

CUBA

In the last 11 months, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), around 180.000 Cubans entered the United States irregularly through the Mexican border. Another 8.000 tried to do so via sea. Moreover, the U.S. Coast Guard indicates that from October 2021, 5.421 persons were intercepted at sea trying to reach the Florida straight in fragile boats (*balsas*). 3.000 persons succeeded in reaching the coast. This number is higher than the total of *balseros* detained in the last five years.

In the CBP Fiscal Year 2020, 14.000 Cubans entered the U.S. irregularly through the Mexican border. In 2021 there were 39.300 apprehensions, and in 2022, close to 180.000 have entered via the US southern border. US authorities have indicated that if this current flow continues, 2022 will represent a record with more than 200.000 Cubans entering the US irregularly.

The current outflow of migration from Cuba exceeds even the Mariel crisis in 1980 during which 125.000 Cubans fled the island; it also exceeds the 1994 *Crisis de las Balsas*, when 35.000 persons left Cuba.

Cubans fleeing the island face death at sea, human trafficking, deportation, and difficult journeys through sea and land, including precarious conditions through the Darien Gap and in Central America and Mexico in their efforts to reach the US. Hundreds of Cubans have lost their lives at sea, crossing the Rio Bravo/Rio Grande and in the hands of criminal elements which control irregular migration in the region.

The complex situation was also discussed in the 159th Plenary Meeting of the Cuban Episcopal Conference at the end of March, when the bishops analysed and shared criteria on the growing emigration of many, especially of young people, with the consequences that this entails for families and for the country.

For further information:

Institutional Websites and NGOs

AP News - Cubans flee island's economic woes by air, land and sea

<https://apnews.com/article/cuba-miami-united-states-immigration-4568de1226ea37ab2799c9b2c1af4aac>

Conferencia de Obispos - Nota Informativa - 159ª Asamblea plenaria de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Cuba

<https://iglesiacubana.org/cocc/pages/articles/1870>

El País - Cuba vive el mayor éxodo migratorio de su historia. September 12, 2022

<https://elpais.com/internacional/2022-09-12/cuba-vive-el-mayor-exodo-migratorio-de-su-historia.html>

Migration Policy Institute - Rise in Maritime Migration to the United States Is a Reminder of Chapters Past

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/maritime-migration-united-states-rise>

The New Humanitarian - The Invisibles: A Cuban asylum seekers' dangerous odyssey, May 10, 2022

<https://interactive.thenewhumanitarian.org/stories/2022/05/10/us-asylum-darien-gap-cuba-central-america-mexico/>

US Customs and Border Protection - CBP Releases August 2022 Monthly Operational Update

<https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/national-media-release/cbp-releases-august-2022-monthly-operational-update>