

# [***US, Mexico and Guatemala pledge to deepen cooperation on illegal migration***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BF7-N021-JBSS-S4T9-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; The United States, Mexico and Guatemala on Wednesday pledged to deepen their cooperation to address [*illegal migration*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/29/us/us-mexico-border-migration/index.html) after a round of ministerial level talks in Washington, DC, as migration and border issues continue to loom large over US domestic ***politics***.

In a joint statement following the talks, the three nations said they "committed to establish an operationally focused trilateral working group which will work to improve security, law enforcement, processes, and infrastructure along their international borders."

"Law enforcement authorities from the three countries will work together to identify security gaps, share information, and develop coordinated operational plans," the statement said. "This effort will build on and expand existing partnerships to address shared challenges at our borders."

Wednesday ministerial - the latest round of talks on migration - comes a day before both President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump [*are slated to visit the southern border*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/26/politics/biden-southern-border-thursday/index.html) as the issue remains in sharp focus for the 2024 election. Trump has sought to seize the Biden administration's handling of the border as a cornerstone of his re-election campaign. Biden has repeatedly hit congressional Republicans for failing to pass a bipartisan national security and border deal earlier this year.

Wednesday's meeting also comes as Biden is [*considering executive action*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/21/politics/biden-considering-executive-action-to-close-southern-border-sources-say/index.html) to restrict migrants' ability to seek asylum at the US southern border if they crossed illegally.

The US has relied on partners to the south to drive down crossings at the US-Mexico border and recently attributed a dramatic decline in crossings to Mexico's increased enforcement. The US and Mexico have held an additional two rounds of talks since December.

Wednesday's meeting focused on four key areas: working together on the root causes of illegal migration, "opportunities to deepen our trilateral efforts to expand legal pathways" for migration, "joint commitments to strengthen the management of irregular migration flows," and "coordination on future ministerial level meetings," a senior administration official said.

According to the joint statement, the three delegations discussed "the need to increase coordinated joint efforts on humane border management and enforcement, including at the U.S. - Mexico and Mexico - Guatemala borders."

"The three delegations committed to share data about migration flows by launching a new dashboard, which will enhance data-driven decision-making and coordination," the statement said.

The three countries also "discussed efforts to combat human trafficking and the importance of trafficking prevention programs" and "committed to strengthen joint law enforcement efforts, including by enhancing information sharing and working collectively to investigative and prosecute human trafficking and migrant smuggling networks."

In a call with reporters Tuesday, when asked about assessments that the strategy to address root causes has largely failed, a second senior administration official countered that "this is certainly a long-term effort that requires lots of work from throughout the US government, throughout international organizations, foundations, and otherwise."

"We believe that has been successful," they said.

Another senior administration official noted that "extra-hemispheric migration" - meaning people who travel to South America from other parts of the world for the purpose of migration - is "of deep concern for many governments in the region, not just us."

"We have been working with governments all over the hemisphere to address the routes that migrants from outside of the western hemisphere are taking to travel, you know, into the hemisphere and ultimately up to our border, and that includes Chinese nationals," the official said.

[*CNN*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/08/americas/china-us-migrants-illegal-crossings-intl-hnk-dst/index.html) reported in January on Chinese nationals migrating to the US from Mexico.

This story has been updated with additional information.

By Jennifer Hansler, CNN

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