

ICE AIR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – JUNE 2023

- AS ANTICIPATED, THERE WAS A REVERSAL IN THE OBSERVED MAY LULL IN REMOVAL FLIGHTS WITH THE ABRUPT END OF T42 FLIGHTS AND BEFORE T8 EXPEDITED REMOVAL DEPORTATIONS RAMPED UP. (SEE T42 TO T8 TRANSITION SECTION BELOW.)
- 23,069 TOTAL ICE AIR FLIGHTS OPERATED IN 2020-JUNE 2023. SINCE INAUGURATION: 17,963 TOTAL FLIGHTS.
- 4,174 REMOVAL FLIGHTS OPERATED IN 2020-JUNE 2023. SINCE INAUGURATION: 3,107 REMOVAL FLIGHTS.
- 670 TOTAL ICE AIR FLIGHTS OPERATED IN JUNE, UP 16 (15%) FROM THE PRIOR MONTH. JUNE WAS 27 (4%) BELOW THE PRIOR 6-MONTH AVERAGE OF 697.
 - IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT ON A WEEKDAY EQUIVALENT BASIS TO MAY, JUNE WOULD HAVE REGISTERED A DECREASE OF ONLY 9. THERE WAS 1 MORE WEEKDAY IN MAY THAN JUNE.
- TOTAL ICE AIR FLIGHTS OF 670 WERE UP 29 (5%) FROM JUNE 2022.
- LATERAL FLIGHTS PLUMMETED AGAIN BY 23 (52%) FROM 44 TO 21 IN JUNE DRIVEN BY A DECREASE IN ENCOUNTERS AND MOST LIKELY TO THE OPENING OF THE NEW CBP PROCESSING CENTER IN EL PASO. THERE WERE NO LONGITUDINAL FLIGHTS FROM PLATTSBURGH, NY TO TEXAS.
- 122 REMOVAL FLIGHTS IN JUNE, UP 16 (15%) FROM THE PRIOR MONTH AND DOWN 17 (12%) FROM JUNE 2022. UP 10 (9%) FROM THE PRIOR 6-MONTH AVERAGE OF 112. NOTE THAT ON A WEEKDAY EQUIVALENT BASIS TO MAY, JUNE REMOVALS WOULD HAVE BEEN 128, UP 22 (21%) FROM MAY.

TRANSITION FROM T42 TO T8

June saw the reversal of the expected lull in removal flights at the abrupt ending of T42 and T42 flights and before T8 / expedited removal deportation flights ramp up. Removal flights increased 16 (15%) from 106 in May to 122 in June. On a weekday equivalent basis the increase would have been 22 (21%).

In March and April there were an average of 6.3 and 5.9 removal flights per weekday, respectively, and these levels continued at 5.4 per day in May through the 11th. However, from the 11th through the 24th average removals per weekday dropped about 40% to just 3.6 per day, before increasing to 5.0 per weekday from the 25th to the 31st.

In June, average removals per weekday increased to 5.5 per weekday from the May exit rate of 5.0. Moreover, the average per weekday for the last 10 days of June was up to 6.8 per day (please see the 3+year trend chart on pages 10, 12; box 7).

Activity at Alexandria LA, traditionally a major deportation staging location, increased in prominence. All deportation flights to South America and the Caribbean departed from Alexandria (except Cuba – Miami) and 25% of the flights to Northern Triangle countries departed from Alexandria. 73% of the flights to Northern Triangle Countries departed from the Texas cities of Harlingen, Laredo, El Paso, and to a much lesser extent, Houston and San Antonio (page .

In June, 37% of all removal flights either connected in or originated in Alexandria compared to 28% in April.

Detention numbers and those for expedited removal will be interesting to monitor as well. From 21 May to 17 June detention numbers increased 2,283 (8%) from 27,330 to 29,613, almost all the increase accounted for by an increase in those in expedited removal which increased 2,165 (15%) from 14,430 to 16,595.

LAST 12 MONTHS

Over the last 12 months, all under President Biden, there have been a likely 8,255 ICE Air flight legs as compared to 4,845 in 2020, a startling, unexpected, and disappointing increase of 3,410 (70%) over 2020 and up 2,131 (35%) over 2021.

Of these flights, 1,368 were removal flights, an increase of 359 (36%) over the 1,009 in 2020, and 319 (30%) over 2021.

Shuffle flights, including lateral flights and those just moving people in the US to and between detention/deportation centers were 4,994 over the last 12 months, a staggering increase of 2,769 (124%) over the 2,225 in 2020, and up 1,335 (36%) over 2021. (pages 24,34,37,40).

