

The southern border should be a place of refuge and hope, not a site of militarization and fear. It's time to reverse the deadly policies of the Trump era and build a new border policy that supports migrants, asylum-seekers, border communities, and everyday people here and abroad.

Donald Trump's scorched-earth immigration policies, deployment of troops, and racist fixation on building a wall cemented the U.S. southern border as a place of militarism and violence:

- Trump used a fictional national security emergency as pretext to deploy troops and tear gas migrants and asylum-seekers arriving at the southern border. This terrorized families, drove the U.S. toward constitutional crisis, made political pawns out of the military, wasted federal funds, and subverted the will of Congress.
- President Biden's Day 1 executive order to end the national emergency declaration and stop border wall construction is a welcome step forward. The construction of the unnecessary and racist border wall devastated the local environment and forced many to attempt more dangerous crossings. The real security threat was to migrants and asylum-seekers at the hands of Trump and his administration of anti-immigrant hardliners.
- Due to the brutal legacy of decades of disastrous U.S. interventions, the U.S. has a direct responsibility to help alleviate the conditions that drive forced migration in Latin America and provide for the displaced.

BORDER MILITARIZATION IS IMMORAL & DANGEROUS

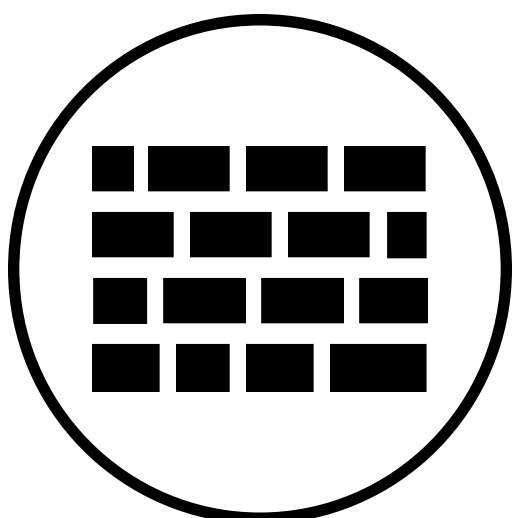
Human security is not divisible, and our own fears of insecurity do not justify policies that make others less safe. Border brutality threatens the safety of those seeking refuge and opportunity at our borders.



- Firing tear gas, separating families, and caging children are the real threats to human security. People seeking refuge and migration itself are not.
- The broken U.S. immigration system, hundreds of miles of "walls" (fences, barricades, levees, etc.) already built across the southern border, and a militarized ICE and Border Patrol, have pushed people seeking asylum to attempt more dangerous crossings.
- Congress and the Biden administration should immediately establish a human rights-first approach to border governance, accelerating and increasing life-saving protections in our asylum processes to uplift the rights and dignity of all people seeking refuge.

PREVENT PRESIDENTS FROM DECLARING A FAKE EMERGENCY

The only emergency at the southern border is the dire humanitarian catastrophe and irreversible harm to refuge-seeking children and families that Trump's and decades of draconian immigration policies have inflicted.



- Migrants and asylum seekers arriving at the U.S. border should be greeted with urgent humanitarian and medical aid, and border personnel prepared to process their immigration or asylum applications, not armed troops.
- Troops currently deployed to the U.S.-Mexico border may be in violation of the Posse Comitatus Act. Congress must defund this political ploy and invest in increased humanitarian assistance and trained migrant case workers.
- Congress can prevent any president from abusing emergency powers to terrorize migrants and asylum seekers by reforming the National Emergency Act to require Congress to approve the establishment of national emergencies.

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES IN LATIN AMERICA

Long-standing violent and exploitative U.S. policies towards Latin America contribute to the conditions that force people to leave their homes.



- U.S. foreign policy should safeguard the rights, access to justice, and security of the people in Latin America, not undermine them by militarizing the border and dismantling the U.S. asylum system.
- That means ending U.S. military and intelligence interventions, deadly broad-based sanctions, and the training and arming of violent security forces. The U.S. must reverse decades of exploitative economic relations, from trade deals like NAFTA and CAFTA to IMF-imposed austerity, that put corporate profit over the wellbeing of everyday people.





