

ICE AIR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – OCTOBER 2022

- 17,446 TOTAL ICE AIR FLIGHTS OPERATED IN 2020/2021/YTD2022. SINCE INAUGURATION: 12,360 TOTAL FLIGHTS.
- 3,278 REMOVAL FLIGHTS OPERATED IN 2020/2021/YTD2022. SINCE INAUGURATION: 2,211 REMOVAL FLIGHTS.
- 685 TOTAL ICE AIR FLIGHTS OPERATED IN OCTOBER, UP 21 (3%) FROM THE PRIOR MONTH. OCTOBER WAS 13 ABOVE THE PRIOR 6-MONTH AVERAGE OF 672.
- TOTAL ICE AIR FLIGHTS OF 685 WERE UP 4 (1%) FROM OCTOBER 2021.
- 115 LATERAL FLIGHTS IN OCTOBER, ROCKETING PAST THE PRIOR HIGH OF 85 IN MAY 2022 AND THE PRIOR 6-MONTH AVERAGE OF 53, DRIVING A 34-MONTH RECORD HIGH OF 492 DOMESTIC SHUFFLE FLIGHTS. SEE DETAIL IN THE LATERAL AND SHUFFLE SECTIONS BELOW.
- 83 REMOVAL FLIGHTS IN OCTOBER, DOWN 24(22%) FROM THE PRIOR MONTH AND DOWN 54 (39%) FROM OCTOBER 2021. HOWEVER, I ESTIMATE THAT THERE WERE 20-25 “LATERAL FLIGHTS FOR EXPULSION” OF VENEZUELAN IN OCTOBER – EFFECTIVELY REMOVAL FLIGHTS.

LAST 12 MONTHS

Over the last 12 months, all under President Biden, there have been a likely **7,810 ICE Air flight legs** as compared to **4,845 in 2020**, a startling, unexpected, and disappointing increase of **2,965 (61%) over 2020** (page 18).

Of these flights, **1,474 were removal flights**, an increase of **465 (46%) over the 1,009 in 2020**.

Shuffle flights, those just moving people in the US to and between detention/deportation centers were **4,478 over the last 12 months**, a staggering increase of **2,253 (101%) over the 2,225 in 2020**.

On a year-to-date (YTD) basis, total flights are up **1,686 (35%) from the prior YTD**, and removal flights are up **425 (53%) from the prior YTD** (pages 18).

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Total Flights of 685 in October, utilizing 28 different planes operated by 5 different charter carriers (IAero aka Swift, World Atlantic, GlobalX, OMNI, and Eastern Air) were up **21 (3%) from September**, and were above the average of the prior 6 months (672) by **13 (2%)**.

The increase of 21 total flights from September can be attributed to the decrease in removal related flights (removal, connection, and return) of 35 (15%), offset by a significant increase in shuffle flights of 56 (13%), driven by a meaningful increase in lateral flights of 32 (page 18).

Lateral Flights surged to 115 from 83 in September, the highest month recorded since they began in March 2021, besting May 2022 at 85. Moreover the 115 was substantially above the prior 6-month average of 53 (page 10).

I am estimating, based on dates, routes, and expulsion numbers of Venezuelans at the 5 relevant POEs that 20-25 laterals were “laterals for expulsion,” effectively removal flights. Of the 5,642 expulsions from 12 October through 29 October, 4,899 were between 12 and 20 October. These numbers were passed to me by OIM-Mexico as they sourced them from secondary sources.

As mentioned above, the majority of the mass expulsions of Venezuelans was through 20 October, and it is following that date that we saw laterals fall again to a more normalized decompression level. From 1 Oct through 10 October laterals averaged 4.8 flights a day decompressing El Paso and Yuma and during the bulk of the movements for expulsion, between 11 Oct and 20 Oct, they averaged 4.4 per day. But then, as encounters plummeted around 19 October, laterals dropped to an average of about 2.2 per day from 20 October through the 31st, a more normalized decompression for processing level. Through 5 November, they have averaged about 4 per day, primarily to decompress the crowded El Paso center, and to a lesser extent Yuma and Tucson.

In October, 87 (76%) laterals originated in El Paso, 21(18%) from Yuma, 5 (4%) from Tucson, and 2 (2%) from Phoenix. The proportion of originations from each city is almost the same as in September, even though the total number of flights escalated.

Destination cities included Harlingen, TX receiving 57 (50%) flights, Laredo, TX receiving 36 (31%), and San Diego receiving 19 (17%), and Tucson 3 (2%). In October, compared to September, the proportion of flights to these large receiving cities tilted more to Laredo (13% to 31%) and San Diego (13% to 17%) from Harlingen (69% to 50%).

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 October of 83 were down 24 (22%) from September, and down 48 (37%) from the prior 6-month average. Moreover, removal flights were down 54 (39%) from October 2021, and the lowest month since July 2021 at 47 flights. As mentioned above, I estimate 20-25 lateral flights were “lateral for expulsion” and therefore effectively removal flights.