June 2023 (note: there were only 22 weekdays in June so to compare on a day weighted basis to May with 23 days, the numbers reported for June would have been higher by about 5%.)

Total Flights of 670 in June, utilizing 24 different planes operated by 5 different charter carriers (IAero aka Swift, World Atlantic, GlobalX, Eastern, and Gryphon) were up 16 (15%) from May, and were below the average of the prior 6 months (697) by 27 (4%).

It is important to note that on a weekday equivalent basis to May, June total flights would have been 700, down just 9.

The decrease of 39 total flights from May can be attributed to the decrease in lateral flights (down 21) and shuffle flights moving people to and between detention/deportation locations and removal flights (down 61 excluding laterals), offset by removal related flights (removal, connections and returns) up 43 (page 15). The lower laterals and shuffle flights were no doubt related to lower encounters between ports.

In May Border Patrol encounters (between ports) at the Southern border were 169,244 while the estimates for June are closer to 100,000 which would be down 40%.

Removal Flights increased by 16 (15%) from 106 to 122 which was 17 (12%) below June 2022, but up 10 (9%) from the prior 6-month average (pages 23-25). This is the first month with all flights as deportation flights since March 2020 when T42 began, and it's interesting that deportation flights already exceed the prior 6-month average of primarily rapid expulsion flights.

In terms of the outlook for the future, average removal flights per weekday for June were 5.5 compared to April and May at 6.3 and 5.9, respectively. But the last 1/3 of June registered at 6.8 per weekday and it will be interesting if that pace holds.

The Northern Triangle countries of Guatemala (up 8, or 31%, to 34), Honduras (up 12, or 46%, to 38), and El Salvador (up 5, or 63%, to 13) all marked meaningful increases while most South American countries fell including Colombia (down 6, or 35%, to 11), Ecuador (down 4, or 40%, to 6), and Peru (down 1, or 17%, to 5). Brazil remained unchanged at 1.

In May removal flights from Northern Triangle countries (60) comprised 57% of all removal flights while in June they jumped up to 85 comprising 70% of all removal flights. Curious if expedited removals to Northern Triangle Countries are employed more, or are more easily effected than those to other countries.

Flights to the Dominican Republic dropped 2 from 5 to 3. Nicaragua (2), Cuba (1), Haiti (1), and Jamaica (1) were unchanged and small jet (15 passenger max) flights to Africa increased from 1 to 2 flights with stops in Chad, Tanzania, Kenya (2), Liberia and Nigeria.

Please see Country Detail Section below for more details

The total number of people returned in June by air to Guatemala and Honduras is estimated at 8,100, up from 6,080 (2,020 or 33%) representing 23% of May encounters, about the same percent as May at 22%. Honduras was lower at 21% than Guatemala at 25%, possibly because of the significant increase in encounters of Hondurans in May to 21,000 from 13,215 (up 7,785 or 59%) in April (page 16).

Lateral Flights dropped again in June, by 23 (52%) from 44 to only 21, the lowest level in 15 months since March 2022 (page 15). There seems to be a reduced need for "decompression" flights to move people for processing from crowded CBP processing centers for two reasons. First, the drop in encounters mentioned above and second because of the [opening of the new soft sided CBP processing center in El Paso](#) that has a capacity of 2,500. Historically, many laterals originated in El Paso and, conversely, in June, El Paso received 9 laterals, with none originating there.

The only sector it seems "decompression" laterals are operating from is Del Rio which originated half (11) of the laterals in June. The other laterals seem to be to move people for removal flight nationality capacity reasons.

In addition to the 11 laterals from Del Rio there were 6 from Tucson with 2 each to El Paso, San Diego and Harlingen. Additionally, there was 1 lateral each to Laredo and Harlingen. Laterals appear to have as destinations removal flight locations, except for San Diego, which is a deportation by land location for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans.

In addition to these lateral flights there are lateral buses as well into which there is no visibility, however we understand there were many buses from Del Rio sector to Laredo primarily.

Longitudinal Flights paused between Plattsburgh, NY and Texas in April with no flights, leaving the total at 6 since they began 13 March. All the April flights arrived in El Paso as did 2 of the 3 in March with the remainder to Harlingen.

Shuffle flights of 354 fell 82 (19%) from May as Border Patrol encounters (between southern ports) are expected to fall from 169,244 in May to around 100,000 in June, down around 40%, reducing the need for lateral flights and those moving people to and between detention centers and deportation staging (pages 15,23).

