio Grande Valley to Laredo via buses. Similar to lateral flights, this lateral bussing aimed to relieve overcrowding in Border Patrol facilities and to expel families with children six years old and younger into Nuevo Laredo. Notably, the city of Nuevo Laredo initially accepted children under the age of seven years old, even though it is in the state of Tamaulipas.

Through this process, the Border Patrol began moving up to 350 people per day from McAllen, Texas to Laredo, Texas. Once these buses reached Laredo, 100 people were expelled to Nuevo Laredo and the rest were released into the U.S. interior. However, around May 2021, Nuevo Laredo stopped accepting families with young children, and adopted a similar stance to other cities in Tamaulipas.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF EXPELLED POPULATION

Within the intake forms, the Kino Border Initiative recorded demographic and personal information for the 369 people (140 families) who were expelled through the Nogales port of entry and then arrived at its facilities in Nogales, Sonora. The following section will focus on the demographics of these individuals, including family structure, sex, and nationality, and will also cover their reported reasons for leaving their home communities and traveling to the United States.

Family Structure. Within the intake data, there were a variety of family structures. Slightly more than half of the families had two people, which were split into approximately two thirds single mothers with a child and one third single fathers with a child. Another 35 percent of the families had three individuals, which were either two parents and a child or one parent and two children. An additional 18 percent of the families had four or more members.

Table 2: Family Sizes for Population Expelled to Nogales

| Family Size | Number of Families | Percent of Total Families |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 2 Individuals | 72 | 51 percent |
| 3 Individuals | 49 | 35 percent |
| 4 Individuals | 14 | 10 percent |
| 5 Individuals | 3 | 2 percent |
| 6 Individuals | 1 | 1 percent |
| Unknown | 1 ¹⁵ | 1 percent |

Source: Kino Border Initiative Intake Data

Notably, of the 130 families with listed ages for their children, 128 of these families had at least one child who was six years old or younger. The two families that reported only having older children were the two families who were bussed from El Paso to Nogales, instead of being flown laterally from the Rio Grande Valley. This aligns with the state of Tamaulipas's requirement that it would only accept expelled families with children who were at least seven years old. In other words, the families that were laterally expelled from the Rio Grande Valley to Nogales were almost exclusively the families that the U.S. Border Patrol was unable to expel into Tamaulipas.

Table 3: Expelled Families by Structure

| Family Structure | Number of Families |
|---|--------------------|
| Families with at least one child six years old or younger | 128 |
| Families without one child six years old or younger | 2 |
| Families with unlisted ages for their child/children | 9 |
| Families where it is unclear if they have a child | 1 ¹⁶ |

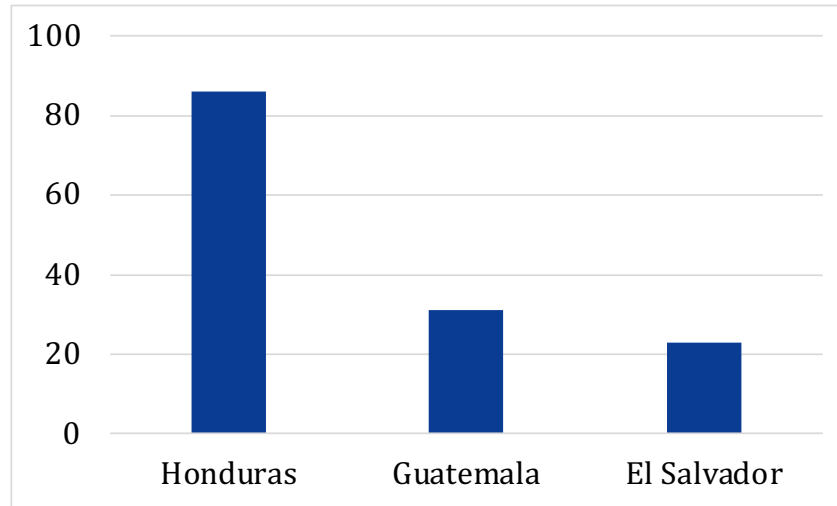
Source: Kino Border Initiative Intake Data

