
Migrant Caravan: Trump Suggests Possible Use of Lethal Force

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The U.S. President has announced the deployment of tens of thousands of troops to the border and warned the Central American migrants to turn around.

The United States President Donald Trump warned Thursday that the troops deployed to the border to stop the Central American Exodus, which he calls an "invasion," will regard stones possibly thrown by migrants as firearms, paving the way for the use of lethal force by U.S. soldiers.

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The first wave of the migrants is moving through Mexico toward the United States. The group has grown to between 4,000 to 7,000 members since leaving Honduras.

Some members of the caravan, whose members refer to as a Central American Exodus, have turned back to their home countries or sought asylum in Mexico. Others are pressing on. Many of those making the journey are families and children.

According to the United Nations children's agency (UNICEF), there are an estimated 2,300 children walking to the U.S. southern border.

"Anybody throwing rocks like they did to Mexico... where they badly hurt police and soldiers. We will consider that a firearm because there is not much difference," Trump warned in a televised address. The U.S. is expected to [deploy up to 15,000](#) armed troops to the border in a posture of brute force.

Trump's warning suggests U.S. troops could fire into the crowd of migrant families fleeing violence and poverty in Central America.

"We have about 5,800. We'll go up to anywhere between 10,000 and 15,000 military personnel on top of Border Patrol, ICE and everybody else at the border," Trump said. "These illegal caravans will not be allowed in the United States and should be turned around now," he said.

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Lieutenant Colonel Jamie Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, declined to discuss the possible use of force by the military, but said that US soldiers "always have the inherent right to self-defense," according to Reuters.

Trump added that those seeking asylum will have to arrive at a legal port of entry and argued poverty is not a cause for asylum.

However, the Immigration and Nationality Law states that any immigrant in the U.S. can apply for asylum, regardless of whether they entered the country through a designated port of entry, Reuters reports.

The U.S. President has been emphasizing immigration issues in the lead up to the midterm elections. This week Trump announced he would sign an executive order to end the right to U.S. citizenship for children born in the country. Though such an executive order is unconstitutional, it furthers rhetoric in line with his "America First" slogan.

"We're talking about a nationalism, all Americans first, but what he really means is all white Americans first," Shane Burley, author of *Fascism Today: What It Is and How to End It*, told teleSUR.

Members of the first wave, now two weeks into their journey, are trekking through southern Mexico. Many, including children, are struggling with illness, exhaustion, and injuries, The Guardian reports.

A second group is trailing the first by about 200 miles. A federal official who spoke on condition of anonymity [told the Associated Press](#) that 153 migrants in the second caravan were detained during highway inspections in Chiapas Wednesday.

A third group from El Salvador, estimated at 500 members, has reached Guatemala. A fourth group from the same country of about 700 set out on the journey Wednesday.
