

US Deports More Chinese Illegal Immigrants

It was the fifth such flight to China in less than seven months, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

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Save



Chinese illegal immigrants wait while a Border Patrol agents provides medical care to a woman within a large group of illegal immigrants near Eagle Pass, Texas, on May 20, 2022. Charlotte Cuthbertson/The Epoch Times



As part of its systematic deportation of illegal residents, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) last week flew a large number of Chinese back to China on a charter flight.

The DHS said in a release on Jan. 10 that it had conducted a large-frame charter removal flight of Chinese nationals with final orders of removal from the United States.

The flight on Jan. 6 was the fifth such flight in less than seven months, the DHS said. The flights were conducted in close coordination with officials in Beijing and the coordinated efforts will continue, it said.

“The Chinese nationals removed this week to the People’s Republic of China (PRC) add to the hundreds who have been removed for not having a legal basis to remain in the U.S.,” Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in a written statement.

According to Mayorkas, the effort was part of a multi-pronged approach that “includes tough consequences for illegal border crossing, extensive engagement with foreign countries, and the development of safe and lawful pathways for people to access humanitarian relief under our laws.”

According to the DHS, the coordinated efforts between the United States and China contributed to a 62 percent decrease in the number of Chinese nationals encountered at the southwest border of the United States between June 2024 and Dec. 2024.

Removal flights to China started at the end of June, and between June and December, the number of illegal Chinese immigrants encountered at the southwest border decreased dramatically, from 2,160 to 820.

Washington and Beijing don’t have a strong history of coordinating efforts to manage illegal immigrants and their deportation. The United States designated China as a “recalcitrant” country in 2020 along with 13 other countries including Vietnam, India, Russia, Pakistan, Bhutan,

Iraq, and Iran, because those countries declined to take back their nationals.

In China's case, things have never been simple diplomatically. Beijing has a history of linking the issue of repatriations to other political issues it considers important, such as the return of fugitives accused of criminal acts in China, according to 2016 Congressional testimony from the State Department.

In some cases, China has been selective about which illegal immigrants it helps the United States deport. Human rights watchdog Safeguard Defenders said in a 2022 [report](#) that China has used the issue of illegal immigrants “as a tool of leverage to try to force the return of politically sensitive targets instead.”

In May 2024, the two countries quietly began coordinating the deportation of illegal Chinese immigrants once again, nearly two years after Beijing suspended its cooperation in retaliation for then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's trip to Taiwan.

On June 4, President Joe Biden released a [presidential proclamation](#) on securing the border.

The proclamation “suspended and limited” the entry of noncitizens into the United States across the southern border, with certain exceptions.

In June, following the proclamation, the DHS and the Justice Department issued a complimentary measure restricting the entry of asylum seekers at the southern border. In September that rule was amended and made final as the Joint DHS-DOJ Final Rule.

The measure limited asylum eligibility for migrants who cross the southern border during times when “high levels of encounters exceed our ability to deliver timely consequences,” according to a DHS fact sheet.

The United States also has the option to apply visa sanctions against recalcitrant countries under Section 243(d) of the Immigration and

Nationality Act.

Last year, the DHS removed over 742,000 foreign individuals from the United States. Between the June 4 proclamation and the end of November, over 740 repatriation flights went to over 160 nations including China, Peru, Egypt, Senegal, Uzbekistan, and India.

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Reporter

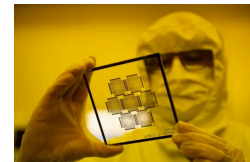
Venus Upadhayaya reports on India, China, and the Global South. Her traditional area of expertise is in Indian and South Asian geopolitics. Community media, sustainable development, and leadership remain her other areas of interest.



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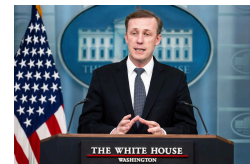
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