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MailOnline

White House to give more than \$250 MILLION in new aid to Central American countries as its response to overwhelming surge in illegal immigration

- **More than 47,000 children have poured into the U.S. through the Mexican border since October**
- **Most of them are running away from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala**
- **They are under the misconception that once they arrive in the U.S. they'll be able to stay forever**
- **The build-up at the border is causing a humanitarian crisis at immigrant detention facilities**
- **The White House announced today that it would give \$254.6 million to Central American countries to expand their repatriation facilities and at-risk youth programs**
- **The U.S. also plans to start detaining families at the border instead of giving them a court date and letting them go**
- **Vice President Joe Biden is in Guatemala today to meet with Central American leaders to discuss ways they can make their countries safer while reducing child immigration to the U.S.**
- **House Speaker John Boehner wants Obama to send the National Guard to border to handle the humanitarian crisis so that Border Patrol can do its job**

By [Francesca Chambers](#)

Published: 09:06 EST, 20 June 2014 | Updated: 16:03 EST, 20 June 2014

The White House announced \$254.6 million in new aid for Central American countries today.

The money will go toward returning unaccompanied minors who travel to the U.S. illegally to their families and fostering youth centered programs in their home countries, the White House said this afternoon.

The assistance to the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras announced today is in addition to the \$130 million in aid the U.S. already provides those countries in economic assistance.

The U.S. has also decided to begin detaining families at the border instead of giving them court dates and releasing them.

The new aid package and the illegal immigration crisis at the U.S. border will be the subject of Vice President Joe Biden's meetings this afternoon in Guatemala with senior representatives of the Central American countries.

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U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, left, and Guatemala's President Otto Perez Molina shake hands at the National Palace in Guatemala City before their meeting about child immigration

Kids crossing border alone

The number of children (age 17 or younger) traveling without their parents who've been apprehended at the U.S.-Mexico border, by country of origin, in thousands:

- Mexico
- Honduras
- Guatemala
- El Salvador



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Chart shows the number of unaccompanied children (age 17 or younger) apprehended by U.S. Border Patrol, fiscal years 2008-2014; statistics show a dramatic increase in children coming across the U.S.-Mexico border since 2012

Inside the facility holding immigrant children on the US border



Misconceptions about the Obama administration's illegal immigration policies have caused mammoth numbers of Central American children to embark on the dangerous journey to the United States throughout the last two years.

The president's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy initiative only applies to illegal immigrants who came to the U.S. under the age of 16 before June 15, 2012 and had lived in the U.S. continuously for five years before that dates.

But teens and children from Central America have been flooding the United States guided by the belief that they too will receive amnesty.

Roughly 47,000 unaccompanied minors have made the trip from Mexico to Texas since October.

The Obama administration expects a total of 80,000 illegal immigrant children to come to the U.S. this year alone, according to a report in the Christian Science Monitor.

The White House says U.S. immigration officials repatriated 47,769 illegal immigrants from Guatemala, 37,049 from Honduras, and 21,602 from El Salvador last year.

That makes up approximately 29 percent of all U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency deportations.

The White House did not say how many of the illegal immigrants being sent back to those countries were ages 17 and younger.



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Overcrowded: Children sleep under red cross blankets on the floor of a Border Patrol center in Texas



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The White House sent Biden, left, to meet with Molina, right, and other regional leaders to warn against the perils of illegal immigration and announce that the U.S. will start detaining families at the border instead of releasing them on their own recognizance

+6he Department of Homeland Security has been overwhelmed by the number of children trying to unlawfully immigrate to the U.S., which has resulted in a humanitarian crisis at the U.S.'s border with Mexico.

The White House rushed to publicly address the issue this week after photos of children sleeping on floors in cramped quarters and reports of unhygienic conditions in the detention centers surfaced several weeks ago.

Today the White House announced that it would provide additional resources to the Department of Justice and DHS so that they can process removals of illegal immigrants more rapidly.

In a letter to President Obama, House Speaker John Boehner called on the president to go one step further and 'immediately deploy the National Guard.'

'The National Guard is uniquely qualified to respond to such humanitarian crises, 'Boehner said. 'They are able to help deal with both the needs of these children and families as well as relieve the border patrol to focus on their primary duty of securing our border.'

President Obama has not yet responded to Boehner's letter, but it divulged this afternoon that it would give Central American countries \$9.6 million to expand their repatriation centers so that they can intake returned migrants more quickly.

The U.S. will give another \$40 million to Guatemala, \$25 million to El Salvador and \$18.5 million to Honduras for

at-risk youth services that are intended to slow the rate of gang growth and migration to America, in addition to the \$161.5 million it is giving to the region for similar programs.



