



Secretary Nielsen Orders CBP to Surge More Personnel to Southern Border, Increase Number of Aliens Returned to Mexico

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Today, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen M. Nielsen issued a memorandum to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Commissioner Kevin McAleenan outlining new steps the agency must take to combat the growing security and humanitarian crisis at the southern border.

“The crisis at our border is worsening, and DHS will do everything in its power to end it,” said Secretary Nielsen. “We will not stand idly by while Congress fails to act yet again, so all options are on the table. We will immediately redeploy hundreds of CBP personnel to the border to respond to this emergency. We will urgently pursue additional reinforcements from within DHS and the interagency. And we will require those seeking to enter the United States to wait in Mexico until an immigration court as reviewed their claims.”

The Secretary ordered Commissioner McAleenan to undertake emergency surge operations and immediately increase its temporary reassignment of personnel and resources from across the agency to address the influx of migrants. According to the directive, the CBP Office of Field Operations shall accelerate its planned reallocation of up to 750 officers to Border Patrol Sectors that are affected by the emergency. Moreover, CBP is directed to explore raising that target, is authorized to exceed it, and shall notify the Secretary if reassignments are planned to exceed 2,000 personnel.

Secretary Nielsen further directed CBP to immediately expand the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), a DHS initiative to return aliens to Mexico to wait during the pendency of their U.S. immigration proceedings. The Secretary directed CBP to return hundreds of additional migrants per day above current rates to Mexico, consistent with U.S. law and humanitarian obligations. This increase in returns shall include individuals apprehended or encountered at or between POEs. Moreover, the agency is directed to plan for an expansion of MPP beyond the locations in which it currently operates in California and Texas.

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