Within the laterally transferred population that was expelled to Nogales, there were 149 minors who were six years old or younger, and another 21 minors who were between 7 and 17 years old. Another ten children did not have their ages listed. The minors were split evenly by sex: 86 were boys and 90 were girls, and another four minors did not have a listed sex. This sex breakdown was different for adults. Among the adults who were laterally transferred and expelled, 64 percent were female and 36 percent were male.¹⁷

Nationality. All the laterally transferred families came from one of three countries: Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. In total, the Kino Border Initiative documented the nationalities for 351 of the laterally transferred individuals, and the remaining individuals were all children of parents whose nationalities were listed.

Honduran families made up nearly two thirds of the expelled population, followed by Guatemalan families (22 percent), and Salvadoran families (16 percent).

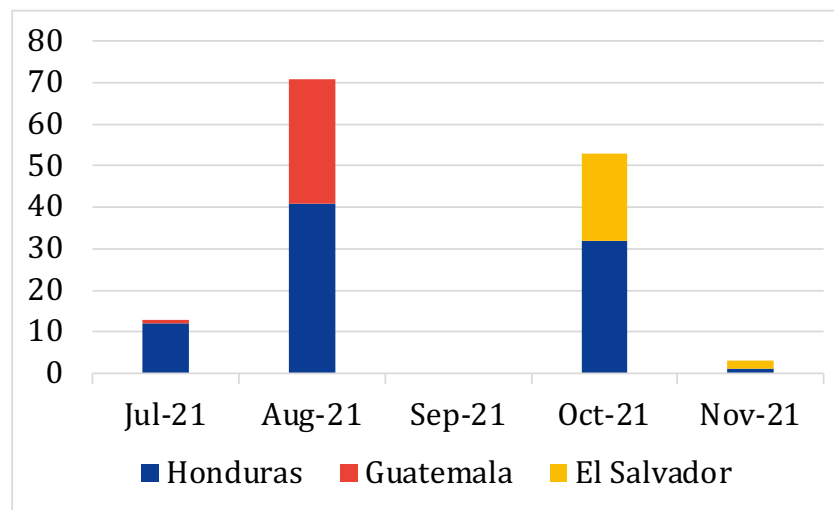
Figure 2: Nationality of Expelled Population (By Family)



Source: Kino Border Initiative Intake Data

The nationalities did not remain constant over the course of the lateral flights. In July 2021 and August 2021, the Kino Border Initiative received only Honduran and Guatemalan families. However, in October 2021, the Kino Border Initiative did not receive a single Guatemalan family from the lateral flights. Instead, these families were replaced by Salvadoran families. This shift in nationalities corresponds to the beginning of Title 42 flights to Guatemala for Guatemalan families, which began in early September 2021.¹⁸

Figure 3: Nationality of Expelled Population (By Family)



Source: Kino Border Initiative Intake Data

Reported Reasons for Migrating. The laterally transferred population reported to have left their countries of origin for two primary reasons: 1) a lack of work and 2) violence. Overall, 50 percent of families reported that they migrated to the United States for a lack of work and 47 percent reported that it was due to violence. However, this breakdown varied by nationality. For example, almost two thirds of Guatemalan families reported leaving their communities due to a lack of work, compared to only 4 percent of Salvadoran families. Similarly, in El Salvador, 96 percent of families reported leaving due to violence, which was a higher percentage than in either Honduras or Guatemala.