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Hundreds of mostly Central American immigrant children are being processed and held at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Nogales Placement Center in Nogales, Arizona, a day



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Young boys, mostly of Central American descent, wait for medical appointments in a holding area at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Nogales Placement Center

Last weekend the White House announced that Biden would tack on a trip to Guatemala to his Latin American trip to speak to leaders of Central American countries about the 'root causes' of the mass migrations and find out how the U.S. can help the countries 'try to make life better for these families and children in all of the countries of Central America.'

This afternoon Biden met with Guatemalan President Otto Perez Molina and Guatemalan Vice President Roxanna Baldetti. Later he will meet with Salvadoran President Salvador Sanchez Ceren.

'The surge of unaccompanied minors making the very perilous journey from Central America to the United State and often if not primarily in the hands of smuggling networks that engage in physical and sexual abuse of these children,' Biden said in a statement after his meeting with the Guatemalan government.

'This is a serious humanitarian issue standing alone all by itself, and ... it is a fundamentally shared problem for the United States, Mexico, and this entire region.'

In his remarks, Biden acknowledge that 'the current situation is not sustainable.'

'It is unacceptable,' he said.

But it is important that Guatemala recognize and address the root reasons children are fleeing the country, Biden said.

'Especially poverty, insecurity and the lack of the rule of law, so the people can stay and thrive in their own communities,' Biden said, 'so a parent doesn't feel so desperate that they put their child in the hands of a criminal

network and say take him, and take her to the United States.'

Guatemala's president said in his own statement that he had asked the U.S. to give illegal immigrants from Central America a 'temporary protected status' that would allow them to stay in the United States because of how dangerous it has become to live in their home countries.

The U.S. has already denied to give Central Americans any sort of special immigration status and that is unlikely to change now.

Yesterday, President Barack Obama told Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto that unaccompanied minors illegally entering the U.S. through its border with Mexico will be sent back to their home countries.

During a phone call with Nieto on Thursday night Obama explained to his Mexican counterpart that neither his Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy nor his comprehensive immigration reform legislation that is stalled in the Senate would provide amnesty to the hundreds of children crossing the U.S. border each day.

Yesterday, Obama also talked with the Mexican president about a regional strategy that includes the governments of Central American countries to reduce the number of children coming to the United States illegally.

Obama also talked with Nieto about how the two countries can work together to shut down the criminal networks shuttling children from country to country.

The Vice President called Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández to discuss the regional strategy earlier today on the plane to Guatemala, the White House said.

He will meet in person with senior representatives from Honduras and Mexico this afternoon, as well.

The Obama administration's new strategy for handling immigration came just hours after [Gallup](#) released a poll showing that Obama's immigration approval rate had tanked to 31 percent in its recent poll - Obama's lowest ranking on the topic since 2011.

Read more:

- [Approval of Obama's Handling of Immigration Falls to 31%](#)



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[Wise Pellican](#), Elon, USA, 17 hours ago

Well life would be better there wouldn't it.....I mean you are in New York, right?

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[Wise Pellican](#), Elon, USA, 17 hours ago

I work with a man from Guatemala. He's retired early from IBM and working as substance abuse counselor. He's just waiting until he can get his pension and move back to Guatemala. He says that life is better there for him. University is FREE there and his friends are all professionals. They all did better than him. He plans to have his son go to university and dental school for FREE in Guatemala. - DW,

NYC, 6/21/14 15:24 Nothing is free.

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[merriel](#), Soap Lake, 17 hours ago

Well im running for president, and not one single penny will leave this country. America comes FIRST

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[Wise Pellican](#), Elon, USA, 17 hours ago

A bit more money to ship a few thousand more illegals north with, I suppose. Obama is set on destroying the USA by every means at his disposal.

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[Earthling](#), Milkyway, United States, 18 hours ago

\$250 millions aid? It does sounds like paying the ransom.

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[ray weaver](#), baltimore, United States, 23 hours ago

Build and man a fence at the US Southern border. Bet you could build a good one for \$250M

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[Californian](#), Sacramento, United States, 1 day ago

That's \$250 million we will have to borrow from China.

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[Happy Camper](#), los angeles, United States, 1 day ago

if we build the wall they will not come.

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[Hope4Change](#), Chicago, United States, 1 day ago

Let me guess - the white house will ensure this taxpayer money will be spent buying airfare, gas and bus tokens to the USA? After all, they need their votes when they get here!

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[aandm12](#), Laguna Hills, 1 day ago

There are no problems cash won't cure....yea right....

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