



United States Border Patrol
Reunification Efforts
Del Rio Sector / June 14, 2019



ISSUE / BRIEFING TOPIC:

Since January 2019, the (b)(7)(E) Station (b)(7)(E) has experienced an unprecedented influx of Family Units (FMUA) crossing illegally into the United States. In this humanitarian crisis, (b)(7)(E) is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of these families specially the children within those FMUAs. (b)(7)(E) has encountered several cases where families were separated at the U.S. Mexico Border while attempting to cross illegally into the United States. (b)(7)(E) mission is to maintain unity of FMUAs for the entire immigration process.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Thus far in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, (b)(7)(E) Station has encountered (b)(7)(E) families, which amounts to more than a 700% increase in FMUAs compared to the entire FY 18. (b)(7)(E) has made it a priority to protect these families during their crossing and maintain their unity through the entire immigration process. However, the process of crossing into the United States is often chaotic and dangerous. During this process, there were several families that became separated from each other during bi-national rescue efforts. To address this issue, (b)(7)(E) has developed a process to reunify the families that have been separated during these bi-national rescue events at the immediate border.

BACKGROUND:

- For FY 19 (b)(7)(E) has had six cases where families were separated and then ultimately reunited. To facilitate this reunification, (b)(7)(E) has worked with different branches and agencies to make sure these families are reunited in a timely manner.

- (b)(6),(b)(7)(C),(b)(7)(E) – Honduran Adult

January 18, 2019

- A Honduran woman was separated from her child when the (b)(7)(E) Fire department rescued her from the river and the Mexican officials rescued her child.
- The child was admitted to the hospital (b)(6)(b)(7)(C) from crossing the Rio Grande River.
- Through the Del Rio (DRT) Foreign Operations Branch (FOB) (b)(7)(E) requested the transfer of the child from Mexico to Border Patrol custody.
- The Government of Mexico (GOM) declined to relinquish custody of the child.
- In order to reunify the family unit, (b)(7)(E) requested to reunify the

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accompanying parent with the child in Mexico.

- Permission was received and the parent was processed for a voluntary return to Mexico and was turned over to Mexican Immigration through the (b)(7)(E) Port of Entry.
- Mother and child were reunited on **January 18, 2019**.
- The mother and child illegally re-entered the United States on January 20, 2019. The child required medical attention and was transported to the (b)(7)(E) (b)(7)(E) Medical Center and treated (b)(6)(b)(7)(C). They were processed according to current guidelines upon their release from the hospital.

• (b)(6),(b)(7)(C),(b)(7)(E) – **Mexican UACs**

February 10, 2019

- (b)(7)(E) encountered two minor Mexican children traveling with two unrelated adults.
- Custodial interviews revealed the mother was in Mexico and with Mexican authorities.
- DRT FOB was contacted and confirmed the children's mother was in (b)(7)(E) with Mexican authorities.
- DRT FOB and Mexican authorities established the mother and the children were Mexican nationals.
- The children were processed for a voluntary return, repatriated to Mexico, and turned over to Mexican authorities to be reunited with their mother.
- Mother and child were reunited on **February 11, 2019**.

• (b)(6),(b)(7)(C),(b)(7)(E) – **Honduran Adult**

February 15, 2019

- (b)(7)(E) apprehended a woman who was separated from her children after being swept away by the Rio Grande River currents.
- Mexican authorities rescued the three children and were taken into custody by "Procuraduría Para Niños, Niñas y La Familia" (PRONNIF).
- Due to humanitarian reasons, the subject was offered the opportunity to return to Mexico to be reunited with her children.
- (b)(7)(E) contacted DRT FOB who coordinated with Mexican authorities and the respective consulate office to reunite the family.
- The Honduran Consulate filed a petition and coordinated with the Government of Mexico "Instituto Nacional de Migración" (INM) to accept her repatriation to Mexico.
- GOM approved a repatriation to Mexico and (b)(7)(E) processed the mother as an Expedited Removal.
- DRT FOB advised that the Commissioner for Mexican Immigration in Coahuila, (b)(6)(b)(7)(C) approved this action.
- The mother was repatriated and turned over to Mexican Immigration to be re-united with her three minor children.
- Mother and child were reunited on **February 16, 2019**.