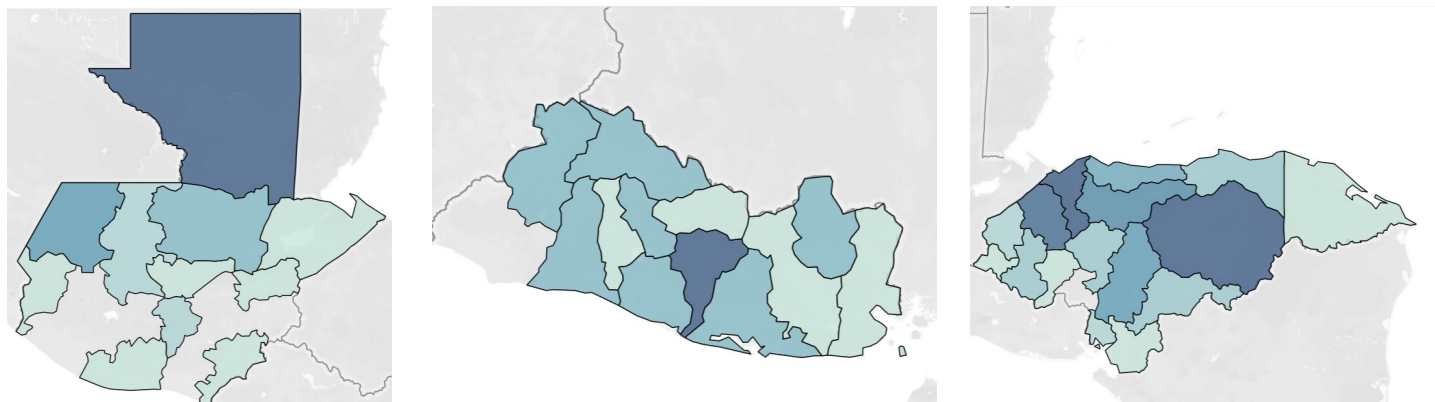
Table 4: Reported Reason of Leaving (By Family)¹⁹

| | Honduras | Guatemala | El Salvador |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Lack of Work | 56% (49 families) | 65% (20 families) | 4% (1 family) |
| Violence | 41% (36 families) | 26% (8 families) | 96% (22 families) |
| Other | 2% (2 families) | 10% (3 families) | 0% (0 families) |

Source: Kino Border Initiative Intake Data

Smaller numbers of families reported leaving their communities for other reasons. These other reasons included ecological reasons (three families), reuniting with family members in the United States (one family), and high levels of debt (one family).

Maps 1 to 3: Origins of Families from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras (by Department)



Source: Kino Border Initiative Intake Data

While these numbers and percentages provide a general sense of the laterally transferred population's reasons for leaving their communities of origin, they also obscure the specific circumstances behind each family's migration. For example, a Honduran family that had cited violence as the reason for migrating noted that it was the local gang's extortion payment that did not allow the father to work and earn a living for his family. Another single mother from Guatemala reported that she left her home after her husband was killed and she began to receive threats. A third family from Honduras, who had cited ecological reasons, reported that they left the country after losing their home to a hurricane in 2020.

LATERAL FLIGHT EXPERIENCE AND REPORTED ABUSES IN CBP CUSTODY

Of the 140 families in the intake data, 92 families reported that they had experienced some form of abuse during their migration journey or in U.S. custody. Of these 92 families, 78 families (85 percent) named the U.S. Border Patrol as being one of the perpetrators of this abuse. These complaints ranged in scope, including poor detention conditions, verbal abuse, and not being allowed to seek asylum in the United States.

Additionally, 62 families of the 140 total—which are not necessarily the families noting abuses—granted authorization to the Kino Border Initiative to anonymously use testimonies that they provided about their migration journeys.²⁰ The following section includes the abuse complaints from the intake forms and the 62 families' testimonies, which were coded for this report.

APPREHENSIONS AND INITIAL CBP PROCESSING

Among the families, the most common complaint was poor detention conditions in the United States, which was reported by 58 families (41 percent of the total). For these families, Border Patrol detention generally took two forms: being held in a “Temporary Outdoor Processing Site” underneath the Anzalduas Bridge in Mission, Texas—near McAllen—and/or being held in indoor Border Patrol short-term processing sites.

