

## ICE AIR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – NOVEMBER 2022

- 18,220 TOTAL ICE AIR FLIGHTS OPERATED IN 2020/2021/YTD2022. SINCE INAUGURATION: 13,114 TOTAL FLIGHTS.
- 3,379 REMOVAL FLIGHTS OPERATED IN 2020/2021/YTD2022. SINCE INAUGURATION: 2,312 REMOVAL FLIGHTS.
- 754 TOTAL ICE AIR FLIGHTS OPERATED IN NOVEMBER, UP 69 (10%) FROM THE PRIOR MONTH. NOVEMBER WAS 70 ABOVE THE PRIOR 6-MONTH AVERAGE OF 684.
- TOTAL ICE AIR FLIGHTS OF 754 WERE UP SIGNIFICANTLY BY 124 (20%) FROM NOVEMBER 2021.
- 128 LATERAL FLIGHTS IN NOVEMBER, ECLIPSING THE PRIOR HIGH RECORD OF 115 IN OCTOBER 2022 AND THE PRIOR 6-MONTH AVERAGE OF 67, DRIVING A 35-MONTH RECORD HIGH OF 523 DOMESTIC SHUFFLE FLIGHTS. SEE DETAIL IN THE LATERAL AND SHUFFLE SECTIONS BELOW.
- 101 REMOVAL FLIGHTS IN NOVEMBER, UP 18 (22%) FROM THE PRIOR MONTH AND DOWN 32 (24%) FROM NOVEMBER 2021, AND DOWN 25 (20%) FROM THE PRIOR 6-MONTH AVERAGE.
- AFTER THE END (HOPEFULLY) OF T42 ON 21 DECEMBER I WILL BE WATCHING CLOSELY FOR ANY CHANGES, INCLUDED, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, AN INCREASE IN AIRCRAFT AND FLIGHTS, ANY CHANGE IN DOMESTIC OR INTERNATIONAL ROUTES, AND CHANGES IN LATERAL FLIGHT VOLUME AND PATTERNS.

### **LAST 12 MONTHS**

**Over the last 12 months**, all under President Biden, there have been a likely **7,934 ICE Air flight legs** as compared to **4,845 in 2020**, a **startling, unexpected, and disappointing increase of 3,089 (64%) over 2020** (page 19).

Of these flights, **1,442 were removal flights**, an **increase of 433 (43%) over the 1,009 in 2020**.

**Shuffle flights**, those just moving people in the US to and between detention/deportation centers were **4,680 over the last 12 months**, a **staggering increase of 2,455 (110%) over the 2,225 in 2020**.

On a year-to-date (YTD) basis, total flights are up 1,810 (33%) from the prior YTD, and removal flights are up 393 (42%) from the prior YTD (pages 18).

## **NOVEMBER 2022**

**Total Flights** of 754 in November, utilizing 29 different planes operated by 5 different charter carriers (IAero aka Swift, World Atlantic, GlobalX, OMNI, and Gryphon) were up 69 (10%) from October, and were above the average of the prior 6 months (684) by 70 (10%).

The increase of 69 total flights from October can be attributed to the increase in removal related flights (removal, connection, and return) of 38 (20%), and an increase in shuffle flights of 31 (6%), driven by an increase in lateral flights of 13 (page 19).

**Lateral Flights** surged to a record 128 from 115 in October, the highest month recorded since they began in March 2021. Moreover the 128 was almost 2x the prior 6-month average of 67 (page 11).

It is difficult now for me to estimate the number of lateral flights that operate to move Venezuelans along the border for expulsion. OIM Mexico will no longer provide me with expulsion numbers and the CBP statistics are worthless for this purpose as they report the T42 expulsions in the location where a person undergoes processing, not necessarily where they are expelled. That said, I would estimate the equivalent of 15-25 lateral flights in November were “laterals for expulsion.”