Country Detail

Honduras flights leaped significantly by 12 (46%) from 26 to 38, the highest month since 39 in June 2022. June was also substantially above the prior 6-month average of 22 by 16 (73%) (pages 24). Despite the ramp up in flights, returns only represented about 21% of May encounters (June not yet reported) as encounters of Hondurans jumped up from 13,215 in April to 21,000 in May (7,785 or 59%). It appears the flight increase is a deterrence message spurred by the encounter jump. It is interesting to note that encounters of Guatemalans and Salvadorans did not exhibit a similar spike in May.

In June, estimated returns by ICE air were 4,370 based on Government of Honduras reporting, at 115 people per plane in June, up 1,562 (56%) from 2,808 returned by ICE Air in May.

Unusually, for the third month in a row, there were no removal flights from Mexico (page 19), and land returns from El Carmen, Mexico remained very low at an estimated 400, down from 676 in May and substantially below March at 1,389 (down 989 or 71%). In June total estimated returns from US and Mexico were 4,770, up 1,286 (37%) from May, but below 5,946 in March by 1,176 (20%).

Guatemala flights jumped by 8 (31%) from 26 to 34 in June. June 2023 was below June 2022 by 10 (23%) as encounters in June 2022 were 9,854 (40%) higher than May 2023 (last month reported). June removal flights were 4 over the prior 6-month average, so deportation flights have reached T42 plus deportation removal flight levels (page 24).

Although we do not know encounters for June, these returns by air represented an estimated 25% of May encounters, higher than May at 22% and comparable to April at 26%.

Based on reports by Guatemala Migration the US returned an estimated 3,750 Guatemalans by air in June, 591 (19%) more than May with 110 people per plane compared to the prior two months at 121 per plane when T42 was in force.

After 2 months each of only 1 Mexico deportation flight to Guatemala there were 0 in June, the only month without a flight since at least May 2021 when I started to monitor (page 19). I will note I do not think this is a mistake because the Government of Guatemala reported only the 1 flight as well the prior two months. It is estimated based on Guatemala's reporting that around 1,100 Guatemalans will be returned by Mexico by land at Tecún Úman, up 355 (48%) from May, but substantially down from the 3,261 returned there in March. Combined with the ICE Air returns total returns by the US and Mexico would be 4,850, up about 946 (24%) from May, but substantially below March at 10,016 by 5,166.

El Salvador flights increased for the 2nd month in a row from 4 in April to 8 in May and 13 in June. It is worth a reminder that El Salvador did not accept T42 returns so this means an acceleration of deportations. Perhaps this indicates the rapidity embedded in the new policies as encounters of Salvadorans has been relatively stable between 4,678 and 5,746 February - May.

Based on IOM statistics, there were 404 returns of Salvadorans in April on 4 flights and that would represent only 9% of April encounters, reasonably consistent with history. Based on the increase in flights to 13 and an estimated 1,300 people returned, in June these returns would represent about 24% of May encounters, now consistent with Honduras and Guatemala levels.

Ecuador flights decreased meaningfully for the 3rd straight month from 31 to 20, to 10, to 6 for the months of March - June, as encounters remained in the 6,387 to 7,141 range during that time. The 3rd quarter of 2022 averaged 2 flights per month. In December encounters of Ecuadorans spiked from 7,030 in October to 16,205 in December at which time flights moved from 2 in October to 13 in December and 31 in March, before falling to 6 in June (page 24).

Perhaps it has been determined the cost of the incremental flights will not be worth the deterrence benefit, or that the deportation process takes more time, which I think may be the case because the trend is similar for other South American countries. It is estimated that removals in June only represent about 10% of May encounters.

Colombia flights also dropped for the 3rd straight month from 24 to 21, to 17, to 11 for the months of March – June, as encounters increased steadily from 9,471 in January to 18,128 in May (page 24). The monthly average of flights for the last 6 months of 2022 was 20 at a time when encounters ranged between 13,454 and 17,685, so 11 flights in June is substantially lower on a relative basis and represents only around 7% of May encounters, down from an already low 11% in May.

Like Ecuador, it seems the deportation process for South American countries may take more time than for the Northern Triangle countries. I understand from Colombia that nothing has changed in the number of flights allowed, that the reduction is because of the timing and complexity of T8 processing compared to T42.

Dominican Republic flights dropped by 2 (40%) to a more normalized 3 flights from 5 in May and 7 in April (page 24) which was a 3-year high. Prior to April there were basically 2 flights per month. It is not clear why flights escalated in April and May because there is no public reporting of encounters from the DR.

It is possible there was an attempt to reduce the detainee population in April and May in anticipation of the end of T42. It is not clear if this is a temporary reduction which is something to watch.