Anzalduas Bridge. The Border Patrol has used the Anzalduas bridge for holding families and for initial processing.²¹ The bridge is located near a frequently used Rio Grande crossing spot, where Central American families cross the river from Mexico and then walk along a dirt path to reach the bridge. However, in 2021, the bridge became a primary location for holding families, as the number of arriving families increased.²²

As families arrived at the Anzalduas bridge, they reached a site with minimal infrastructure. The Border Patrol had contracted services for the arriving population and set up fans and misters, but the site itself remained sparse. For example, there was no air conditioning amid the South Texas summer heat, bathrooms were port-a-potties, and families that were not processed immediately had to sleep on benches or on top of gravel.

Sixteen of the 62 families who provided testimony to the Kino Border Initiative mentioned that they were processed or held at the Anzalduas bridge. Nine of these families reported that they were held for at least a day under the bridge, with their processing time ranging from a few hours to several days. One single father traveling with a three-year-old reported that they were held under the bridge for five days. Others reported spending less time under the bridge, but had complaints about the processing site. Specifically, a mother and her three-year-old child reported that they both got sick from the dust under the bridge. While Honduran parents traveling with a one-year-old reported that they did not receive any food during the day that they were held under the bridge.

Border Patrol Short-Term Holding Facilities. Some families reported that they were taken directly to indoor Border Patrol short-term holding facilities, and others reported being taken to these sites after being held at the Anzalduas bridge. These facilities are spaces where individuals are taken for initial processing and until Border Patrol decides on their next steps. These Border Patrol short-term holding facilities also have limited infrastructure and are not equipped for long-term stays.

Within the 62 testimonies, 23 families noted that they passed through the short-term holding facilities, and seven of these families reported being moved there after being processed or held at the Anzalduas bridge. Families reported spending a median time of four days at the Border Patrol short term processing sites, which is beyond the 72-hour maximum limit that CBP notes in its National Standards for these sites.²³ This included three families who reported being held at these sites for either seven or eight days.

Within these facilities, families had various complaints. A primary complaint was that the processing sites were cold. For years, this has been a recurring complaint for these processing sites and has given rise to the facilities’ nickname among migrants as the “hielera” or icebox. Families also noted that their belongings were taken away from them and thrown away when they arrived at the processing facilities, including children’s sweaters, diapers, and medicine. Three families noted that they did not receive sufficient food at the sites, and three other

families reported that they were yelled at by Border Patrol agents.

However, the most common complaint—among ten families—was that their children became sick while they were being held in the processing sites. Four of these families noted that they were either not provided any medical care or were specifically denied access to medical attention.²⁴ Three adults reported that they became sick while in these facilities. One of these adults was provided with a Covid test after coming down with a fever and a cough. The Covid test result was negative, but the individual was still flown to Tucson and expelled through the Nogales port of entry as part of the Title 42 public health measure. This was the only mention of a Covid test among the testimonies.

Notably, four families reported that they had been separated while being held at these processing facilities. This included three cases of a father being separated from the mother and children, and one incident where a 13-year-old boy was separated from his mother and younger sister.

Overall, during this initial processing period, 27 families reported being denied access to a credible fear interview. This aligns with the broader implementation of Title 42, which has been in place since March 2020. Under Title 42, individuals and families are expelled to Mexico or their countries of origin immediately, and bypass normal immigration processing (Title 8). With normal immigration processing, families would be able to make a protection claim and enter a distinct processing track that could include a credible fear interview.

FLIGHTS TO TUCSON AND EXPULSION IN NOGALES

Lateral flights. After being held in Border Patrol’s short-term holding facilities, the Central American families were put onto planes and flown to Tucson, Arizona. Tucson is about 66 miles—a one hour drive—north of Nogales. Once the families arrived in Tucson, some were immediately transferred to buses and driven down to Nogales to be expelled. Others were held overnight and then expelled the following morning. As previously noted, Border Patrol agents would expel 50 people to Nogales on the day of the lateral flight, expel another 50 people the following day, and release 35 people into the U.S. interior.

