

U.S. begins reuniting families separated at Mexico border

By ELLIOT SPAGAT
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO— The Biden administration said Monday, May 3, that four families that were separated at the Mexico border during Donald Trump's presidency will be reunited in the United States this week in what Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas calls "just the beginning" of a broader effort.

Two of the four families include mothers who were separated from their children in late 2017, one Honduran and another Mexican, Mayorkas said, declining to detail their identities. He described them as children who were 3 years old at the time and "teenagers who have had to live without their parent during their most formative years."

Parents will return to the United States on humanitarian parole while authorities consider other longer-term forms of legal status, said Michelle Brane, executive director of the administration's Family



A migrant man, center, holds a child as he looks at a U.S. Customs and Border Protection agent at an intake area after crossing the U.S.-Mexico border March 24, 2021, in Roma, Texas. The Biden administration said Monday, May 3, that four families that were separated at the Mexico border during Donald Trump's presidency will be reunited in the United States this week in what Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas calls "just the beginning" of a broader effort.

Reunification Task Force. The children are already in the U.S.

Exactly how many families will reunite in the U.S. and in what order is linked to negotiations with the American Civil Liber-

ties Union to settle a federal lawsuit in San Diego, but Mayorkas said there were more to come.

"We continue to work tirelessly to reunite many more children with their parents in the weeks and

months ahead," Mayorkas told reporters. "We have a lot of work still to do, but I am proud of the progress we have made and the reunifications that we have helped to achieve."

More than 5,500 children

were separated from their parents during the Trump administration going back to July 1, 2017, many of them under a "zero-tolerance" policy to criminally prosecute any adult who entered the country illegally, according to court filings. The Biden administration is doing its own count going back to Trump's inauguration in January 2017 and believes more than 1,000 families remain separated.

While family separation ended in June 2018 under court order, Biden has repeatedly assailed the practice as an act of cruelty. An executive order on his first day in office pledged to reunite families that were still separated "to the greatest extent possible."

The ACLU is happy for the four families but their reunifications are "just the tip of the iceberg," said attorney Lee Gelernt. Among the more than 5,500 children known to have been separated, more than 1,000 may still be apart

from their parents and more than 400 parents have yet to be located, he said.

"We need the Biden administration to provide relief to all of them, including providing them a permanent pathway to citizenship and care," Gelernt said.

The reunifications begin as the Biden administration confronts the third major increase in unaccompanied children arriving at the border in seven years. It has made strides moving children from overcrowded Border Patrol facilities to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services shelters, which are more suited to longer-term stays until children are placed with sponsors in the United States, typically parents or close relatives.

The average stay for an unaccompanied child in Border Patrol custody has fallen to about 20 hours, below the legal limit of 72 hours and down from 133 hours in late March, Mayorkas said.

May Day marches lead to arrests in Seattle, Portland

Associated Press

SEATTLE — At least 20 people were arrested during May Day demonstrations in Seattle and Portland in support of immigrants and worker rights, officials said.

Seattle police said 14 people were arrested Saturday, May 1, for crimes including obstruction, property destruction, reckless driving and assault as several unpermitted marches wound through the downtown area. Demonstrators threw bottles, rocks, paint, paint-filled eggs and raw eggs and threw lighted flares into the roadway, officers said.

About 150 people participated in a permitted march in support of immigrant and worker rights, The Seattle Times reported. They also called for open borders, equality in vaccine access and spoke against hate crimes against Asian people, racism, police brutality and white supremacy.

"Our people have built multiracially with the Black

working class, with Native folks with Latinx folks around the world to fight for a different vision of this planet, where we can live, where we can breathe, where we can be safe," said JM Wong of Massage Parlor Outreach Project said during a speech in the center of Seattle's Chinatown International District.

In Portland, peaceful demonstrations during the day gave way to violent demonstrations at night. About 100 people marched toward the area around city hall on Saturday night, where there were multiple reports of vandalism and broken windows at businesses, police said. Officers declared the gathering a riot and ordered people to leave. They later announced six arrests.

Officers deployed crowd dispersal munitions at a smaller group of people who gathered outside the Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in Southwest Portland.

Nuclear waste tank in Washington may be leaking

By NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS
Associated Press

RICHLAND, Wash. — An underground nuclear waste storage tank in Washington state that dates to World War II appears to be leaking contaminated liquid into the ground, the U.S. Department of Energy said Thursday, April 29.

It's the second tank believed to be leaking waste left from the production of plutonium for nuclear weapons at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation. The first was discovered in 2013. Many more of the 149 single-walled storage tanks at the site are suspected of leaking.