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• (b)(6),(b)(7)(C),(b)(7)(E) – Nicaraguan Adult

April 15, 2019

- The (b)(7)(E) Fire department and Mexican authorities rescued a woman and her two children from an island in the Rio Grande River.
- During the custodial interview, the mother claimed she left her third child in Mexico at the river bank with the child's grandmother.
- DRT FOB notified GOM who stated they had custody of the child and the grandmother.
- (b)(7)(E) Staff and FOB worked with INM to return the family unit Mexico to reunite them with the small child. INM agreed to accept the family unit and arrangements were being made for the reunification.
- However, the mother claimed fear of the Nicaraguan government and wished to be processed for credible fear instead of reuniting with her child that she left behind in Mexico.
- The mother and two other children were processed accordingly and continued with the credible fear process.
- All efforts to reunify her with her children stopped after she declined an offer of returning to Mexico.

• (b)(6),(b)(7)(C),(b)(7)(E) – Congolese UAC

June 4, 2019

- (b)(7)(E) agents apprehended a group of individuals, to include a 10 year old child, who attempted to make illegal entry near the Port of Entry (b)(7)(E).
- During the custodial interview, it was discovered the child was a Congolese national traveling with an adult other than her legal guardian. The mother of the child remained in Mexico during the attempted illegal entry into the United States.
- (b)(7)(E) in coordination with DRT FOB, worked to learn the identity of the child's mother.
- DRT FOB collaborated with Mexican authorities to locate the mother, who confirmed she was in their custody.
- GOM provided a picture of the mother who shared it with DRT FOB. The picture was provided to the child who exclaimed, "Mama" when seeing the picture. Continued coordination and validation of parental relational was established through the working partnership of DRT FOB and Mexican authorities.
- Mexican authorities received approval to accept the child to be reunited with the mother.
- The child was processed for a voluntary return, repatriated to Mexico, and turned over to Mexican authorities at the (b)(7)(E) Port of Entry to be reunited with the mother.
- Mother and child were reunited on June 5, 2019.

• (b)(6),(b)(7)(C),(b)(7)(E) – Honduran UAC

June 10, 2019

- (b)(7)(E) agents apprehended a group of individuals, to include a one-year-old child, who attempted to make illegal entry through the (b)(7)(E) area.
- It was found that the child's mother was unable to cross and was

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- subsequently apprehended by INM at the immediate border
- DRT FOB coordinated with Mexican authorities to establish they had the mother in their custody in (b)(7)(E)
- Mexican authorities received approval to accept the child to be reunited with the mother.
- The child was processed as a voluntary return, repatriated to Mexico, and turned over to Mexican authorities at the (b)(7)(E) Port of Entry to be reunited with the mother.
- The mother and child reunited on **June 11, 2019**.

REUNIFICATION PROCESS:

- Apprehending / processing Agent(s) determine a separation occurred through custodial interviews.
- Biographical information and information for the accompanying family member is gathered.
 - If the child is in the US and the accompanying parent is in Mexico, information is learned from the child (if possible) and / or accompanying adults in the groups.
- Station Staff members are alerted to the separation to begin the notification process to appropriate Sector Staff and the Sector Foreign Operations Branch (DRT FOB).
- DRT FOB contacts Mexican Immigration to determine if the separated family member is still in their custody.
- Mexican Immigration identifies and confirms the location of the separated family member.
- Note: Mexican Immigration who have children in custody and who are separated from their parents while crossing over to the US are immediately turned over to PRONNIF, the Mexican equivalent of Child Protective Services.
 - If the child is in PRONNIF custody, PRONIF will not release the child under any circumstance.
- DRT FOB contacts the appropriate Consulate Office of the situation for assistance in the reunification process.
- Familial relationship is established between the separated family members.
 - This process includes documented proof and confirmation by both parties, USBP and Mexican Immigration. The appropriate Consulate Office will also validate familial relationship.
- Processing agents confer with the separated family member, if an adult, of the reunification process and they are processed accordingly.
 - If the separated parent is in the US and claims credible fear, the parent is processed accordingly as per current guidelines and held in US custody. The parent is turned over to ERO for final disposition and the child remains in Mexico. Mexico processes the child according to their rules and regulations.

