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# DHS Announces Progress in Enforcing Immigration Laws, Protecting Americans

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*Contact: 202-282-8010*

## *ICE and CBP Release End of Fiscal Year 2017 Statistics*

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced its end-of-year immigration enforcement numbers, the results of a year-long return to enforcing the law, upholding the integrity of our lawful immigration system, and keeping America safe. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) reported 310,531 apprehensions nationwide, 303,916 of which were along the Southwest border, underscoring the need for a physical barrier at the border. Additionally, in FY 2017, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Removal Operations (ERO) conducted 143,470 arrests and 226,119 removals. While 2017 marked a successful year in border security efforts, reducing illegal cross-border migration, increasing interior enforcement, and dismantling transnational criminal enterprises, multiple challenges still remain in providing immigration officials with the tools needed to keep criminals off the streets, eliminate the pull factors for illegal immigration, and remove aliens who have violated our immigration laws from the country. The previously announced Trump Administration’s immigration [priorities](https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/10/08/trump-administration-immigration-policy-priorities) (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/10/08/trump-administration-immigration-policy-priorities>) would address these challenges by enhancing border security, implementing a merit-based immigration system, and closing loopholes that encourage illegal immigration.

“We have clearly seen the successful results of the President’s commitment to supporting the frontline officers and agents of DHS as they enforce the law and secure our borders,” **said Acting Secretary Elaine Duke**. “We have an obligation to uphold the integrity of our

immigration system, but we must do more to step up and close loopholes to protect the American worker, our economy, and our communities.”

“We have seen historic low numbers this year - an almost 30 percent decline in apprehensions in FY17, but we are very concerned about the later month increases of unaccompanied minors and minors with a family member,” **said Acting Deputy Commissioner Ronald Vitiello**. “We are also concerned about the significant uptick in the smuggling of opioids and other hard narcotics, including heroin and cocaine, which generally increase when illegal border crossings spike. The men and women of CBP, working along our borders and at the ports of entry protecting our great nation, are doing outstanding work. For us to truly have an operationally secure border, we must close loopholes in our laws that help fund the cartels.”

“These results are proof of what the men and women of ICE can accomplish when they are empowered to fulfill their mission,” **said Thomas Homan, ICE Deputy Director**. “We need to maintain this momentum by matching the dedication and drive of our personnel with the resources they need to perform at even higher levels. We need to confront and address misguided policies and loopholes that only serve as a pull factor for illegal immigration. We must continue to target violent gangs like MS-13, and prevent them from rebuilding what we have begun to dismantle. Finally, we need to find a solution to the dangerous sanctuary city policies and the politicians who needlessly risk innocent lives to protect criminals who are illegally present in the United States.”

## Customs and Border Protection

In FY17, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) recorded the lowest level of illegal cross-border migration on record, as measured by apprehensions along the border and inadmissible encounters at the U.S. ports of entry. However, in May CBP began to see a month-over-month increase in apprehensions and inadmissible cases along the Southwest border, most notably from children, either as part of a family unit or unaccompanied by their parent or legal guardian.

In addition to the 310,531 apprehensions by U.S. Border Patrol agents there were 216,370 inadmissible cases by CBP officers in FY17, representing a 23.7 percent decline over the previous year. Illegal migration along the Southwest border declined sharply from January 21 to April, which was the lowest month of border enforcement activity on record.

By the end of the year, family-unit apprehensions and inadmissible cases reached 104,997 along the Southwest border. Another 48,681 unaccompanied children were apprehended or determined to be inadmissible.

CBP continues to be concerned about steady increase in the flow of unaccompanied children and family units from Central America, as transnational criminal organizations continue to exploit legal and policy loopholes to help illegal aliens gain entry and facilitate their release into the interior of the country.

## U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

The most significant changes in immigration enforcement strategy can be found in the interior of the United States. The executive orders issued by President Trump in January 2017 strongly emphasized the role of interior enforcement in protecting national security and public safety, and upholding the rule of law. By making clear that no category of removable aliens would be exempt from enforcement, the directives also expanded enforcement priorities for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Overall, in FY 2017, ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) conducted 143,470 arrests and 226,119 removals. Notably, from the start of the Trump Administration on January 20, 2017 through the end of the fiscal year, ERO made 110,568 arrests compared to 77,806 in FY2016 - an increase of 40 percent. During the same timeframe, removals that resulted from an ICE arrest increased by 37 percent, nearly offsetting the historically low number of border apprehensions, a population that typically constitutes a significant portion of ICE removals. Total ICE removal numbers for FY17 (226,119) reflect a slight decline (6%) from FY2016 (240,255), largely attributed to the decline in border apprehensions.

ICE continued to prioritize its resources to enhance public safety and border security, which is demonstrated by the data, which reflects that 92 percent (101,722) of aliens ICE administratively arrested between January 20, 2017 and the end of FY2017, were removable aliens who had a criminal conviction or a pending criminal charge, were an ICE fugitive, or were an illegal re-entrant.

The executive orders also prioritized efforts to dismantle transnational gangs, with a specific focus on MS-13, one of the most violent gangs in the United States. In FY2017, ICE Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) arrested 796 MS-13 gang members and associates, compared to 434 in FY2016 – an 83 percent increase. Overall, HSI made 4,818 criminal arrests related to gang activity and 892 administrative arrests as a result of gang investigations. Additionally, ERO administratively arrested 5,225 gang members and associates.

Overall in FY17, HSI conducted 32,958 total criminal arrests and seized \$524 million in illicit currency and assets over the course of investigations into human smuggling and trafficking, cybercrime, transnational gang activity, narcotics enforcement, human smuggling and other types of cross-border criminal activity.

## Employee Satisfaction

In addition to these improved numbers, the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) results for CBP and ICE personnel significantly improved this year, reflecting that the Administration is allowing them to faithfully execute their duties and fully enforce the law.

Earlier today, ICE, CBP and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services participated in a press briefing to announce the end of year numbers. [Click here to watch the recording \(/redirect?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DwIghWWD-E94\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DwIghWWD-E94).

The Office of Immigration Statistics will release their annual report on DHS-wide enforcement data in January.

[Link to CBP report \(https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats\)](https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats)

[Link to ICE reports \(https://www.ice.gov/topics/fy2017\)](https://www.ice.gov/topics/fy2017)

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