**Record Heat and Harsh Policies: The Deadly Reality for Migrants at the U.S.-Mexico Border**

*Extreme temperatures and restrictive immigration measures are turning the U.S.-Mexico border into one of the world's deadliest migration routes.*

Across the United States, people are united in their reaction to extreme temperatures, which are shattering records as weather apps display triple-digit readings. “It’s way too hot!”

Each year, extreme weather conditions cause hundreds of deaths in the United States. On humid days, the [National Weather](https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat) Service advises staying indoors, using air conditioning or fans, and drinking plenty of fluids.

However, this advice doesn’t help immigrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. While extreme heat can stifle many Americans, it is deadly for those traversing the hot desert shrublands to avoid detection by Border Patrol agents.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the U.S.-Mexico border ranks among the deadliest migration routes worldwide. In 2022, IOM documented [approximately 686 migrant deaths](https://www.iom.int/news/us-mexico-border-worlds-deadliest-migration-land-route#:~:text=Geneva%2FBerlin%2FSan%20Jos%C3%A9%20%E2%80%93,for%20migrants%20worldwide%20on%20record) and disappearances along this border, with the majority attributed to heat-related causes.

Rather than help migrants seeking to enter the U.S. from Mexico, the Biden administration has exacerbated an already dire situation. Last month, in his strictest migration limits to date, [President Biden signed an executive order temporarily](https://www.uusc.org/what-does-bidens-asylum-ban-actually-do/) closing the U.S.-Mexico border to asylum-seekers who attempt to cross outside designated entry points.

The move is a historic betrayal of our country’s founding principles and a significant departure from Biden’s campaign promises to improve the [asylum process and treat immigrants more humanely than his predecessor.](https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/05/11/us-biden-asylum-ban-endangers-lives-border) In the 40 years since the U.S. established its asylum system, no Democratic administration has suspended individuals’ right to seek refuge in the U.S. — a recognized international right.

Many migrants fleeing their countries face difficulties such as kidnapping, extortion, torture, and persecution. Often these are due to political or economic realities that can be traced to U.S. policies. But instead of trying to fix the problems we have caused; the Biden administration’s new rules make it harder for asylum-seekers to access the rights and safety that U.S. and international laws have promised.

These fears appear to be well founded. Although the number [of border crossings outside legal ports of entry has decreased](https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/national-media-release/cbp-releases-june-2024-monthly-update) since President Biden introduced the new restriction, the number of migrants who are dying at the border has increased.

There is urgent need for Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform tackling climate change, political instability, and economic challenges prompting asylum-seekers to seek refuge in the United States. Yet despite bipartisan calls for reform, little progress has been made on this front.

UUSC and our partners will keep striving to protect the safety and dignity of migrants across the Americas. You can stay updated on our work and support us by signing up for regular [updates here](https://www.uusc.org/subscribe/) or [donating to our efforts](https://donate.uusc.org/give/188649/#!/donation/checkout?utm_source=topnav&utm_medium=website&utm_campaign=website). Your contribution to UUSC helps us remain in solidarity with our partners to promote human rights and justice for displaced people worldwide.