There may be a “crowding out” impact from fixed plane resources for removal flights by the massive jump in lateral flights, something we can assess better this month (pages 10,18).

Of the 24 decrease in removal flights from September, flights to Honduras were down 6 (28 to 22), Guatemala down 5 (25 to 20), El Salvador down 3 (13 to 10), Colombia down 2 (22 to 20), SE Asia down 3 (3 to 0), Peru down 2 (5 to 3), and Haiti (1 to 0), Ecuador (3 to 2) and Jamaica (1 to 0) each down 1. See Country Detail section below.

Of the 54 decrease in removal flights from October 2021, flights to Mexico were down 43 (43 to 0), with a total of 35 flights in October 2021 to Tapachula and Villahermosa to expel Hondurans and Guatemalans. Flights to Haiti were down 21 (21 to 0), and Guatemala down 17 (37 to 20). These decreases were offset by increases in flights to Colombia of 20 (0 to 20) and to Honduras of 10 (12 to 22). (pages 19,20,30).

Removal flights were below the prior 6-month average (131) by 48 (37%).

Flights to the Northern Triangle Countries of Guatemala (20), Honduras (22), and El Salvador (10) comprised 63% of all removal flights, the same as September, and **with Colombia (20) they comprised 87% of removal flights.** (pages 19,20).

Direct T42 flight influence. Flights to countries now accepting T42 flights, Guatemala (20), Honduras (22), El Salvador (10), Colombia (20), Peru (3), and Brazil (1) totaled 76 and made up 92% of all removal flights in October (page 19,20).

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 and in October it was 24% and 23%, respectively.**

Underscoring the intent to deter is that, as dramatic as these flights are, people returned by air to Northern Triangle Countries only represented an estimated 19% of the [September encounters](#), and were 39% of people processed under T42 from these countries in September (October encounters are not available).

Shuffle flights increased by 56 (13%) to a 34-month record 492 in October driven by the massive increase in lateral flights, besting the prior high month of August 2021 at 458, and the prior 6-month average of 378.

To put the 492 into even greater relief, the monthly average domestic shuffle flights in 2020 and 2021 were 185 and 305, respectively (pages 29,32). This extraordinarily high record level may add more weight to the hypothesis of the crowding out of removal flights in October.

Country Detail

Honduras flights decreased for the 4th month in a row to 22, down 6 (21%) from September. October was the lowest month since November 2021 at 14.

Over the last 4 reported months encounters of Hondurans dropped significantly from 24,177 in June to 14,417 (down 40%) in September as flights decreased by 17 (44%) from 39 in June to 22 in October. We do not know September encounters, but I would not be surprised to see the downward trend continue into October (pages 11-13, 19,20).

Although we do not know encounters for October, these returns by air represented an estimated 16% of September encounters of Hondurans, and 34% of those processed under T42, relatively consistent with the last few months (pages 11-13).

In October of 2021 (before accepting T42 returns) there were 12 flights to Honduras, however, there were also 20 flights to Villahermosa, MX which removed Hondurans from the US to Mexico by air.

Combined with the 3 Mexican Government deportation flights (see page 14 and Mexico section below), **Honduras received 25 return flights in October** down from 39 in September, returning an estimated 2,750 citizens by air.

Guatemala flights decreased for the 3rd month in a row to 20, down 5 (20%) from September, and the lowest month since August 2021 at 10; before T42 flights were accepted.

Over the last 4 reported months encounters of Guatemalans have dropped significantly from 24,648 in June to 15,331 (down 38%) in September, as flights decreased by 24 (55%) from 44 in June to 20 in October. We do not know October encounters, but I would not be surprised to see the downward trend continue (page xx).

Although we do not know encounters for October, these returns by air represented an estimated 14% of September encounters of Guatemalans, and 26% of those processed under T42, somewhat lower than the last few months and reasonably consistent with Honduras.

In October of 2021 there were 37 flights to Guatemala, however, there were also 15 flights to Tapachula, MX which primarily removed Guatemalans from the US to Mexico by air (pages 19, 30).

The US returned an estimated 550 fewer people by air in October at 2,200. October returns by air were down dramatically from June at 5,350 (**down by 3,150 or 59%**), reflecting flights falling from 44 in June to 20 in October, **down 55%.** Encounters of Guatemalans were **down similarly at 40%** from June to September (last data point).

With the 5 Mexican Government deportation flights to Guatemala (see pages 14, 19) **added to the ICE flights** (page xx), **Guatemala received 25 flights returning around 3,000 citizens by air** in from the US and Mexico. **Combined with the estimated [2,975 Guatemalans returned by land by Mexico](#)** at Tecún Únam primarily, about **5,975 Guatemalans returned by the US and Mexico, about 300 less than in September** Please see the section on Mexico's deportation flights below for a discussion on the large decrease in Mexico's deportation flights to Guatemala.

Colombia flights decreased by just 2 from 22 to 20, still pacing at about every weekday. 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 (page 19).

