



AS IT IS

Number of Venezuelans Trying to Cross into US Increased in August

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Venezuelan migrants have been in the news lately in the United States.

About 50 Venezuelans arrived by airplane on the small Massachusetts island of Martha's Vineyard on September 14. No one on the island was expecting the migrants.

The migrants had crossed the U.S.-Mexico border to enter the state of Texas. After a few days, they were sent to Massachusetts by the Republican governor of Florida who is critical of the border policies under President Joe Biden's administration.

Venezuelan migrants also made news in early September when it was reported that six people **drowned** crossing the Rio Grande river near Eagle Pass, Texas. Five of the dead were from Venezuela.

On Monday, U.S. officials said that Venezuelans are now the second-largest group trying to come into the U.S. Mexicans are still the largest group of migrants. But the number of Venezuelans rose past the number of Hondurans and Guatemalans coming into the U.S. in August.

The U.S. government reported that border officials stopped Venezuelans over 25,000 times in August. That number was 43 percent higher than the number in July and four times the number from the same month one year earlier.

Between October 2021 and August 2022, the U.S. stopped 2.15 million migrants overall. That was almost 40 percent more than the year before. And it was the first time that the number was higher than 2 million.

One reason the number is so high is that some people try to cross several times. During the pandemic, the U.S. established a rule that denies a right to seek asylum while giving no **penalty** for illegal crossing.

Chris Magnus heads the U.S. agency which oversees the Border Patrol. He said, “Failing communist **regimes** in Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba are driving a new wave of migration across the Western Hemisphere, including the recent increase in **encounters** at the southwest U.S. border.”

IOM, the United Nations organization that works with migrants, says most Venezuelans are leaving because of political problems and a troubled economy. The UN’s refugee agency, UNHCR, says there are over 6 million Venezuelans around the world who live somewhere else now because of those problems.

Crossing by Venezuelans to the U.S. went down earlier this year, as Mexico made rules restricting the arrival of airplanes from Venezuela. But now more are arriving by land.

One Venezuelan migrant told the newspaper in Martha’s Vineyard that she had crossed through 10 countries before arriving in Texas.

I’m Dan Friedell.

Dan Friedell adapted this story for VOA Learning English based on a report by the Associated Press.

Words in This Story

drown -v. to die by being under water too long

penalty -n. punishment for breaking a rule or law

regime -n. a form of government

encounter -n. an unplanned meeting

We want to hear from you. Do you think the people from Venezuela will be able to return home one day?

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