What is clear is that decompression is still occurring primarily in El Paso, and to a lesser extent, at least by air, in Yuma and Tucson with lateral flights averaging 4.3 per day in November.

In November, 104 (81%) laterals originated in El Paso, 13 (10%) in Tucson, and 11 (9%) in Yuma. In November, the proportion of originations tilted a bit more to El Paso (76% to 81%) and Tucson (4% to 10%), and away from Yuma (18% to 9%).

Destination cities included Harlingen, TX receiving 62 (48%) flights, Laredo, TX receiving 42 (33%), and San Diego receiving 24 (19%). In November compared to October, the proportion of flights to these receiving cities was quite similar with Harlingen (50% to 48%), Laredo (31% to 33%) and San Diego (17% to 19%) changing minimally.

I am watching very closely to see if the pace and geography of laterals, which have been very consistent on a daily basis, will change in the run up to 21 December, and after.

In addition to these lateral flights there are lateral buses as well into which there is no visibility, including for expulsions of Venezuelans. My understanding is that there are buses now to at least San Diego, Laredo, and to a lesser extent Tucson and the Rio Grande Valley for decompression and expulsions.

**Removal Flights** in November of 101 were up 18 (22%) from October, and down 25 (20%) from the prior 6-month average. Moreover, removal flights were down 32 (24%) from November 2021. As mentioned above, I am not sure how to estimate the number of lateral flights which were “lateral for expulsion” and therefore effectively removal flights. However, if expulsions of Venezuelans in November were similar to October, as were lateral flights during the expulsion period, then it could be in the range of 15 to 25 lateral flights that are essentially removal flights.

Of the 18 removal flight increase from October, flights to Guatemala were up 6 (20 to 26), Ecuador up 6 (2 to 8), Africa up 3 (0 to 3), Jamaica up by 2 (0 to 2). And, Honduras (22 to 23), El Salvador (10 to 11), Peru (3 to 4), Albania (0 to 1), all up 1. These increases were offset by a decrease in flights to Colombia of 3 (20 to 17),

Of the 32 removal flight decrease from November 2021, flights to Mexico were down 40 (40 to 0), with a total of 25 flights in November 2021 to Tapachula and Villahermosa to expel Hondurans and Guatemalans.

Flights to Guatemala were down 17 (43 to 26) from November 2021, and Haiti down 9 (9 to 0). These decreases were offset by increases in flights to Colombia of 15 (2 to 17), to Honduras of 9 (14 to 23), to Ecuador 5 (3 to 8), and to Peru 4 (0-4) and Africa 3 (0-3). (pages 19,21,31).

Removal flights were below the prior 6-month average (126) by 25 (20%).

It should be noted that 4 of the removal flights relate to one small jet (generally 10-12 passengers maximum) that included Albania, Sudan, South Sudan, and Kenya.

Flights to the Northern Triangle Countries of Guatemala (26), Honduras (23), and El Salvador (11) comprised 59% of all removal flights, a bit lower than October, and with Colombia (17) they comprised 76% of removal flights. (pages 20,21).

**Direct T42 flight influence.** Based on a court declaration on 10 November by Blas Nuñez-Neto, countries now accepting T42 flights are: Guatemala (26), Honduras (23), Colombia (17), Peru (4), Ecuador (8), Brazil (2), and Haiti (0), and they totaled 80 flights and made up 79% of all removal flights in November flight (page 20,21).

This is not to say all the people returned on these flights were returned under T42. It is unknown how many were under T8, especially under the new asylum rule and expedited removal. The percentage of removal flights originating in Alexandria, LA, typically T8 flights, increased in September and October. From March through August, the percentage of removal flights originating in Alexandria ranged between 12% and 15%. In September, October, and November it was 24% ,23%, and 20%, respectively.

Underscoring the intent to deter is that, as dramatic as these flights are, people returned by air to Guatemala and Honduras only represented an estimated 18% of the [October encounters](#), and were 34% of people processed under T42 from these countries in October (November encounters are not available).

