

# *Second U.S. military zone along border with Mexico set up to deter migrants*

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Army National Guard soldiers return from a boat patrol on the Rio Grande River at the U.S.-Mexico border in Eagle Pass, Texas. REUTERS/Kaylee Greenlee Beal

The government says 100 km-long Texas National Defense Area runs east from the Texas-New

## Mexico border in El Paso

El Paso, May 3 (RHC)-- The U.S. military has created a second military zone along the border with Mexico, adding an area in Texas where troops can temporarily detain migrants or trespassers, following another zone newly designated in New Mexico last month.

The announcement of a new military encampment comes as President Donald Trump has launched an aggressive anti-immigration crackdown since taking office, increasing troops at the southern border and pledging to deport millions of people from the US.

The military said that it had established the "Texas National Defense Area" in a 100-kilometre (63-mile) strip running east from the Texas-New Mexico border in El Paso.

According to the Pentagon, U.S. troops can detain migrants in the zones, and the detainees will then be handed over to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) or other civilian law enforcement, which maintains jurisdiction over illegal border crossings.

In April, the Trump administration designated an 18-metre-wide, 270 km-long (60 feet by 170 miles) strip along the base of New Mexico as a "National Defense Area."

A total of 82 migrants have so far been charged for crossing into the New Mexico military zone, according to the US Attorney's Office. U.S. troops did not detain any of them, and they were dealt with by CBP officials.

The military zones are intended to allow the Trump administration to use its military forces to detain migrants without invoking the 1807 Insurrection Act that empowers a president to deploy the U.S. military only to suppress events like civil disorder.

About 11,900 U.S. troops are currently stationed on the border with Mexico. According to government data, the number of migrants caught crossing illegally into the U.S. in March fell to the lowest level ever recorded.

Texas Governor Gregg Abbott, a Republican, on Thursday posted pictures of a razor wire barrier construction on the border, saying, "Texas continues to work with the Trump Administration to stop illegal immigration."

Since 2021, Abbott has deployed the state's National Guard and police to border security. However, New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham has opposed what she called a "deportation buffer zone" in her state.

In a March social media post, the Democrat called it "a waste of resources and military personnel, especially when migrant crossings are at the lowest in decades".

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