

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 17, 2024

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

The Biden-Harris administration has imported Venezuelan illegal aliens at an alarming rate, allowing criminals – including the gang Tren de Aragua (TdA) – to gain a foothold in Texas and communities throughout the United States. Texans and the American people deserve better.

The massive increase in crime committed by Venezuelan illegal aliens is a direct result of this administration’s purposeful policies. Since October 2022, 117,000 Venezuelans have been paroled into the U.S. via the fraud-ridden Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela (CHNV) program.<sup>1,2</sup> Further, since January 2021, nearly 750,000 Venezuelans have been encountered at the southern border— many of whom have been released into the U.S. interior.<sup>3,4</sup>

As you know, on October 5, 2024, law enforcement executed “Operation Aurora,” a sting targeted at TdA members occupying a San Antonio apartment complex that had been forcefully taken over by the violent gang, similar to the situation recently seen in Aurora, Colorado.<sup>5</sup> Authorities arrested 19 Venezuelan illegal aliens, four of whom are confirmed TdA members, after receiving numerous complaints of TdA seizing vacant apartment units for drug-related crimes and human trafficking, and threats to apartment employees. One of the arrested suspects was reportedly a TdA gang leader.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, 15 of the 19 detained individuals had immigration detainers placed on them by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) for likely for removal from the U.S.<sup>7</sup>

Thankfully, the raid concluded without incident. The task force, comprised of law enforcement officials from the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD), the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Border Patrol, and HSI, should be commended for their efforts. While the apprehension of TdA members and other foreign criminals is a welcome development, this dangerous incident, and similar incidents, may have been avoided if DHS took

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/venezuelans-legal-status-chnv-program>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-migrant-sponsorship-program-paused-cuba-haiti-nicaragua-venezuela/#:~:text=The%20Biden%20administration%20has%20paused%20a%20migrant%20sponsorship%20policy%20it>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fairus.org/issue/country-brief-venezuela>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/nationwide-encounters>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://news4sanantonio.com/news/local/sapds-operation-aurora-strikes-early-saturday-20-arrested-in-tren-de-aragua-crackdown-10-05-2024>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.kens5.com/article/news/crime/tren-de-aragua-gang-arrested-san-antonio-texas/273-be02f360-1dc4-4655-8f69-e16601534959>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

appropriate action to secure the border and stop the mass release of illegal aliens into our communities.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, this is not the first incident involving TdA in Texas. On September 26, 2024, reports revealed DPS arrested over 20 suspected TdA members at an El Paso hotel for human smuggling, prostitution, and narcotics possession, among other crimes.<sup>9</sup> On September 19, 2024, HSI and SAPD reportedly arrested two individuals linked to TdA for their involvement in a firearms smuggling operation.<sup>10</sup> In March 2024, more than 100 suspected TdA members were arrested for their involvement in charging at National Guardsmen and DPS troopers at the El Paso border in March 2024.<sup>11</sup>

Alleged TdA affiliates have committed heinous crimes against Americans. The two Venezuelan illegal aliens charged with raping and murdering 12-year-old Jocelyn Nungaray before tossing her dismembered body into a Houston bayou, both of whom were released under your tenure after they unlawfully crossed into Texas earlier this year, are believed to have ties to TdA.<sup>12,13</sup> Further, on October 4, 2024, authorities announced the arrest of three additional Venezuelan illegal aliens in Northwest Dallas in September for their alleged involvement in a robbery of a woman who was tied-up and told that her fingers would be cut off if she did not comply during the crime.<sup>14</sup>

Additionally, TdA has subjected illegal aliens smuggled into the U.S. to sex trafficking. The South American ring is forcing illegal alien women into prostitution in eight states, including Texas, to pay off their smuggling debts, rendering them vulnerable to all forms of abuse.<sup>15</sup>

TdA members have also demonstrated brazen indifference to public safety officials. On July 30, 2024, Border Patrol issued a bulletin warning that TdA gave the “green light” to its over 1,000 members to fire on and attack law enforcement.<sup>16</sup> In response to the gang’s proliferation and threat to the public, the state of Texas has heightened its security measures amid the federal government’s failure to secure the border from foreign crime syndicates.<sup>17</sup>

Our law enforcement community and the Texans they serve deserve answers on the scope of infiltration of TCOs under this administration. As such, we request you respond to the following questions by October 31, 2024:

1. Please provide a full accounting of the number of Venezuelans released into the country via CHNV, other forms of parole, release after apprehension at the border, or otherwise, including:
  - a. The last known whereabouts of each Venezuelan, broken down by state.
  - b. The number of Venezuelans released into the United States without identification documents and their last known whereabouts, broken down by state.
  - c. The number of released Venezuelans that have committed a crime in the United States, and their last known whereabouts, broken down by state.
  - d. The number of released Venezuelans with known or suspected gang affiliations and their last known whereabouts, broken down by state.
  - e. The number of released Venezuelans that are known or suspected members of TdA.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.fairus.org/blog/2024/08/09/tren-de-aragua-gang-given-green-light-open-fire-us-law-enforcement-officers>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://kfoxtv.com/news/local/over-20-suspected-gang-members-nabbed-in-downtown-el-paso-hotel-raid>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ksat.com/news/local/2024/09/27/2-san-antonio-arrests-made-in-connection-with-tren-de-aragua-gang-department-of-homeland-security-says/>.

<sup>11</sup> <https://nypost.com/2024/09/16/us-news/suspected-tren-de-aragua-gang-bangers-were-part-of-the-migrant-group-that-rushed-the-border/>.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2024/10/03/warrants-illegal-aliens-accused-of-murdering-jocelyn-nungaray-may-be-venezuelan-gang-members/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.newsweek.com/jocelyn-nungaray-houston-dead-johan-jose-rangel-martinez-1916006#:~:text=Police%20released%20mugshots%20Friday%20of%20the%20two%20men%20suspected%20of.>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.fox4news.com/news/northwest-dallas-robbery-arrests-irving>.

<sup>15</sup> <https://nypost.com/2024/09/23/us-news/tren-de-aragua-linked-to-migrant-sex-trafficking-in-8-states-leaked-memo/>.

<sup>16</sup> <https://x.com/AliBradleyTV/status/1818289178762764464>.

<sup>17</sup> <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-designates-tren-de-aragua-as-terrorist-organization>.

- f. The number of Venezuelans paroled into the United States that have since been removed, and the reason for their removal.
    - g. The number of Venezuelans released from the southern border that received a Notice to Appear.
    - h. The number of Venezuelans released from the southern border that received a Notice to Report.
2. How many criminal aliens has DHS arrested in the United States as of January 2021? Please include the following information:
  - a. Date of arrest, location of arrest, date of the alien crossing the border, date of release from the border, gang affiliation (if applicable), criminal charges received, previous criminal history, country of origin, and current status (is the alien detained at an ICE facility, on the non-detained docket, or was removed from the U.S.).
  - b. How many of these criminal aliens have charges and/or convictions for human trafficking, child exploitation, or forced labor at the federal or local level?
  - c. Of all criminal aliens arrested in Texas, how many have a detainer placed by ICE?
3. What future operations does DHS and/or ICE plan to conduct to mitigate TdA's presence in Texas?
4. What other transnational criminal organizations are present in Texas that DHS has detected?
5. What policies or action has DHS implemented to recruit the cooperation of sanctuary jurisdictions in Texas that limit or refuse to cooperate with federal immigration detainers and/or authorities?

Sincerely,



Chip Roy  
Member of Congress



Ted Cruz  
U.S. Senator