

[Article 02] Migrant Crossings at the US-Mexico Border Are Down. What's Behind the Drop?

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Migrant Crossings at the US-Mexico Border Are Down. What's Behind the Drop,?

The number of people trying to enter the US illegally from Mexico has gone down recently. This change might not last long. The numbers often go up and down for many reasons.

In December, a record number of people tried to cross the border. But in January, only half as many people tried. The biggest drop was in the Del Rio area, which includes Eagle Pass, Texas. Texas Governor Greg Abbott focused on stopping migrants there. Mexico also helped by stopping more migrants during this time after talking with US President Joe Biden's government.

Let's look at the numbers and why they changed:

What Do the Numbers Show? In December, 249,735 people were caught crossing the border illegally. In January, this number went down by half.

The Tucson, Arizona area had the most people crossing illegally with 50,565 arrests. This was 37% less than in December. The Del Rio area saw a big drop of 76%, with only 16,712 arrests.

The number of Venezuelan people trying to cross went down a lot, by 91%. But this might change soon. Many migrants are still traveling through Panama on their way to the US.

What is Mexico Doing? Mexico is stopping migrants from riding on trains to get closer to the US border. They are also putting migrants on buses to send them back to southern Mexico or flying some back to their home countries. This started after a US official visited Mexico City on December 28.

Mexican states near the US border, like Coahuila, are working with Mexico's government. In January, Mexican soldiers and police were watching the Rio Grande river. They put migrants on buses and drove them away from the border.

What is Texas Doing? In Eagle Pass, Texas, the state's National Guard took control of a park by the river. Since January 10, Texas has not let US border agents into Shelby Park. They also put up more wire fences to stop people from crossing.

Before this, US Border Patrol agents used the park to watch the border and process migrants who crossed the river. Mike Banks, border expert, said they took away the reason for migrants to cross at that spot.

What Else Affects the Numbers? The weather can change how many people try to cross the border. More people usually try to cross when it's warmer in the US.

Last year, a big change happened in May when COVID-19 rules ended. These rules, called Title 42, let the US government send asylum-seekers back to Mexico quickly.

When Title 42 ended, the number of crossings went down for a month. The US government made new rules to limit who could ask for asylum. But then the numbers started going up again until they reached the highest ever in December.

Questions:

1. The article says fewer people are crossing the border now. Can you think of one reason why this might be happening?
2. If we use more cameras and drones to watch the border, do you think it will stop more people from crossing? Why or why not?
3. The article talks about different things that change how many people cross the border, like weather and the rules. How do you think watching the border more closely might help (or not help) due to these changes?