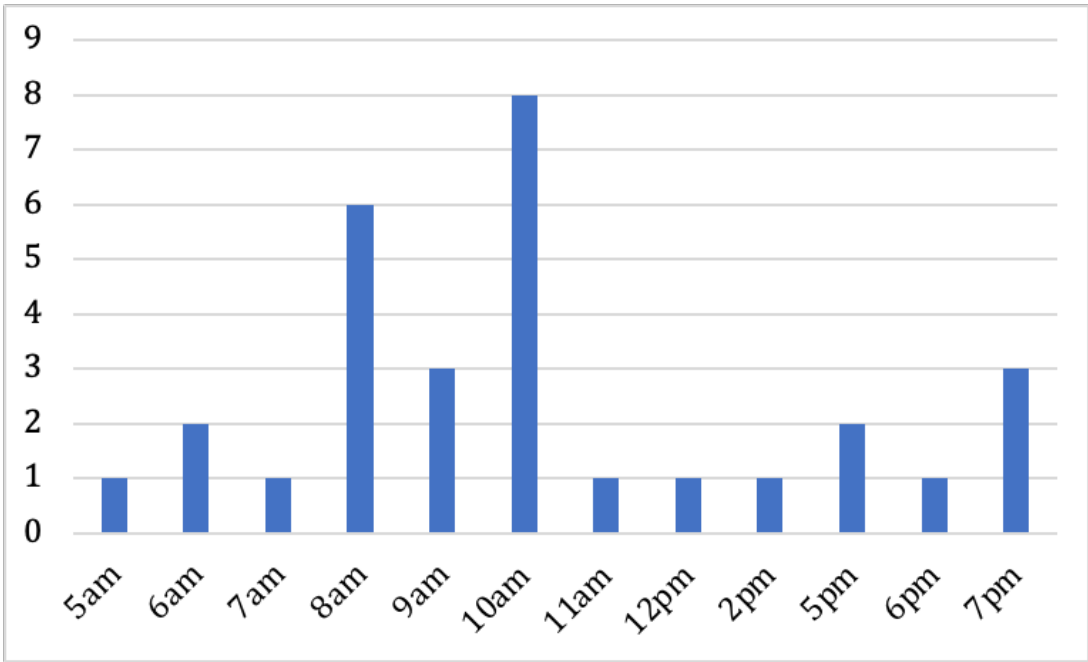
Within the testimonies, 22 families specifically spoke about some aspect of their expulsions. Within this group, seven families discussed that they were not provided with any information about the flights or their future. At times, this confusion was compounded by information that they received from individual Border Patrol agents. Five families reported that Border Patrol agents asked for the contact information of family members who would be receiving them in the United States. Other families mentioned that Border Patrol agents said they would be reunited with family members. One family reported that when Border Patrol agents put them on the bus from Tucson to Nogales “they said that they were bringing [us] to a place where [we] could sign [paperwork] and go be with [our] families.”

While the Kino Border Initiative intake forms do not ask about family members or friends who are already living in the United States, some families volunteered this information in their testimonies. Eight families mentioned that they had family members who were living in various U.S. states. This included a Honduran

mother who reported that one of her children was in a U.S. shelter (after presumably entering the United States as an unaccompanied minor) and two Guatemalan mothers traveling with children stated that their husbands were already living in the United States. Additional parents mentioned that sisters, brothers, and aunts were living and working in the United States and were planning on receiving them.

Expulsion to Nogales. Instead of being released into the interior of the United States, the Border Patrol expelled the families to Nogales, Sonora. Upon arrival at the Dennis DeConcini Port of Entry in Nogales, Border Patrol agents walked the groups to the entryway to Mexico, and then the families continued alone into Mexico. Twenty-nine families provided the time that they were expelled to Nogales, with a range of 5:00am to 7:30pm.²⁵ The majority of the families were expelled in the morning.

