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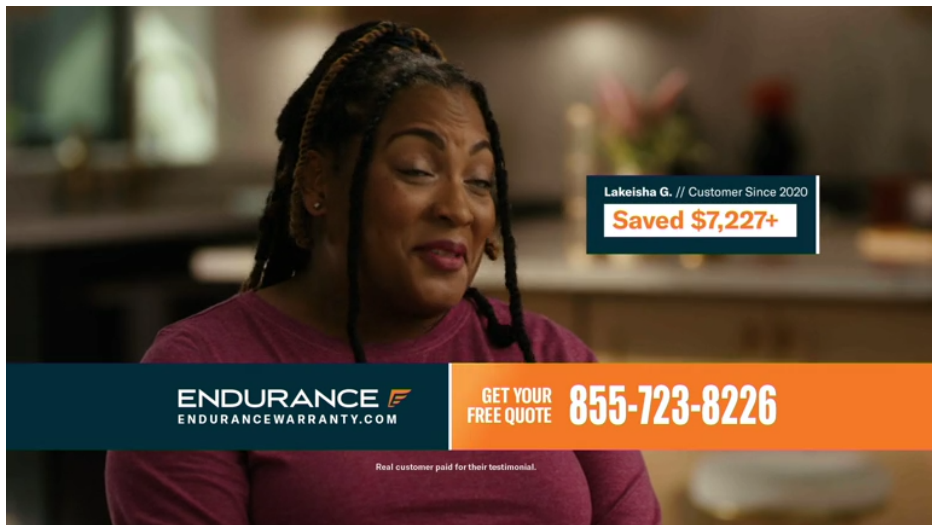


POLITICS >

U.S. opens new immigration path for Central Americans and Colombians to discourage border crossings

BY CAMILO MONTTOYA-GALVEZ

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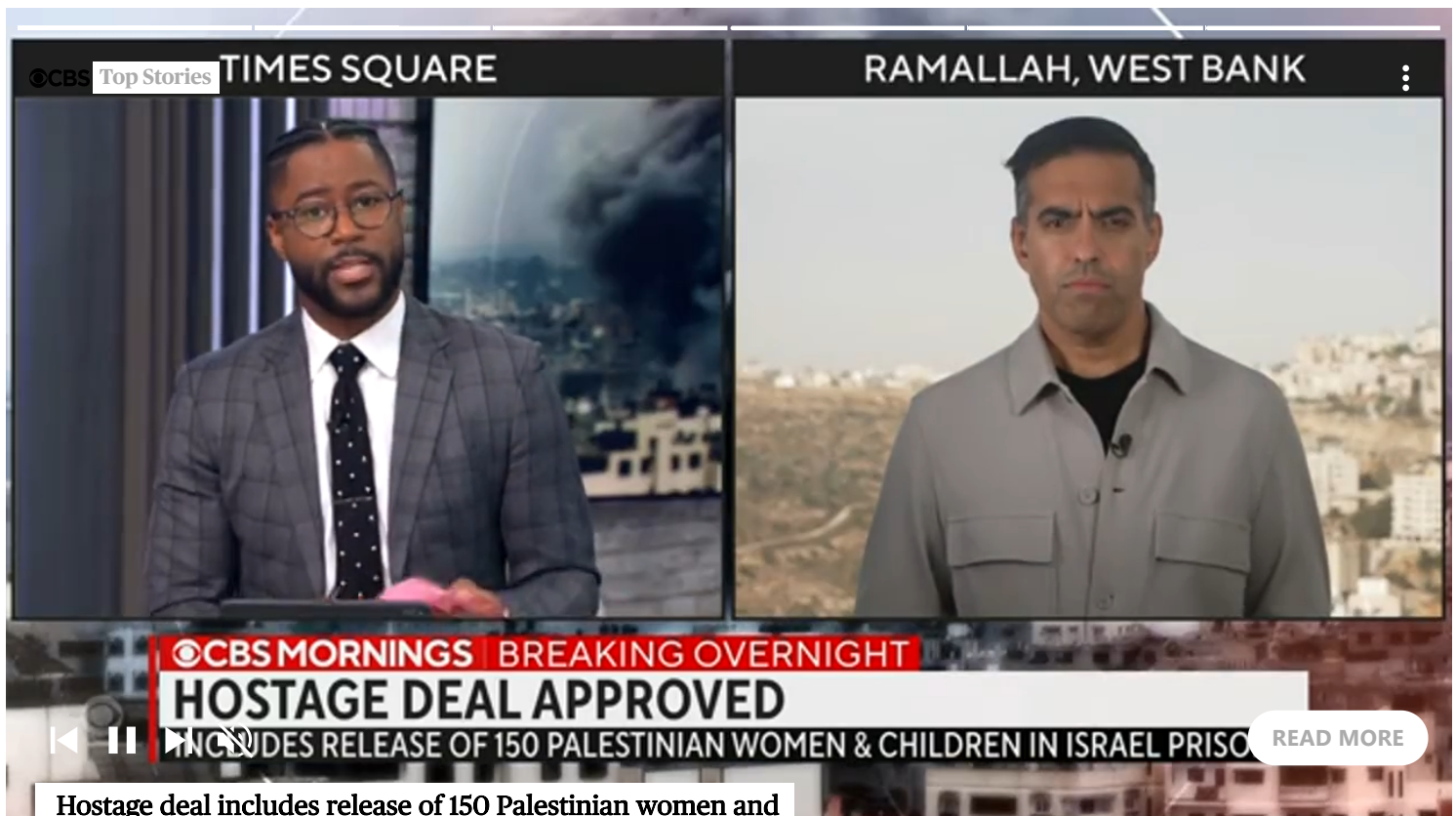
ation program to allow some Central Americans and Colombians  
nts from these countries from journeying north to cross the U.S.