In September there was one T8 flight from Alexandria, LA to Medellín, and there were none to Medellín before that or after. All the T42 flights have arrived in Bogota. I understand from Colombian officials that this was a test flight to measure the ability to receive T8 flights there.

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

El Salvador flights decreased for the 3rd month in the row to 10, down 3 (23%) from September to the lowest level since April 2022 at 8 (page 19). It should be noted that in the months between May

and September many flights to El Salvador were coupled with flights to other countries and in October 2 were, so there were 8 unique flights to El Salvador compared to 8 of the 13 in September.

Although we don't know September encounters, the estimate of 800 returns in October would represent 10% of August encounters and about 20% of those returned under T42, somewhat lower than other Northern Triangle countries, but consistent with September.

Peru flights that began with 2 in mid-August 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. My understanding is Peru is accepting T42 flights. It is interesting that Peru is aggregated in the "other" encounter category so actual encounters are not visible, yet it ranks 5th in removal flights at 5 (page xx).

Adam Isacson of WOLA pointed me to the [Pacific Alliance](#), which includes Mexico, Peru, Colombia and Chile, and which makes it very complicated for Mexico to be pressured by the US visa regime program to implement visa restrictions for Peru and Colombia. [According to the Alliance:](#)

"The Lima Declaration (April 28, 2011) established as general purpose of the Pacific Alliance, to progressively move towards "the free mobility of goods, services, capital and people". It also established that at first it would prioritize "the movement of business people and the facilitation of migratory transit, including immigration and consular police cooperation".

BRAZIL flights decreased significantly from 10 in August to 2 in both September and October. The decrease is no doubt related to encounters of Brazilians dropping from 5,747 in August to 1,723 in September after the large air lift in August.

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 in August, and 1.7k in September. 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. Perhaps the lower level of 2 in October implies depressed encounters in October as was the case in September.

Haiti flights dropped 0 in October for the first time since June 2021 from 1 on 6 September (pages 15, 19).

For the 4th month in a row, in September, CBP encounters of Haitians between southern ports was [below 500 at 186, with 4,977 at ports of entry](#), many through exceptions to T42.

For the 4th 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 entry they will choose to do that rather than to enter without documentation between ports. In October only 24 Haitians were subjected to T42 after encounters at the southern border.

We are now 13 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 15).

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 it appears about 200-250 Haitians were interdicted at sea in October.

Other Removal Destinations were The Dominican Republic (2), Nicaragua (2), and Ecuador (2), all within generally normal patterns (page 19,20).

Mexico Operated Removal flights observed fell by 16 (64%) from 25 in September to 9 in October. Deportation flights to all countries fell. Honduras was down 8 (11 to 3), Guatemala down 2 (7 to 5), Nicaragua down 2 (3 to 1), and Ecuador (2 to 0) and El Salvador (2 to 0), both down 2. The reason for the large decrease in deportation flights in October is not clear (page 14).

Mexico added a second carrier, Viva Aerobus, for deportation flights. Magnicharters operated 1 flight at the beginning of October and none until the end of the month. Now both are operating flights, so perhaps the lull was the result of some contract issues.

I did observe 2 voluntary [flights to Venezuela](#) from Mexico City operated by the Venezuelan [state-owned Conviasa](#), which I did not include as they do seem to be voluntary returns for which it has been reported that passengers pay a portion of the cost, \$200. There was another one in early November. And on 5 November Mexico INM operated what [the first voluntary "air bridge" flight on their new charter contractor, Viva Aerobus, to Venezuela](#).

Based on reporting from Guatemala, land returns by Mexico of Guatemalans are estimated down around 200 (7%) to around 3,000. Returns of Hondurans to El Carmen in October appear to be substantially lower at around 900 compared to 2,067 in September, however, Mexico announced it would again start to [receive Hondurans at El Ceibo](#) but they have not started to report returns there as of this writing.

OCTOBER FLIGHT SUMMARY

In October, there were 685 likely ICE Air flights, up 21 (3%) from September, and up 4 (1%) the same month of 2021. Removal flights of 83 were down 24 (22%) from September, while domestic shuffle flights increased by 56 (13%).

- - 83 removal flights, with 82 return flights, to 11 different countries in Latin America, the Caribbean.
- - 28 domestic flights connecting directly to removal flights.
- - 492 domestic shuffle flights between deportation locations.
- - 520 domestic flights (connections and shuffle flights).
- - Since President Biden's inauguration there have been 12,360 likely ICE Air flights including 2,211 removal flights. Including just the 264 lateral flights before October 2021 and 20 for Venezuelans in October 2022 as expulsion flights would yield 2,495 removal flights.
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Last 12 Months – 7,810 likely total flights

- - 1,474 removal flights, with 1,363 return flights, to at least 21 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Southeast Asia.
- - 495 domestic flights connecting directly to removal flights.
- - 4,478 domestic shuffle flights between removal locations.
- - 4,973 domestic flights (connections and shuffle flights).
- - 43% of flights were return related (removal, return and connections) and 57% were domestic shuffle flights.