



## Illegal Migration Across Border Reaches New High in November

Statistics released by U.S. Customs and Border Protection on December 15 indicated that the number of illegal aliens apprehended at the border reached the highest number since the height of the border surge in June 2014. Last month 47,214 illegal aliens were apprehended — a 44-percent increase from November 2015. Of this total, the Border Patrol apprehended more than 15,000 illegal aliens traveling together as families while crossing the southwest border during November.



The *Washington Times*, which broke this story, reported that the number of children traveling without parents also increased to more than 7,000 for the month,

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) indicated that the migration surge includes migrants from places other than Central America. Haitians who have been living in Brazil for years have been making their way north in greater numbers and CBP is seeing an increase in the number of Cubans, too.

“CBP continues to maintain a strong security posture through background checks of all individuals encountered and ensures that each person is processed in accordance with U.S. immigration laws and DHS policy,” the *Times* quoted an agency spokesman as saying.

The *Times* reported that while Obama officials blame conditions in Central America — including prevalent poverty and violence — for forcing people to make the trip north, the head of the Border Patrol has a different explanation. Border Patrol Chief Mark Morgan told Congress that U.S. policy is inviting the surge because migrants, coached by the smugglers that they are paying, have learned to exploit the system.

A CNS News report on November 30 summarized Morgan’s testimony that day before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. In his testimony, Morgan said that the problem of illegal immigration is made worse by the fact that there are no consequences for non-Mexicans who cross illegally into the United States. While Mexican nationals who enter illegally are subject to expedited removal, people from Central America are not.

“What’s happening with the UACs [unaccompanied children] and the family units, the OTMs [other than Mexicans] as we call them, from Central America ... is right now, they know that if they make it to the border, they will be released into the interior of the United States. Generally, that’s done through an NTA ... a notice to appear.”

Morgan said this weak enforcement sends a “strong message” to others back in their home countries that if you can get to the border, we will let you in.

Senator Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), the committee chairman, said if the Central Americans were sent right back home “with humanity ... we’d dramatically reduce the incentive — and my guess is, we’d



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on December 16, 2016

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dramatically reduce the flow. Do you agree with that?" the senator asked Morgan.

"Yes, sir," Morgan replied.

A December 2 report from ABC affiliate station KRGV in Weslaco, Texas (in the Rio Grande Valley) cited Morgan's testimony before Congress in which he complained about the loopholes existing under his agency's "catch and release" policy. He said many Central Americans know they'll be given a notice to appear and then released when they get to the United States.

Border Patrol agents who catch people along the Rio Grande often don't have room at the detention centers, so they give them notices to appear in court at a later date. Large numbers of those released with NTAs never appear at their hearings. "We know right now that smuggling organizations are absolutely using and exploiting credible fear. We know that they're coaching individuals on specifically what to say when they come here," Morgan said.

"They just rattle off and they memorize the magic words that they need to say, so that they'll fall within the statute of credible fear."

"Credible fear" is the standard determining whether or not an illegal alien qualifies for asylum. An explanation posted on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website states: "If you are in expedited removal proceedings and found to have a credible fear of persecution or torture, you may seek asylum before an Immigration Judge."

Morgan said that the policy for credible fear needs to change so that it doesn't get taken advantage of.

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