

# It's not a border crisis anymore — it's border chaos



A US Border Patrol agent processes a group of undocumented immigrants in Sunland Park, New Mexico on July 22, 2021. AFP via Getty Images

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At this point, it's not quite accurate to say there's a crisis at the border. The situation is much worse than that. As a result of the policy changes enacted by the Biden administration, combined with an utter lack of planning or foresight about what those policies would produce, the border is now in chaos — and getting worse by the day.

Federal border officials in some areas are now so overwhelmed they're unable even to process the migrants they arrest for illegally crossing the border. Instead, they're simply releasing them with a notice to report into the nearest Immigrations and Customs Enforcement office and request an asylum hearing whenever they get to where they're going in the U.S.

As you can imagine, not many migrants are complying with this ramshackle and

totally unprecedented honor system. This week Axios reported that nearly 90 percent of the more than 50,000 migrants released between mid-March and mid-July with a notice to report to ICE have failed to do so. (A far greater number, it should be noted, have been released with a notice to appear before an immigration judge.)

And no wonder. The vast majority of migrants never win their asylum cases. Among migrants from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, about 85 percent of asylum claims are ultimately denied.

The US Border Patrol is left to deal with thousands of migrants who don't bother reporting to ICE.REUTERS/Go Nakamura

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But the sheer volume of people crossing the border illegally leaves federal authorities little choice. U.S. Border Patrol agents in Texas's Rio Grande Valley arrested more than 20,000 migrants just last week, including 6,000 over the weekend, adding to the more than 1.1 million apprehensions so far this fiscal year.

We haven't made that many arrests on the southwest border since 2006, and there's still three months to go. At this rate, the Biden administration will break the record for border arrests set in 2000.

Border facilities are overcrowded, as they have been since March. More than 14,000 minors are still in federal custody, and large groups of migrants, including unaccompanied minors, continue to come across the border in spite of the deadly summer heat.

Adding to the chaos is the COVID-19 pandemic. On Monday, the White House upheld international travel restrictions, opting to keep land border crossings closed to all but essential travel, due to the pandemic. But those who cross the border illegally are allowed to bypass all COVID restrictions and be released into the country, often without even being tested.

In some cases, migrants who are known to have COVID-19 are being released and even housed in South Texas hotels by charity groups, without the knowledge of

local authorities.

The response of Biden and Kamala Harris — who doesn't seem to be making much headway with those "root causes" — is to say and do nothing, even as their policies plunge the border into chaos.

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