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Ecuador to require Cubans to get entry visas

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Ecuador announced Thursday that it will begin requiring Cubans to get visas to enter beginning Tuesday, seeking to discourage the flow of migrants.

Deputy Foreign Minister Xavier Lasso said Ecuador wants to curb the movement of migrants who have been using Ecuador as a transit country to reach other nations without permission.

He said such migration is risky and "puts at risk men, women and children."

"We do not close the door to Cuba," but Ecuador is committed to efforts by the Latin American community to prevent migration without authorization, Lasso said.

His announcement came after a weekend meeting in El Salvador where Central American and other officials, including Ecuador's foreign minister, discussed the plight of 3,000 U.S.-bound Cuban migrants who are stranded at the border between Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

The vast majority of those Cubans started their journey in Ecuador, which until now has allowed any foreigner to enter without a visa.

The year-old detente between the U.S. and Washington has set off a surge of Cuban migrants toward the United States. They fear the normalization of relations will bring an end to Cold War-era special immigration privileges that give U.S. residency to any Cuban who sets foot on U.S. soil.

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