
US Paying Undercover Informants to Spy on Migrants

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The practice, while not illegal, raises questions on the Trump administration's priorities. Trump has dehumanized the migrants, calling them "an invasion."

Paid undercover informants are gathering information on the migrant caravan through Whatsapp group messages for the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS), NBC News reported Tuesday.

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The migrants, currently in the Mexican border town of [Tijuana](#), have been using WhatsApp group messages to coordinate their journey. According to the report, DHS officials have joined the messaging groups as a way to monitor the caravan's size and activity.

The practice of monitoring non-U.S. citizens' communication is not illegal. However, former acting undersecretary of intelligence for DHS, John Cohen, told NBC that it raises concerns about how resources are being allocated.

"Those resources have to come from someplace. They are not being devoted to thwarting terrorist threats, mass shootings, mailed fentanyl coming into the

country or cyberattacks," said Cohen.

An exodus of around 4,000 migrants from Central America, the majority of which are asylum seekers, have been traveling from Honduras to the border between the U.S. and Mexico since mid-October.

The journey has been dangerous as they crossed zones controlled by drug-trafficking cartels, slept rough at night, faced harsher weather conditions in the north of Mexico and encountered precarious security conditions along their way. "I find it hard to believe that the highest risk facing this nation comes from this caravan," Cohen said.

They have been fleeing poverty and violence at home, the result of decades of U.S. foreign policy and unstable political climates in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala

"Three countries that have been under harsh U.S. domination," [Noam Chomsky](#) told Democracy Now. "People are fleeing from the misery and horrors for which we are responsible... from severe oppression, violence, terror, [and] extreme poverty."

The amount of funding the DHS is using to perform their information gathering scheme inside the caravan is unknown.

DHS Spokeswoman Katie Waldman said the U.S. has an obligation "to ensure we know who is crossing our borders to protect against threats to the Homeland."

"While not commenting on sources or methods, it would be malpractice for the United States to be ignorant about the migrants — including many criminals — attempting to enter our country," Waldman said in a statement.

Despite Waldman's claims of "many criminals," there have been no reports of violence occurring from the group.

U.S. President Donald Trump issued a proclamation Nov. 9 declaring anyone

crossing the southern border ineligible for asylum.

Nielsen denounces U.S. federal judge's decision to block Trump's asylum ban in a press conference. | Efe

However, a federal judge temporarily shut down the presidential decree and ordered the Trump administration to resume accepting asylum claims from migrants no matter where or how they enter the United States.

DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen criticized the judge's decision saying that the migrants "will not succeed in skipping the line in violation of the laws."

In the run-up to the Nov. 6 midterm elections, nearly 6,000 U.S. troops were sent to the southern border to allegedly "protect" the region and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) agents stationed along the frontier.

Some 2,000 National Guard members have been patrolling the border since the most recent exodus last April.