A specific example is Ecuador, with an increase in removal flights from 2 in October to 8 in November (5 coupled to other countries). This is most likely related to the consistent increase in encounters from 2,948 in July to 7,011 in October, of which only 423 were subjected to T42.

*Please see Country Detail Section below for more details*

**Shuffle flights** increased by 31 (6%) to a 35-month record high 523 in November driven by a record high number of lateral flights of 128. Moreover, shuffle flights were a massive 119 (29%) over the prior 6-month average.

To put the 523 into even greater relief, the monthly average domestic shuffle flights in 2020 and 2021 were 185 and 305, respectively (pages 30,33).

### **Country Detail**

**Guatemala** flights increased from 20 to 26 (30%) in November following 3 straight months of decline, but are still below 29 and 46 flights in August and July, respectively. I take this as a small sign that encounters may have increased a bit in November, perhaps by 2,000 to 3,000 (page 20).

Over the last 5 reported months encounters of Guatemalans have dropped significantly from 24,648 in June to 14,806 (down 40%) in October, as flights decreased by 18 (41%) from 44 in June to 26 in November

Although we do not know encounters for November, these returns by air represented an estimated 21% of October encounters of Guatemalans, and 40% of those processed under T42, within the typical range.

In November of 2021 there were 43 flights to Guatemala, however, there were also 5 flights to Tapachula, MX which primarily removed Guatemalans from the US to Mexico by air (pages 20,31). It was in November 2021 that flights to Tapachula were phased out as Guatemala began to accept T42 flights.

The US returned 899 more people by air in November at 3,129, but November returns by air were down dramatically from June at 5,350 (down by 2,221 or 42%). Encounters of Guatemalans were down similarly at 40% from June to October (last data point).

With the 9 Mexican Government deportation flights to Guatemala (see pages 15,20 ) added to the ICE flights (page xx), Guatemala received 35 flights returning 4,435 citizens by air in from the US and Mexico. Combined with the [2,913 Guatemalans returned by land by Mexico](#) at Tecún Únam primarily, 7,348 Guatemalans returned by the US and Mexico, 1,311 more than in October, but far below the 10,863 that were returned in June 2022, by 3,515 (32%), and reasonably consistent with the 40% decline in US encounters of Guatemalans from June to October. Please see the section on Mexico's deportation flights below.

**Honduras** flights increased by 1 in November from 22 to 23 (5%) after declining for 4 straight months indicating to me that November encounters may be similar to October. In November, estimated returns by ICE to Honduras of 2,100 represented 17% of October encounters and 38% of those subjected to T42

Over the last 5 reported months encounters of Hondurans dropped significantly from 24,177 in June to 14,003 (down 42%) in October as flights decreased by 16 (41%) from 39 in June to 23 in November. We do not know November encounters (pages 20,21,31).

In November of 2021 (just before accepting T42 returns) there were 14 flights to Honduras, however, there were also 20 flights to Villahermosa, MX which removed Hondurans from the US to Mexico by air. In December 2021 Honduras began accepting T42 flights and flights to Villahermosa were phased out.

Combined with the 6 Mexican Government deportation flights (see pages 15,20) and Mexico section below), Honduras received 28 return flights in October, up from 25 in September, returning an estimated 2,800 citizens by air.

**Colombia** flights decreased by 3 from 20 to 17, still pacing at about every weekday. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> straight month of modest decline from 23 in August. However, none of these flights were coupled with flights to other countries compared to August when all 23 flights were coupled with flights to El Salvador and in September 3 flights were coupled with El Salvador, so not much should be read into the decreasing trend from August (page 20).

In October there were 17,195 encounters of Colombians and 1,958 subjected to T42, which means estimated returns in October seems to most or all of those under T42.

Flights to Colombia from April through November have been reasonably consistent at 18, 21, 17, 19, 23, 22, 20, and 17 respectively, with the caveat mentioned above about the coupled flights.

