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## Houston Sees Sharp Rise in Migrant Child Sex Crime Arrests Amid Border Enforcement Shift

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A six-month enforcement operation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Houston, Texas, has led to the arrest of 214 illegal immigrants for offenses related to the sexual exploitation of minors, surpassing the total number of similar arrests made in the entire 2024 fiscal year. Each individual arrested was either charged with or previously convicted of a child sex offense.

ICE credited the success of the operation to a “whole-of-government” enforcement strategy first implemented during the Trump administration, which continues to influence multi-

agency cooperation efforts. The coordinated task force includes the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and state-level law enforcement partners.

Former Arizona Supreme Court Judge Andrew Gould, who served in the border city of Yuma, highlighted Houston's geographic proximity to the southern border as a key factor contributing to the rise in arrests. "In Yuma, sex trafficking and sexual offenses were common because offenders could commit a crime and then flee to an enclave in Mexico," Gould told *Fox News Digital*. "For a city like Houston that isn't too far from the border, it doesn't surprise me to see these kinds of numbers."

Gould noted that the current efforts reflect not only geography but a renewed commitment to collaboration and enforcement at all levels of government. "They've put together a multi-agency task force. The numbers don't lie, what we're seeing reflects a policy shift," he added.

Although ICE officials did not directly assign blame, Gould distinguished immigration policies under former President Donald Trump and those of the current administration. He argued that the Trump administration's focus on border security had a measurable impact on reducing criminal migration. "Trump has done an excellent job shutting down the border," he said. "But now, the administration is focusing on what to do internally, and that's targeting the worst of the worst. That's what we're seeing."

He also emphasized the critical role of local law enforcement in these operations. "Federal reach only goes so far. Local law enforcement knows who these offenders are and where they are," Gould stated. "They have the most at stake because it's their community."

According to Gould, this cooperation improves both the efficiency of arrests and the morale of local officers. When local and federal agencies operate as partners, he noted, communities are better protected, and frontline officers feel more empowered to act.

The operation reflects a growing concern about how immigration enforcement is handled across the country, particularly in areas close to the southern border. While political debate over national policy continues, law enforcement officials appear focused on targeting high-risk offenders, especially those involved in crimes against children.