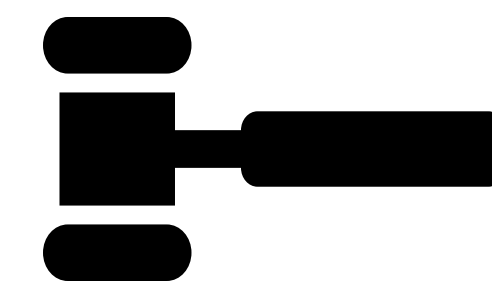
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONGRESS

The militarization of the border began before Trump, but accelerated dramatically under him. Members of Congress can take action to counter border militarization by advocating for and enacting the following policies:



REVERSE TRUMP'S BORDER MILITARIZATION

Work with the Biden administration to remove all military personnel and equipment from the border, halt all border wall construction, and repeal border wall waiver authority. Use Congress' power of the purse to ensure that funds are appropriated for port of entry infrastructure and rescue and recovery, *not* troop deployments, walls, or military equipment.



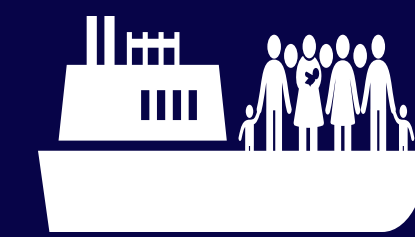
REQUIRE CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF A "NATIONAL EMERGENCY"

Pass legislation to require congressional approval of any emergency declared under the National Emergencies Act, to prevent any future president from declaring a fake national emergency.



FOSTER STABILITY IN LATIN AMERICA

Provide robust support for equitable humanitarian and sustainable development initiatives in Latin America. Stop funding train-and-equip programs and selling military equipment that facilitate human rights abuses. End U.S. interventions and the use of blanket sanctions in the region, and rewrite the rules of trade and economy to provide for broad-based prosperity.



FIX OUR IMMORAL & BROKEN IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

Repeal the Trump administration's "zero-tolerance" policy, fully enforce humanitarian legal protections for asylum seekers and welcome them without detention, promote rescue and recovery over counterproductive "deterrence," and pass a just and humane permanent solution for DACA, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) holders.

THE HIGH COSTS OF OF BORDER MILITARIZATION

As many as 4,000 U.S. troops are deployed to the southern border, a hallmark of Trump's border militarization, an extension of the U.S.' violence-first foreign policy, and a consequence of excessive spending, lack of oversight, and lack of accountability at the Pentagon and Department of Homeland Security. **Every dollar spent on unnecessary troop deployment could instead be used to fix our immigration system and invest in diplomacy, public health, climate adaptation, and countless other urgent needs to provide true security for everyday people.**



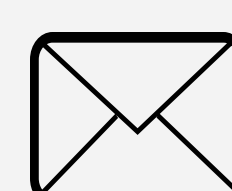
SELECT PAST LEGISLATIVE ACTION ON BORDER MILITARIZATION

- **Feb. 2019:** Trump declares a national emergency at the U.S.-Mexico border.
- **June 2019:** The House passes the American Dream and Promise Act [237-187](#).
- **July 2019:** The House fails to pass several demilitarization of immigration amendments to the FY20 NDAA, including to prohibit the president from authorizing funds to detain undocumented immigrants in DoD facilities, which failed by a vote of [173-245](#) and to ban the president from deploying U.S. troops to the border to enforce immigration law, which failed by a vote of [179-241](#).
- **Sept. 2019:** Both the House and Senate pass a joint resolution, S.J.Res. 54, to end the national emergency at the border. The House voted [236-174](#) and the Senate voted [54-41](#).
- **Oct. 2019:** Trump vetoes S.J.Res. 54 and Senate fails to override by [53-36](#). The national emergency is left in effect.
- **Feb. 2020:** Trump extends the national emergency at the border for another year.
- **Jan. 2020:** Biden issues an executive order to revoke the emergency declaration and halt border wall construction.
- **Jan. 2020:** Biden issues other significant executive orders and memoranda on immigration, including to affirm DACA protections, halt Trump's "Remain in Mexico" policy, and reinstate Deferred Enforced Departure for Liberians through June 2022.

For further questions and additional resources:



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