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- If the separated parent does not claim credible fear, the parent is processed for an Expedited Removal and a repatriation is coordinated to Mexico through the Port of Entry.
- In all cases, the separated individual is turned over to Mexican Immigration at the Port of Entry and documented via an I-44.
- FOB continues to communicate with Mexican law enforcement agencies and subject's respective consulate office throughout the reunification process.
- To our knowledge, Mexican Immigration repatriates all reunified family members back to their home country of origin after repatriation from Mexico.

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Headquarters Additions:

1. UAC definition from the Homeland Security Act of 2002

(g) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section—

(1) the term “placement” means the placement of an unaccompanied alien child in either a detention facility or an alternative to such a facility; and

(2) the term “unaccompanied alien child” means a child who—

(A) has no lawful immigration status in the United States;

(B) has not attained 18 years of age; and

(C) with respect to whom—

(i) there is no parent or legal guardian in the United States; or

(ii) no parent or legal guardian in the United States is available to provide care and physical custody.

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2. Google Search of “reunification (b)(7)(E)” utilizing past 24 hours:



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ISSUE / BRIEFING TOPIC:

On June 10, 2019, at approximately 2100 hours, Border Patrol Agents from the (b)(7)(E) Station (b)(7)(E) encountered a 1 year old unaccompanied Honduran minor child that crossed with group of illegal aliens. The group claimed his mother was apprehended on the riverbank by Mexican Immigration. We are reuniting the child with his mother in Mexico.

BACKGROUND:

- At 2100 a group of seven (7) aliens crossed illegally into the United States in (b)(7)(E) Texas at the (b)(7)(E) event (b)(6),(b)(7)(C),(b)(7)(E)
- (b)(6)(b)(7)(C) was identified in the group by his uncle as being an unaccompanied minor.
- The uncle claimed the child's mother (b)(6) was apprehended by people at the riverbank before crossing, it was later determined the apprehension was done by Mexican Immigration Officials.
- (b)(6)(b)(7)(C) of the Foreign Operations Branch was contacted to inquire about the status of the child's mother, he found out that she was apprehended and being held by Mexican Immigration at Port of Entry (b)(7)(E)
- (b)(6)(b)(7)(C) was initially processed as an unaccompanied minor.
- Mexican immigration agreed to take the child back to Mexico and reunite with the mother.
- The child was re-processed as a voluntary return and an I-44 was issued for turnover to Mexican Authorities.
- (b)(6)(b)(7)(C) will be taken to the port of entry by Supervisory Border Patrol Agent (SBPA) (b)(6)(b)(7)(C) and handed over to Mexican authorities.

SUBJECT'S INFORMATION:

(b)(6)(b)(7)(C)

DOB: (b)(6)(b)(7)(C)

(b)(6),(b)(7)(C),(b)(7)(E)

Honduras

MOTHER

(b)(6)(b)(7)(C)

Honduras

UNCLE

(b)(6)(b)(7)(C)

(b)(6),(b)(7)(C),(b)(7)(E)

Honduras

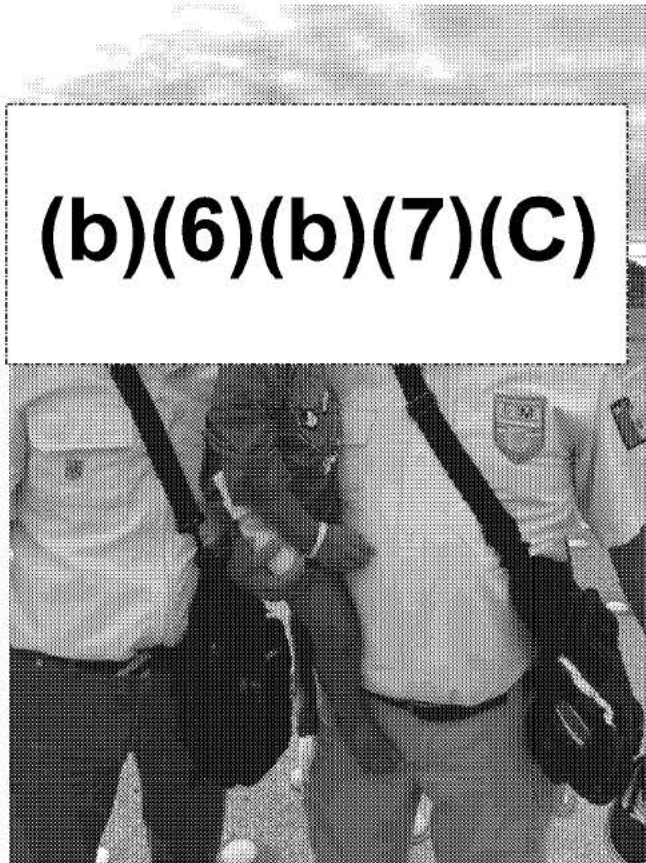
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Final:

