

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Gia Del Pino, Director of Communications

Phone: (520)-208-7716

Email: [gdelpino@kinoborderinitiative.org](mailto:gdelpino@kinoborderinitiative.org)

# Migrants in Nogales, Sonora Hold Press Conference to Commemorate the 70th Anniversary of UN Convention on Status of Refugees, Ask Biden Administration to Urgently Restore Asylum

*Migrants highlight the urgent need for the U.S. government to protect people fleeing persecution by restoring access to asylum at the US-Mexico border.*

(NOGALES, SONORA). Migrants from the bi-national [#SaveAsylum](#) Coalition gathered yesterday morning to demand the Biden Administration to restore access to asylum for migrants forced to wait in Mexico. Asylum seekers waiting in Nogales, Sonora spoke to the press about the damaging toll Title 42 has had on their lives. Currently individuals seeking asylum in the U.S. are turned away and forced to wait in Mexico, as Title 42 strictly prohibits entry to anyone except U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents and their families.

The press conference took place at the Kino Border Initiative's Migrant Aid Center. Throughout the event, asylum seekers from both sides of the border (U.S. and Mexico) spoke about the dangers and difficulties of having to wait in Mexico for many months before crossing the border to begin their asylum process.

"On the border between the U.S. and Mexico, U.S. officials are rejecting people who have experienced persecution and violence without giving them a chance to make their case," Josue [not real name], an asylum seeker from southern Mexico and one of the migrant organizers, said in Spanish. "We are here today to call attention to this reality and to urge President Biden and the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, Alejandro Mayorkas, to make good on their word and to stop rejecting people who are seeking asylum at the border." To reject asylum seekers, Josue reminded the audience, is "to hand them a death sentence."

**"Honestly, our experience living at the border, waiting for the border to reopen, was terrible. My husband and son were threatened, robbed, and extorted. And the truth is, every day we felt fear, uncertainty, among other things we experienced in Nogales."**, said Eleuteria Ibarra, an asylum seeker who spoke to us from Ohio, where she currently lives. Originally from Guerrero, Mexico, Eleuteria has led several [#SaveAsylum](#) advocacy efforts. Her asylum case is still pending.

Jose Antonio [not real name] asked for asylum in 2018 at a port of entry before restrictive policies, such as Migrant Protection Protocols (known as MPP or "Remain in Mexico" policy), DHS' "metering"

policy, and Title 42 came into effect. Although he was not directly impacted by these measures, he spoke to the press about the many injustices that continue to dominate U.S. immigration policies.

"When we ask them for security, they close the doors. They close the borders, so that we don't enter. They separate us from our children. They subject us to inhumane punishment... ***We ask for no more family separation, no more mistreatment of our brother and sister migrants, and no more chains as if we were animals and criminals. We've had enough of all this inequality and all this inhumanity.***"

The event followed the Biden Administration's recent renewal of Title 42, which extended border closure until August 21st. On the 70th anniversary of the signing of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the press conference's participants called attention to the Convention's guarantees of protection for people fleeing to the United States to escape persecution— guarantees ignored by Title 42. Jose lamented, ***Leaders in the United States later joined the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and said that they would never again reject people fleeing from persecution and arriving at the doorstep of their country. Unfortunately, today we see that officials in the U.S. are not acting in accordance with this commitment.***

The days and weeks following the press conference, members of the #SaveAsylum Coalition in the United States and advocates throughout the country plan to meet with Congressional offices to pressure the Biden Administration to reopen the border and restore access to asylum. Affected migrants are calling on supporters to do the same.

"We need you to stop removing people to Mexico under Title 42, to stop forcing migrants seeking asylum to wait in order to access their rights," said Suyapa in Spanish, an asylum seeker who was returned to Mexico three times under Title 42. She recounts the challenges that she and many families like hers have gone through to seek protections assured under U.S. and international law. ***To the Biden Administration: I want you to take us seriously, especially us women. We have endured many things on the way here; hunger, cold, drinking water from puddles, injured feet, knowing that our children also run the risk of facing abuse and illness. We arrive with a lot of fear because of the rumors that people are kidnapped here. We barely go outside because of that fear.*** Suyapa concluded the press conference with a call to action for allies in the United States. ***We need support. We need you to listen to us. The only thing we seek is a better life for our children. And to see how we can continue safely moving forward.***

Link to the video conference is available [here](#).

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The Kino Border Initiative (KBI) is a bi-national organization located in Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora, Mexico. KBI provides humanitarian aid to migrants in Nogales, Sonora and engages in education and advocacy on both sides of the border with a vision of promoting humane, just and workable migration.

The [#SaveAsylum](#) Coalition mobilizes migrants, faith-based groups, and over a dozen humanitarian organizations to restore clear and transparent access to asylum. The coalition works to recognize and publicly condemn the US government's violation of international law as well as the 1980 Refugee Act. A complementary aspect of this public condemnation is lifting up the testimonies of asylum seekers and acknowledging the injustices that they have faced not only in their home country, but as they wait outside the border of a country that had vowed to receive and protect them. The July 28th event is the ninth event the #SaveAsylum Coalition has organized since August 2020.