**El Salvador** flights increased slightly by 1 from 10 to 11 (10%). In November, 4 flights were coupled with flights to Ecuador so there were 7 unique flights to El Salvador, which is consistent with the 8 unique flights in October (page 20).

**Special Note:** There has always been uncertainty as to whether El Salvador accepted returns of those subject to T42. According to a court declaration in November, El Salvador DOES NOT accept T42 flights, which means these are all T8 returns, some of which could be expedited.

Although we don't know October encounters, the estimate of 700 returns in November would represent 12% of October encounters, lower than other Northern Triangle countries (18%-20%) that do accept T42 returns.

**Ecuador** flights increased significantly from 2 (a typical month) to 8 (300%) in November. It's important to note that 5 of these flights were coupled with flights to other countries, 4 to El Salvador and 1 to Honduras. Regardless, it is a meaningful change and most likely represents a deterrence attempt to arrest the consistent monthly increase in encounters from 2,948 in July to 7,011 in October (page 20).

Of the 7,011 encounters on Ecuadorans in October only 423 were subjected to T42, some or all of which were returned on the 2 flights in October. It is difficult to estimate, but November returns could be in the range of 600-800. The deterrence intent is more about the possibility of return to home country, rather than the actual number.

**Peru** flights, at 4 in November, began with 2 in mid-August and continued the pace of every Friday, with one exception, with 3 flights in October. Curiously, the only Friday that was skipped was the Friday [Secretary Blinken was in Peru visiting the Peruvian Foreign Minister](#) on his South American tour (page 20).

Peru does accept T42 flights based on a 10 November court declaration. No doubt the flights started in August as encounters increased from June at 5,853 to August at 7,782. However, the flights don't seem to be having the intended deterrence impact as encounters were 9,081 in October. It is curious that T42 expulsions seemed to match flights in August and September at 246 and 357, respectively, but

only 22 were recorded for October. Perhaps there is a timing lag in reporting, and it will be restated next month.

**BRAZIL** flights decreased significantly from 10 in August to 2 in each of the last 3 months. The decrease is no doubt related to encounters of Brazilians dropping significantly from 5,747 in August to only 762 in October after the large air lift in August (page 20).

Beginning in December 2021 the monthly progression has been 3, 6, 8, 4, 2, 1, 1, 3, 10, 2, and 2 in October (page 19). Since December 2021, the monthly progression of encounters has been 7.9k, 2.8k, 1.4k, 1.3k, 3.0k, 5.1k, 4.0k, 5.5k, 5.8k, 1.7k and .8k in October. **It seems the high flight levels in January and February may have pushed down encounters and after creeping back up ICE decided to accelerate in August to 10.**

Although Brazil does accept T42 it appears the recent flights may be T8 flights as CBP is only reporting 3 and 1 Brazilians subjected to T42 in September and October, respectively. Perhaps they are under T8 with expedited removals.

**Haiti** flights remained at 0 for the second full month, with the last flight on 6 September (pages 16,20).

For the 5<sup>th</sup> month in a row, in November, CBP encounters of Haitians between southern ports was **below 500 at only 124, with 6,593 at ports of entry**, many through exceptions to T42.

For the 5<sup>th</sup> month in a row, it has been shown that if people are given a chance to make a case for asylum at a port of entries, they will choose to do that rather than to enter without documentation between ports. In October only 8 Haitians were subjected to T42 after encounters at the southern border.

We are now 14 months past Del Rio and since 19 September 2021 there have been 240 flights to Haiti removing about 24,622 Haitians, and since inauguration 277 flights removing 26,721 Haitians, 1 in every 425 people in Haiti (pages 16).

