

April 6, 2023

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

We, representatives of the undersigned Catholic organizations working on behalf of migrants and asylum seekers, urge you to end the practice of requiring CBP One app appointments as the primary means of accessing ports of entry for asylum and to rescind other restrictions that continue to limit the right to seek asylum at the U.S. southern border and harm our border communities.

There is a direct link between current U.S. border policies and practices and the horrific deaths of more than 38 people detained at the immigration center in Ciudad Juárez. The recent expansions of Title 42 alongside the inability to schedule an exemption appointment through CBP One has forced asylum seekers to remain in cities like Ciudad Juárez, which are dangerous and which do not have the capacity to provide adequate housing and services for those who need it.

The U.S. does not take these human rights or humanitarian conditions into consideration when returning migrants and asylum seekers to Mexico, signaling to the Mexican government that they can continue to discriminate against migrants without being held accountable. In the last three months, we have observed an increase in abuse, extortion and arbitrary detention by the Mexican authorities at locations where individuals have found shelter, even including churches.

For the last 30 years the U.S. government has approached the border from a [policy framework of deterrence](#) and this model has spread not only to Mexico but worldwide. Nonetheless, this approach has not resulted in a safe and secure border but instead has only brought pain and suffering upon the most vulnerable.

The policies of deterrence have also led to the militarization of border communities in the U.S. where the very same enforcement agents who are charged with keeping our communities safe are now viewed as potential threats. The abuse of power by U.S. law enforcement has resulted in the loss of lives and countless other sufferings under a system that views black, brown, and indigenous individuals at our southern border with fear, regardless of immigration status.

In addition, the new proposed rule by the Biden administration, "[Circumvention of Lawful pathways](#)" simply adds to the deterrence policies already in place and will bring further harm to

human beings who are in need of protection. The limits to asylum proposed in the rule are not pathways that promote a safe and orderly system, but instead are unjust restrictions that result in death.

Pope Francis has said, "the sin is to allow these fears to determine our responses, to limit our choices, to compromise respect and generosity, to feed hostility and rejection. The sin is to refuse to encounter the other, to encounter the different, to encounter the neighbor, when this is in fact a privileged opportunity to encounter the Lord."

We urge the Biden administration to end the practice of requiring CBP One app appointments, rescind the proposed rule on circumventing lawful pathways, and consider other alternatives to access ports of entry along the U.S. southern border. Together we can ensure that there are no more deaths at our borders and that we are prepared to welcome vulnerable people on the move with dignity. This moment is an opportunity for this administration to stand firm and model for the world a system of encounter and reception rather than continuing on a path focused on deterrence.

Sincerely,

The undersigned organizations

cc: Hon. Kamala D. Harris, Vice President of the United States
Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas, Department of Homeland Security
Ambassador Susan Rice, Domestic Policy Council

Signatories

Catholics Against Racism in Immigration (CARI)
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC)
Dorothy Day Catholic Worker - Washington DC
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Network for Migrant - USA
Hope Border Institute
Ignatian Solidarity Network (ISN)
Jesuit Refugee Service - USA
Kino Border Initiative
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Pax Christi - USA
Quixote Center
St. Columban Mission for Justice, Peace and Ecology
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas - Justice Team