(b)(6)(b)(7)(C) was handed over to Mexican Immigration Authorities by SBPA (b)(6)(b)(7)(C) on June 11, 2019 at 2005 hours. Voluntary Return paperwork and an I-44 were executed.



6. Inquiry to IPL:

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, June 17, 2019 5:20 PM
To: QUINN, TIMOTHY (b)(6)(b)(7)(C)
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Subject: Following up about Honduran child reunified with mother in Mexico

Hi Tim,

I hope you're doing well! (b)(7)(E)

(b)(7)(E)

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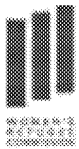
(b)(7)(E)

(b)(7)(E) Border Patrol worked with Mexican INM officials to send him back to Mexico where his mom was in INM custody. This was interesting to us as he was an unaccompanied child in the US and those children are sent to ORR custody when they are identified by CBP. We know in other cases, like for families placed into MPP, some children are being sent to ORR custody when their parents are sent to Mexico. We were wondering how Border Patrol was able to send this particular child back to Mexico (rather than to ORR) and whether this is happening in other cases as well.

Thanks so much for you help!

Sincerely,

(b)(6)



(b)(6) Esq. | Policy Advisor, Migrant Rights and Justice

Women's Refugee Commission

(b)(6) | (o) (b)(6) | (c) (b)(6)

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7. Message to Field Chiefs distributed 06/16/2019

From: (b)(6)(b)(7)(C)
Sent: Wednesday, June 19, 2019 1:15 PM
To: BP Field Chiefs (b)(7)(E) BP Field Deputies (b)(7)(E)
Cc: PROVOST, CARLA (USBP) (b)(6)(b)(7)(C)
(b)(6)(b)(7)(C); LUCK, SCOTT A (USBP)
(b)(6)(b)(7)(C); HASTINGS, BRIAN S
(b)(6)(b)(7)(C); MODLIN, JOHN R
(b)(6)(b)(7)(C); HUDSON, RICHARD M
(b)(6)(b)(7)(C); MARTIN, JERRY B
Subject: UACs and Separations

Good Afternoon Chiefs,

It was brought to our attention that there are some children who have been separated while still in Mexico or while attempting entry (often inadvertently) from their parents during rescues or enforcement actions where Mexico LE and USBP were acting nearly concurrently.

While the US government continues to pursue appropriate reunification of families that are inadvertently separated, the law is clear on how to process children that are in the United States unaccompanied. If a child arrives in the United States without a parent or legal guardian, that child must be processed

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as a UAC. We cannot repatriate/reunify non-Mexican children with their families in Mexico. All non-Mexican UACs must be turned over to HHS, ORR. Mexican UACs must be processed according to the TVPRA procedures, including the Form 93 screening to determine that they are able to make an independent determination, do not have a fear of return, and are not victims of trafficking or at risk of being trafficked, before they may be permitted to VR. OCC is working to support USBP and preparing guidance that articulates the relevant laws and cases that apply to these types of situations.

In previous instances, the USBP has worked to coordinate VRs of illegal entrants from non-contiguous countries to a contiguous country. This only applied to subjects over 18 and required HQ engagement for each instance.

Please immediately discontinue any efforts that considers repatriation of UACs or adults who are citizens of non-contiguous countries unless HQ approves this matter after full consultation with OCC and CBP officials. Please refer all questions to HQ regarding this matter.

Regards,

(b)(6)(b)(7)(C)

Associate Chief

Law Enforcement Operations Directorate - Ops

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