

Honduras: Hundreds Join Caravan Heading to the United States

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Poverty, insecurity, and unemployment force Hondurans to migrate north despite all the dangers.

Despite the tightening of the U.S. immigration regulations, hundreds of Honduran Tuesday night left from San Pedro Sula to Guatemala in a new caravan heading towards the U.S. where they hope to apply for asylum.

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Convened through social networks, migrants are joining the first Honduran pilgrimage to the North since April 2019, when about 400 people were arrested by migration authorities in the state of Chiapas, Mexico.

"I don't get a job anywhere. There are no opportunities. I leave my two children and my mother behind," a 30-year-old Honduran said.

"We hope in God that we can pass. I haven't traveled in a caravan before, so I don't know what awaits me on the road. But I hope to fulfill my American dream," he added.

More than 20,000 Hondurans have joined caravans in the last 15 months. According to the authorities of this Central American nation, most of those people have already been deported or

returned voluntarily to the country. However, 4,587 Hondurans are still in Mexico waiting for the U.S. to respond to their asylum request.

Last week, the U.S. informed Honduras that it will send several agents soon to support border security. This action is conceived as an expression of the "international cooperation" that comes from the immigration agreement that both countries signed in September 2019 to contain irregular Central American migration.???????

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Honduras. Miles de hondureños salen en la primera caravana. Cientos de niños y jóvenes se van por la crisis de violencia.

"Honduras. Thousands of Hondurans leave in the first caravan. Hundreds of children and young people are leaving due to the crisis of violence."

The Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad Wolf confirmed that the implementation of that agreement will begin soon.

"Our teams completed the steps to implement the agreement in the following weeks," Wolf said after a meeting with Honduras President Juan Orlando Hernandez (JOH) held in Tegucigalpa on January 9.

The 2019 agreement obliges Honduras to give asylum to people from other countries in its territory, which the U.S. considers important because Honduras will take an important step towards "humanitarian responsibility."

"To develop the program, we will improve asylum capacity in Honduras in phases... to ensure that the asylum system in Honduras is not overwhelmed," Wolf explained and added that the implementation plan will define the procedures for the transfer of people and the number of people contemplated in the agreement.

If Honduras has security "fewer people will embark on a dangerous journey to the U.S.," Wolf said and announced that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will send specialized personnel to this Central American country to train officials working at customs and borders.

Meanwhile, President JOH administration has been implementing the commitments made with the DHS to share biometric data, which is part of a strategy to combat crimes such as human trafficking and smuggling.

"The border security agreement is extremely important," said Hernandez, who announced that four Iranians were arrested when they illegally entered Honduran territory.???????