The **report by Julia Ainsley of NBC** that the Administration may be considering reopening the Migrant Operations Center at Guantanamo Bay to hold Haitians interdicted at sea was most disturbing and elicited a strong and immediate response from the advocacy community as evidenced by **this letter to the Administration signed by almost 300 organizations** asking that these plans be abandoned and that Haitians be provided their full rights to seek asylum in the US. Based on Coast Guard releases in October and November 585 Haitians were interdicted at sea, an annual pace of about 3,500, about ½ the level of the prior 12 months.

**Small Jet Removals** observed included just one flight on a Gryphon Air Gulfstream that carries 10-12 passengers as a maximum. The jet appears to have deported people on a single route to Albania, Sudan, South Sudan, and Kenya (pages 20,21).

**Other Removal Destinations** were The Dominican Republic (2), Nicaragua (2), and Jamaica (2), all within generally normal patterns (page 20).

**Mexico Operated Removal** flights are now all operated by a new company, Viva Aerobus, which operates many more commercial routes than Mexico's old contractor, Magnacharter, operated. The complete changeover was made around 22 October. In October, Magnacharter operated a flight on 4 October and then there was a pause with Viva Aerobus beginning deportations on 22 October. According to an [article in Milenio](#), the Magnacharter contract was 2020 to 2022 and it apparently expired at the end of September.

What I can't explain is a pause now in deportation flights from 18 November through at least 3 December. Mexico deportations have always been lumpy, so I am watching for the next one.

**Mexico deportations increased from 10 in October, an abnormally low month in transition, to 22 in November. Guatemala increased 4 (5 to 9), Honduras 3 (3 to 6), Nicaragua 2 (1 to 3), Cuba 2 (1 to 3), and Ecuador 1 (0 to 1).** I need to note that Cuba is difficult to discern because of the large number of commercial flights this carrier operates to Cuba, so it could be I have over-estimated, and I will learn more watching patterns in the coming months and press in Cuba (Page 15).

Additionally, I observed 7 likely [INAMI \(Mexico Migration\) "voluntary" return flights to Venezuela](#) from Mexico City, and 1 additional [Venezuela-organized voluntary repatriation flight](#) on their State airline Conviasa, the 3<sup>rd</sup> observed in total. All the INAMI flights operated between 7 and 19 November. Because these are supposed to be voluntary flights, I have **not included them in the totals.**

On [9 November it was reported](#) that more than 4,000 Venezuelans had returned to Venezuela from Panama on 24 "humanitarian" flights. I have not seen more on this operation.

**Cuba** deportation flights were [widely reported](#) to be approved by Cuba now, although there was little specific information. However, it does seem, based on the November court declaration and comments from others that T42 flights are not approved. To date I have not observed any likely deportation flights to Cuba. It was reported there were not enough people to fill a plane yet, and I wonder if expedited removal after T42 will move things ahead.

## **NOVEMBER FLIGHT SUMMARY**

In November, there were 754 likely ICE Air flights, up 69 (10%) from October, and up 124 (20%) from the same month of 2021. Removal flights of 101 were up 18 (22%) from October, while domestic shuffle flights increased by 31 (6%).

- - 101 removal flights, with 93 return flights, to 14 different countries in Latin America, Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean.
- - 37 domestic flights connecting directly to removal flights.
- - 523 domestic shuffle flights between deportation locations.
- - 560 domestic flights (connections and shuffle flights).

- - **Since President Biden's inauguration there have been 13,114 likely ICE Air flights** including 2,312 removal flights. Including just the 264 lateral flights before October 2021 and 35 for Venezuelans in October and November 2022 as expulsion flights would yield 2,611 removal flights.

**Last 12 Months – 7,934 likely total flights**

- - 1,442 removal flights, with 1,330 return flights, to at least 26 countries in Latin America, Europe, the Caribbean, Africa, and Southeast Asia.
- - 482 domestic flights connecting directly to removal flights.
- - 4,680 domestic shuffle flights between removal locations.
- - 5,162 domestic flights (connections and shuffle flights).
- - 41% of flights were return related (removal, return and connections) and 59% were domestic shuffle flights.