



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on May 5, 2021

VP Harris Cites “Climate Change” as Root Cause of Illegal Immigration, Wants People to “Find Hope at Home”

“Border czar” and Vice President Kamala Harris has yet again addressed the migrant surge at the U.S. southern border, describing a “lack of climate resilience” as one of the “root causes” of migration from Central America to the United States.

[Speaking](#) at the Washington Conference on the Americas on Tuesday, Harris acknowledged the recent influx of migrants trying to cross the U.S.-Mexico border, saying people are leaving their homes at “an alarming rate.”

“We want to help people find hope at home. And so we are focused on addressing both the acute factors and the root causes of migration. And I believe this is an important distinction. We must focus on both,” she said.

Harris added that “catastrophes” such as “hurricanes, the drought, and the extreme food insecurity” are driving people to cross the border illegally. The “root causes” of this she named as “corruption, violence, and poverty” as well as “the lack of economic opportunity, the lack of climate adaptation and climate resilience, the lack of good governance.”

Harris’s comments come as the Biden administration attempts to handle an increase of attempted border crossings. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has projected that the number of migrants encountered at the border in April would roughly equal that of March, when border agents detained 172,331 illegal crossers, [according](#) to the CBP.

President Biden appointed Harris in March to lead an effort to slow the surge of illegal crossings, initially [saying](#) that Harris will be focused on coordinating with those countries to stem the current tide of illegal immigration while also addressing the root causes of migration from those countries. As the results of Harris’s effort were yet to be seen, with Harris traveling everywhere but the southern border, the White House was [forced to clarify](#) that Harris’s role is diplomatic and deals with the “root causes” of migration from Central American nations, rather than focusing on enforcement at the border. Americans need to be patient, Harris [said](#) in an interview, as the issue of enormous migration to the United States “will not be resolved overnight.”

The Biden administration believes that the resolution of the “root causes” of illegal immigration from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, the so-called Northern Triangle nations of Central America, lays in pumping American taxpayer dollars into these troubled countries. The president has [promised](#) an additional \$4 billion in economic assistance to the region (Congress has already [appropriated](#) nearly \$2.6 billion for the region over the past couple of years), but a detailed plan has not been made public



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for what projects the funds will target, how funds will be allocated, what regions will be emphasized, and how long it will take before migration will be impacted.

In early April, the White House [requested](#) \$861 million from Congress for that effort in Biden's first annual budget proposal. That would be a sharp increase from the roughly \$500 million in aid this year. On April 27, Harris [told](#) Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei during a virtual call on Monday that the United States will give \$310 million in humanitarian relief to Central America.

Meanwhile, some U.S. lawmakers are raising concerns over is kind of generosity that is unlikely to help Americans at home. On Monday, two top House Republicans, Representative James Comer (Kentucky), the ranking member of the House Oversight Committee, and Representative Jason Smith (Missouri), the ranking member of the House Budget Committee, wrote a [letter](#) to acting Office of Management and Budget Director Shalanda Young, calling Biden's plan to send \$4 billion over four years to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador "naive and misguided."

"In the midst of a border crisis propelled by the Biden Administration reversing successful deterrent policies, it is worrisome that the Administration's solution isn't to reinstate those policies or replace them with workable solutions, but instead to funnel more money to pay countries to dissuade their citizens to break U.S. laws, particularly countries with corruption concerns,' said the letter.

Immigration experts from the Center for Immigration Studies [agree](#) with the congressmen, noting the Traditional USAID programs are not designed to head off migration flows, and that the undemocratic Central American countries may misuse the funds provided. The same conclusion [is shared](#) by the Brookings Institution: "But the most important challenges will not be solved by huge amounts of money. Those are corruption and poor governance." According to [Wilson Center](#) analysts, "The US Strategy for Engagement in Central America acknowledged that previous US assistance had not altered structural deficiencies in the Northern Triangle, such as deep poverty."

Both Biden and Harris keep blaming "the previous administration" and climate change for the unprecedented influx of illegal immigrants into the country. They insist that all of the actions the Biden administration took against "immoral" Trump immigration policy, such as [rescinding](#) working diplomatic agreements with the Central American countries that kept illegals out of the country, relaxing a once-[strict](#) deportation policy, and [halting](#) border wall construction, have nothing to do with the crisis.



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