Tank B-109, the latest suspected of leaking, holds 123,000 gallons of radioactive waste. The giant tank was constructed during the Manhattan Project that built the first atomic bombs and received waste from Hanford operations from 1946 to 1976.

The Hanford site near Richland in the southeastern part of the state



Elaine Thompson/Associated Press, File

Officials say an underground nuclear waste storage tank that dates to World War II appears to be leaking contaminated liquid into the ground. The U.S. Department of Energy said Thursday, April 29, 2021, the tank holds 123,000 gallons of radioactive waste left from the production of plutonium for nuclear weapons.

produced about two-thirds of the plutonium for the nation's nuclear arsenal, including the bomb dropped in 1945 on Nagasaki, Japan, and now is the most contaminated radioactive waste site in the nation.

A multibillion dollar environmental cleanup has been underway for decades at the sprawling Hanford site.

The Washington state Department of Ecology and

the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency were notified April 29 that the tank was likely leaking.

"There is no increased health or safety risk to the Hanford workforce or the public," said Geoff Tyree, a spokesman for the Energy Department. "Contamination in this area is not new and mitigation actions have been in place for decades to protect workers, the public and the environment."

The tank had been pre-

viously emptied of pumpable liquids, leaving a small amount of liquid waste inside, the agency said. Systems in the area capture and remove contaminants that reach the groundwater and ensure the protection of the Columbia River, the agency said.

The leak from was first suspected in March 2019, when there appeared to be a drop in the level of its liquid waste. Monthly checks showed the level stable until July 2020, when another drop was detected, and the Department of Energy launched an investigation.

State officials said the tank is leaking about 3.5 gallons per day.

"It's a serious matter whenever a Hanford tank leaks its radioactive and dangerous chemical waste," Ecology Director Laura Watson said, adding "this highlights the critical need for resources to address Hanford's aging tanks, which will continue to fail and leak over time."

— NATIONAL NEWS BRIEFS —

Supreme Court won't take Maryland bump stock ban case

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court is declining to take up a challenge to Maryland's ban on bump stocks and other devices that make guns fire faster.

The high court on Monday, May 3, turned away a challenge to the ban, which took effect in October 2018. A lower court had dismissed the challenge at an early stage and that decision had been upheld by an appeals court. As is typical, the court didn't comment in declining to take the case.

Maryland's ban preceded a nationwide ban on the sale and possession of bump stocks that was put in place by the Trump administration and took effect in 2019. The Supreme Court previously declined to stop the Trump administration from enforcing that ban. Both Maryland's ban and the nationwide one followed a 2017 shooting in Las Vegas in which a gunman attached bump stocks to assault-style rifles he used to shoot concertgoers from his hotel room. Fifty-eight people were killed and hundreds were injured.

U.S. to launch trade talks on COVID-19 vaccine distribution

WILMINGTON, Del. — The U.S. top trade negotiator will begin talks with the World Trade Organization on ways to overcome intellectual property issues that are keeping critically needed COVID-19 vaccines

from being more widely distributed worldwide, two White House officials said Sunday, May 2.

The White House has been under pressure from lawmakers at home and governments abroad to join an effort to waive patent rules for the vaccines so that poorer countries can begin to produce their own generic versions of the shots to vaccinate their populations.

The U.S. has been criticized for focusing first on vaccinating Americans, particularly as its vaccine supply begins to outpace demand and doses approved for use elsewhere in the world but not in the U.S. sit idle.

U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai will be starting talks with the trade organization "on how we can get this vaccine more widely distributed, more widely licensed, more widely shared," said White House chief of staff Ron Klain.

Klain and national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the administration will have more to say on the matter in the coming days.

Sullivan said the administration believes pharmaceutical companies "should be supplying at scale and at cost to the entire world so that there is no barrier to everyone getting vaccinated."

Klain said the U.S. has sent India enough of the raw materials it needs to make 20 million vaccine doses. India is battling a deadly new surge in coronavirus infections and deaths.

— Associated Press

La Grande School District

KINDERGARTEN ROUND-UP

Date: Thursday, May 6, 2021
Time: 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Place: At your local area Elementary School. (Where your child will be attending school)

Open to all STUDENTS WHO WILL BE 5 BEFORE September 1, 2021

Bring your child to meet the Kindergarten teachers.

For further information, please contact one of the following:
Central School – Connie Ingerson – 541.663.3501
Greenwood School – Eva McKinney – 541.663.3601
Island City School – Dena Tams – 541.663.3271


