

## U.S. to Fund Deportations from Costa Rica Under New State Department Plan

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The U.S. government plans to allocate up to \$7.85 million to support Costa Rica in deporting migrants, according to a U.S. State Department document reviewed by Reuters. The funds are set to be transferred from Washington's Economic Support Fund, traditionally used to aid economic development in allied nations, to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which will coordinate with Costa Rican authorities to carry out the deportations.

The arrangement, modeled in part on a 2024 agreement between the Biden administration and Panama, represents a continuation of efforts to manage illegal immigration by cooperating with regional partners. According to the document, the funding will provide Costa Rica with technical and logistical assistance, including air transportation, to remove migrants who lack international protection or legal grounds to remain in the country.

A spokesperson for the State Department said the program's primary purpose is to help Costa Rica deter the flow of illegal migration through its borders. In addition to logistical support, the initiative will also provide immigration authorities in Costa Rica with training and resources related to asylum screening procedures.

Earlier this year, Costa Rica agreed to accept approximately 200 migrants originating from Africa, Asia, and Europe at the request of the Trump administration. These individuals had previously been living illegally in the United States. Although the initial plan was to return them to their countries of origin, many remain in Costa Rica.

The document does not detail specific deportation timelines or the countries to which migrants will be returned. It also leaves open the possibility that some individuals may be deported to third-party nations. Officials have not confirmed whether similar U.S.-funded deportation efforts will be expanded to other Latin American countries.

Critics, including migrant advocacy groups and several Democratic lawmakers, have previously expressed concern that such international arrangements could limit migrants' access to the U.S. asylum system. Despite this criticism, the current administration has continued to explore regional enforcement strategies, especially in nations experiencing high levels of migrant transit.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem has recently visited Costa Rica, Panama, El Salvador, and Chile to discuss immigration cooperation. While migration through the Darién Gap has slowed significantly, there are reports of some Venezuelan migrants heading south through Costa Rica after abandoning attempts to enter the U.S., in part due to the Trump administration's rollback of Biden-era humanitarian parole programs.

Costa Rica's Ministry of Public Security and the General Directorate of Immigration referred media inquiries to the presidential office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, both of which declined to comment.