Figure 4: Time of Expulsion to Nogales



Source: Kino Border Initiative Intake Data

These families arrived in Nogales without any contacts or previous experience in the city. Within the Kino Border Initiative testimonies, some families reported that they were staying in shelters and others noted that they were renting rooms. One Salvadoran mother traveling alone with a baby noted that she had been robbed in Nogales shortly after arriving in the city. Another family who arrived at the Kino Border Initiative was confused about the type of support they might receive. This family stated that Border Patrol agents had told them that the Kino Border Initiative would help them, which they interpreted as meaning that the organization could help them to receive asylum in the United States.

Once in Nogales, the families differed over next steps. Within the Kino Border Initiative testimonies, seven families expressed a desire to return to their home countries; while a Salvadoran family and Honduran family who had both reported leaving their homes for violence stated that they could not return home. Other families wondered about crossing again, with one family undecided. While yet another father questioned if he should send his wife and child back to their country of origin and stay and work in Nogales. At least one expelled family had previously crossed the border, reporting that they had initially entered the United States in Reynosa, been laterally flown and expelled to Tijuana, returned to cross again in Reynosa, and had now been laterally flown and expelled to Nogales.

CONCLUSION

From May through October 2021, more than 22,000 Central Americans were flown from the Rio Grande Valley to El Paso, San Diego, and Tucson and then expelled into the nearby Mexican border cities. This Kino Border Initiative - Strauss Center report shines a light on 369 of these individuals and tells their stories and experiences. It does not represent everyone who was laterally transferred and expelled, but it aims to highlight the Border Patrol's use of flights along the border and the affected population.