Peru flights dropped by 1 (17%) to 5 following May at 6 and April at a 3-year high of 8. Flights now seem to be back to a 1 per week basis (page 24). It is possible there was an attempt to reduce the detainee population in April and May in anticipation of the end of T42.

Encounters increased from 3,955 in January to 8,362 in March and then remained relatively stable in April and May (8,255). Based on May encounters, June returns represented only about 7% of encounters, about the same as May, but below April at only 10%.

Brazil flights remained at 1 in June for the 3rd month in a row and at the prior 6-month average (page 24). In fact, since September 2022 flights have ranged between 0 and 3 after a highly unusual 10 flights in August 2022. Following the 10 in August 2022 encounters of Brazilians dropped from 5,747 in August 2022 to 762 in November. Since then, encounters have gradually and steadily increased to 3,813 in May 2023, as flights average 1 per month.

The plane that usually operates to Brazil is a large Eastern Air that could carry slightly over 200, which would represent just 5% of May encounters, even lower than other South American countries.

Cuba experienced the first return flights since December 2020 on 24 April followed by 1 in May and 1 in June (pages 24). It seems that the pattern for now is 1 flight per month, although there seems to be no pattern to the day or date of the month.

Haiti experienced 1 flight of 35 people in what now seems to be a monthly flight pattern, at least over the last 7 months (pages 20,24), all departing from Alexandria, LA, and all the last week of the month. Conditions in Haiti seems to be stunningly dangerous and [spiraling down by the day into deeper gang warfare and vigilante action](#).

Over the last 8 months, [only 1,042 Haitians have been encountered between southern ports](#). The vast majority (estimating around 85%+) of encounters at ports of Haitians of 43,751 over the last 8 months have been related to T42 exemptions or CBP One appointments.

Meanwhile, [interdiction of Haitians at sea continues](#) with 4,613 interdicted in the first 9 months of the fiscal year (Oct) for an annual pace of 6,150, below the prior year of 7,175 by 1,025 (14%).

Since inauguration 284 flights have removed 27,013 Haitians, 1 in every 425 people in Haiti. Since the mass return beginning 19 September 2021, 24,914 Haitians have been returned on 247 flights (page 20).

Small Jet Removals observed included 2 flights to Africa on Gryphon Air Gulfstreams that carry 12-15 passengers as a maximum with destinations of Kenya (2), Nigeria, Liberia, Tanzania, and Chad. (page 24,25).

Other Removal Destinations were Nicaragua (2), and Jamaica (1), both within generally normal patterns (page 24).

Mexico Operated Removal flights surprisingly stopped altogether in June following just 1 flight in each of April and May to Guatemala (page 19). I do not think I am wrong because the Government of Guatemala also reported returns of just 1 in April and in May. There has been no explanation given for the lower returns from Mexico of Hondurans and Guatemalans.

The 6-month average prior to April was 24, and there were 37 deportations in May 2022.

Moreover, land returns of Hondurans at El Carmen dropped from 1,389 in March to an estimated 400 in June, down 989 (71%) from March. Returns of Guatemalans at Tecún Úman dropped from 3,261 in March to an estimated 1,100 in June, down 2,161 (66%) in June.

Importantly, land returns of Guatemalans and Hondurans by Mexico fell by an estimated 5,224 (78%) from June 2022 (6,714) to June 2023 (1,490).

JUNE FLIGHT SUMMARY

In June, there were 670 likely ICE Air flights, down 39 (6%) from May, and down 29 (5%) from the same month of 2022. Removal flights of 122 were up 16 (15%) from May while domestic shuffle flights decreased by 82 (19%).

- - 122 removal flights, with 117 return flights, to 17 different countries in Latin America, Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean.
- - 77 domestic flights connecting directly to removal flights.
- - 354 domestic shuffle flights between deportation locations.
- - 431 domestic flights (connections and shuffle flights).
- - **Since President Biden's inauguration there have been 17,963 likely ICE Air flights** including 3,107 removal flights. Including just the 264 lateral flights before October 2021 and 50 for October - December 2022 as expulsion flights would yield 3,421 removal flights.

Last 12 Months – 8,255 likely total flights

- - 1,368 removal flights, with 1,275 return flights, to at least 26 countries in Latin America, Europe, the Caribbean, Africa, and Southeast Asia.
- - 618 domestic flights connecting directly to removal flights.
- - 4,994 domestic shuffle flights between removal locations.
- - 5,612 domestic flights (connections and shuffle flights).
- - 40% of flights were return related (removal, return and connections) and 60% were domestic shuffle flights.