

Biden Administration Title 42 Expulsions of Families and Adults to Nuevo Laredo Fuel Kidnappings and Endanger Lives

The Biden administration's use of Title 42 to [expel](#) families and adults to extremely dangerous Nuevo Laredo in Tamaulipas, Mexico is contributing to already epidemic levels of violence and [kidnappings](#) of migrants and asylum seekers there. These expulsions are occurring in spite of the U.S. Department of State's [Level 4](#) "Do Not Travel" security advisory for Tamaulipas – the same threat level applied to warzones like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria – and specific [warning](#) that "[i]n Nuevo Laredo, violent crime, such as murder, armed robbery, carjacking, kidnapping, extortion, and sexual assault, is common." On several occasions, gun battles in Nuevo Laredo have forced the suspension of processing of asylum seekers being transited out of the Trump administration's Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) through Nuevo Laredo. Human rights [monitors](#), legal services [providers](#), and [media](#) have repeatedly [reported](#) that migrants returned to Mexico through Nuevo Laredo are immediately [targeted](#) for [kidnapping](#) and assault at the port of entry.

Despite the well-known and well-documented dangers for migrants in Nuevo Laredo, the Biden administration appears to be [transferring](#) families with young children, who have crossed in other areas of the Texas-Tamaulipas border to seek U.S. protection, for expulsion via Nuevo Laredo because some other Mexican ports of entry in Tamaulipas will not [accept](#) families being illegally expelled with children under seven. For instance, **a 4-year-old Honduran boy and his asylum-seeking mother who had sought U.S. protection near McAllen, Texas were kidnapped immediately after the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) bused them 150 miles to Laredo, Texas and expelled them to Nuevo Laredo in March 2021**, according to the [Los Angeles Times](#). Local Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers informed advocates and humanitarian service providers in Texas that it is transferring up to 350 people per day from the Rio Grande Valley of Texas to Laredo and expelling around 100 to Nuevo Laredo daily in addition to other individuals being returned there. A local pastor reports receiving around 150 people expelled per day to Nuevo Laredo. More than [60 percent](#) of expulsions to Tamaulipas between January and April 2021 occurred via Nuevo Laredo, according to Mexican government data.

The predictable result of expelling and blocking asylum seekers in Nuevo Laredo under Title 42 has been a rash of kidnappings. In an electronic survey conducted by AI Otro Lado between February and May 2021, **two-thirds (17 out of 25) of individuals from Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras expelled to or stranded in Nuevo Laredo waiting for the restoration of asylum processing at the border reported that they were kidnapped or victims of attempted or threatened kidnappings in Nuevo Laredo; the other third also reported being kidnapped or assaulted but did not specify the location of the attack.** Those kidnapped include a Honduran asylum seeker and her three-year-old child who were kidnapped and held for a month after DHS transported them from McAllen and expelled them to Nuevo Laredo, a Guatemalan asylum seeker and his four-year-old son abducted and held for ransom after being expelled by DHS to Nuevo Laredo, a five-year-old Honduran girl kidnapped with her mother in Nuevo Laredo, and a [one-year-old Honduran girl](#) and her parents kidnapped the same day they were expelled to Nuevo Laredo in April 2021. A pastor assisting expelled families in Nuevo Laredo told [Vice News](#) in April 2021 that cartels and criminal organizations in Nuevo Laredo "operate without any fear of

police or the federal government . . . They go into immigration buildings. They are kidnapping everybody, whoever they can.” DHS is expelling families and adults without access to the U.S. asylum system or fear [screenings](#) interviews required by U.S. law and treaty commitments.

Indeed, violence targeted against migrants and asylum seekers, including those returned to Nuevo Laredo under MPP, is [pervasive](#). For instance, Doctors Without Borders reported that in October 2019, [75 percent](#) of its “patients who were in Nuevo Laredo due to MPP . . . had been kidnapped” and [80 percent](#) of its migrant patients “in Nuevo Laredo during the first nine months of 2019 reported having suffered at least one violent incident.” Human Rights First [tracked](#) scores of kidnappings, rapes and other violent assaults against families and individuals returned to Nuevo Laredo through MPP, including kidnappings in which Mexican migration officers in Nuevo Laredo were [complicit](#). A pastor who intervened to prevent the kidnapping of Cuban asylum seekers by a cartel has been [missing](#) since August 2019 when he and a colleague were abducted from the shelter they ran in Nuevo Laredo. An ongoing federal [lawsuit](#) challenging MPP alleges that DHS returned asylum seekers to Tamaulipas “notwithstanding widespread recognition, including by the U.S. Department of State, of the extreme violence that migrants face there.”