Since Fall 2021, the Border Patrol has halted lateral expulsion flights from the Rio Grande Valley to El Paso, San Diego, and Tucson for Central American families.²⁶ However, the change does not appear to be a policy shift away from lateral flights. Instead, it more likely reflects the lower numbers of Central American families arriving in South Texas and the Border Patrol's increased ability to expel families to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. The result is that lateral flights remain an operational option and they may be brought back at any time that they are deemed to be necessary.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Daniel A. Scharf, “For Human Borders: Two Decades of Death and Illegal Activity in the Sonoran Desert,” *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*, Vol 38(1), 2006.
- 2 “Mexico presses U.S. to drop lateral repatriation program,” *My Plainview*, September 28, 2003, www.myplainview.com/news/article/Mexico-presses-U-S-to-drop-lateral-repatriation-8925451.php.
- 3 “CBP Issues Guidance on the Alien Transfer Exit Program,” American Immigration Lawyers Association, November 10, 2011, www.aila.org/infonet/cbp-guidance-alien-transfer-exit-program; Randy Capps, Faye Hipsman, and Doris Meissner, “Advances in U.S.-Mexico Border Enforcement: A Review of the Consequence Delivery System,” Migration Policy Institute, May 2017, www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/ConsequenceDelivery-Report-FINAL.pdf.
- 4 DHS releases end of year statistics,” U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, December 18, 2014, www.ice.gov/news/releases/dhs-releases-end-year-statistics; Capps, Hipsman, and Meissner, “Advances”; Todd Bensman, “About Those Border Apprehension Spikes: They’re Not Real, but do Reveal a Real Problem,” Center for Immigration Studies, October 16, 2020, cis.org/Bensman/About-Those-Border-Apprehension-Spikes-Theyre-Not-Real-Do-Reveal-Real-Problem.
- 5 Meagan Flynn, “Border Patrol quarantines migrants at McAllen facility amid flu outbreak,” *The Texas Tribune*, May 23, 2019, www.texastribune.org/2019/05/23/border-patrol-quarantines-migrants-mcallen-facility-amid-flu-outbreak.
- 6 Ley de Migración,” Cámara de Diputados del H. Congreso de la Unión, May 25, 2011, https://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/pdf/LMigra_200521.pdf.
- 7 Nick Miroff and Kevin Sieff, “Mexico has stopped accepting some Central American families ‘expelled’ by U.S. along the border,” *The Washington Post*, February 3, 2021, www.washingtonpost.com/national/mexico-has-stopped-accepting-central-american-families-expelled-by-us-along-the-border/2021/02/03/39da9828-6650-11eb-bf81-c618c88ed605_story.html.
- 8 These numbers are conservative estimates and may not reflect all of the flights or people expelled.
- 9 Tom Cartwright, “Ice Air Flights December 2021 and the Last 12 Months,” *Witness at the Border*, January 4, 2022, static1.squarespace.com/static/5e221cacff87ba2d2833cf54/t/61d39007020a5d713c988e78/1641254920060/ICE+Air+Dec+2021F_THCPDF.pdf.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Tom Cartwright, “Death Flights 3/15/21,” *Witness at the Border*, March 15, 2021, witnessattheborder.org/posts/31521.
- 12 Tom Cartwright, “Death Flights 5/10/21,” *Witness at the Border*, May 10, 2021, witnessattheborder.org/posts/51021.
- 13 Tom Cartwright, “Death Flights 3/29/21,” *Witness at the Border*, March 29, 2021, witnessattheborder.org/posts/32921.
- 14 Tom Cartwright, “Death Flights 5/10/21,” *Witness at the Border*, May 10, 2021, witnessattheborder.org/posts/51021.
- 15 This family was recorded as a middle-aged woman, but she was listed as traveling with at least one other person. It was unclear how many people were in the family.
- 16 This individual was a middle-aged woman. She was listed as traveling with at least one other person, but it was unclear if it was a child or an adult.
- 17 Three individuals did not have their sex listed.
- 18 Sofia Menchu, “After U.S. meeting, Guatemala sees end to remote border deportations,” *Reuters*, September 2, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/after-us-meeting-guatemala-sees-end-remote-border-deportations-2021-09-02/>.
- 19 This data is for a total of 139 families. Two families (one Honduran family and one Guatemalan family) reported two separate reasons for migrating and these families are double counted in Table 4. There is no data for one Guatemalan family, and it was left out of Table 4.
- 20 The families that reported abuses are not necessarily the same families that allowed for their testimonies to be used anonymously.
- 21 Individuals expelled to Nogales consistently reported being held under the bridge through August 2021. However, one family noted that they were held under the bridge for several hours in October 2021. Shaw Drake and Kate Huddleston, “Border Patrol Must Stop Holding People in an Inhuman Outside Pen Under a Highway in South Texas,” American Civil Liberties Union, August 9, 2021, www.aclu.org/news/civil-liberties/border-patrol-must-stop-holding-people-in-an-inhumane-outside-pen-under-a-highway-in-south-texas/; “Authorities: Migrant Shelter in McAllen is 500% over capacity,” *Spectrum News 1*, August 4, 2021, spectrumlocalnews.com/tx/south-texas-el-paso/news/2021/08/04/catholic-charities-migrant-shelters-over-capacity-in-mcallen-texas.
- 22 Some Border Patrol also noted the public health upside of holding people outside during the Covid-19 pandemic
- 23 “National Standards on Transport, Escort, Detention, and Search,” U.S. Customs and Border Protection, October 2015, www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2020-Feb/cbp-teds-policy-october2015.pdf.
- 24 One child was ultimately taken to a hospital after arriving in Tucson, but the family was expelled after the child was discharged.

- 25 One family reported being expelled at 10:30am and they were included in the 10am category. Another family was expelled at 7:30pm and they were included in the 7pm category. Twenty-eight of these times came from intake forms and two of these times were recorded from testimonies.
- 26 It is possible that small numbers of individuals continue to be expelled via sporadic lateral flights.