which will formally start on July 10, will allow eligible migrants  
o fly to the U.S. and gain government work permits if they have  
e filed visa applications on their behalf.

As part of a broader plan to address unlawful crossings along the U.S.-Mexico border earlier this year, the Biden administration committed to welcoming up to 100,000 Central American migrants under this program, known as the Family Reunification Parole Process. Officials have not provided a timeframe for fulfilling that pledge or a cap for Colombian applicants.

To qualify for the program, migrants must have U.S. ties. The process starts with U.S. citizens or permanent residents filing immigrant visa requests on behalf of relatives from these four countries. Qualifying family members include adult children and siblings of U.S. citizens and children and spouses of permanent residents.

Once those petitions are approved, the American citizen or resident applicants may receive an invitation to apply for their relatives to come to the U.S. much more quickly than they would have under the backlogged and numerically capped visa system. Some would-be immigrants with U.S. family members often have to wait years – and in some cases, more than a decade – for immigrant visas to become available.



Hostage deal includes release of 150 Palestinian women and children, Hamas says



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ment plans to start sending out invitations for the program

ed to enter the country under humanitarian parole authority, the migrants would be able to gain permanent residency, or a

ssion or are intercepted at sea on their way to American soil after

July 10 are disqualified from the process.

More than 70,000 individuals could qualify for the program immediately, according to government data. As of late May, there were 17,400 Colombians, 32,600 Salvadorans, 12,800 Guatemalans and 10,700 Hondurans waiting in the family-based immigrant visa backlog with approved petitions. Officials, however, said the government does not expect all these migrants to be invited into the program.

In notices to implement the program, the administration called it "an alternative to irregular migration to help relieve pressure at the Southwest Border."

"The Department has proven that the expansion of safe, orderly, and lawful pathways, combined with strong enforcement, is effective in reducing dangerous, irregular migration to the United States," Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas said in a statement.

So far in fiscal year 2023, more than 126,000 Colombians, 115,000 Guatemalans, 41,000 Salvadorans and 110,000 Hondurans have been processed by U.S. immigration authorities at the southwest border, according to [federal figures](#).

Earlier in President Biden's presidency, his administration [revived](#) two similar Obama and Bush-era parole programs for Cubans and Haitians with U.S. relatives.

The Biden administration has made the expansion of legal migration a cornerstone of its revamped strategy to reduce unauthorized crossings along the southern border, which soared to record levels in 2022.

Officials have also used the parole authority to admit up to 30,000 Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans with U.S. sponsors each month, and to process tens of thousands of asylum seekers in Mexico who secure an appointment to enter the U.S. through a government app.

At the same time, the administration has increased deportations and tightened asylum rules for migrants who don't use these programs.



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for asylum if they enter the U.S. illegally without seeking an exemption. Those unable to prove they merit an exemption to the rule face deportation.

There was a marked drop in unlawful border entries since May, when U.S. officials invoked Title 42 that allowed them to expel migrants on public health

grounds.

After peaking at 10,000 before Title 42's expiration, daily unlawful border crossings have dropped below 4,000 in recent days.

## Immigration

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