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Around 1000 Illegal Immigrant Children Moved to Shelters in US

11/12/2015



The transfer responds to the significant increase in arrivals of unaccompanied minors in recent weeks, as border shelters are unable to cope with the surge.

Between October and November, almost 10,595 unaccompanied minors (more than double of the 5,129 in 2014) crossed the border, according to data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Minors aged between 12 and 17 will be accommodated in two shelters belonging to religious organizations in Ellis and Rockwall counties, near the city of Dallas.

Officials in both counties said the move was "imposed" by federal authorities.

"Any person would be really concerned about security issues. These kids have crossed the border unlawfully; somehow they had the wit and the skills to make it through Mexico from Guatemala (...) What kids are we dealing with?" said Paul Perry, Commissioner of Ellis county.

Rockwall County Judge David Sweet said, "We recognize and are aware of the plight of these individuals, but first and foremost, obviously, the safety (...) of all Rockwall County residents is what we're ensuring."

The minors will remain in these centers for a maximum of three weeks, waiting for their family members living in the United States to accept them or, otherwise, be deported to their countries of origin.

The authorities also reported the opening of a third shelter in California before the end of the year.

Ed Walker, founder of the retreat center in Rockwall County, responded to skepticism from local authorities, saying these children have already arrived and they must be taken care of.

"We are prepared to help and happy to do so," he added.

In a statement, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services said the increase in "temporary capacity to house unaccompanied children" is "a prudent step to ensure that the Border Patrol can continue its vital national security mission to prevent illegal migration, trafficking."

During the fiscal year 2014, which ended on Sep. 30, nearly 68,500 unaccompanied children crossed the southern border of the United States, marking an unprecedented immigration crisis that forced dozens of shelters to open their doors to accommodate them.

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