

El Salvador signs three migration deals with Washington



Washington, October 30 (RHC)-- Salvadoran Foreign Minister Alexandra Hill and United States Acting Secretary of National Security Kevin McAleenan have signed three agreements aiming at halting migration in the Central American region.

The first of these agreements concern border security. According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the deal will consist of the deployment of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials to advise the National Civil Police of El Salvador (PNC), on border security and migration.

The second deal will seek to exchange information between Salvadoran authorities and the U.S. "to prevent and combat crime and other threats to public safety." While the third deal will be related to a security program between the DHS, CBP, and the PNC.

"Today's agreements will significantly help the U.S. and our partners in El Salvador confront illegal migration and will strengthen the entire region as we approach the implementation of asylum cooperative agreements," McAleenan said.

"We are again thankful for El Salvador's leadership in the region and close coordination with the U.S. and DHS. Under President Bukele, El Salvador has proven to be a close and trusted ally to the U.S. Our close geographical proximity, common principles, and democratic values have led to a strong partnership over the years, from addressing historical migration flows to efforts to build a more stable and prosperous region," he added.

The signings come as the U.S. extended temporary protection (TPS) for Salvadorans living in the U.S. for another year. Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele has declared that the TPS could be extended for a second year, until January 2022, as long as the lawsuits in the U.S. federal court do not invalidate Trump's decision to end the program.

TPS was awarded to citizens of the Central American country after two devastating earthquakes affected El Salvador in 2001 leaving hundreds of thousands homeless.

In a statement, the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador said that work permits for Salvadorans registered with TPS on the same dates will also be extended. The TPS program offers protection from deportation to migrants already in the country, including those who entered illegally, from countries affected by natural disasters, civil strife, and other problems.

However, U.S. President Donald Trump has shown considerable skepticism toward the protection program and has asked to revoke the special status granted to thousands of migrants from several countries including El Salvador.

El Salvador, along with Guatemala and Honduras, are the countries of origin for the majority of migrants attempting to cross into the United States through Mexico. The three countries have signed already safe-third nation-type deals with the United States.

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