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September 28, 2023

## **Nation's Sheriffs Call for Action at the Border Due to Heightened Threat Picture**

*The American Sheriff Alliance continues to call out cartel activity and lack of reinforcements at the border*

**San Diego, California** – The American Sheriff Alliance met in San Diego this week to discuss the continued pressure and strain on resources due to the lack of border enforcement throughout the United States, including the alarming statistics of encounters with individuals found to be on the Terrorist Watch List, also known as the Terrorist Screening Dataset (TSDS). Further, the diversity of the countries of origin for migrant encounters is also concerning, particularly with those who have strained diplomatic relations with the U.S. The driving forces can be traced back to the lack of border security as well as the Sinaloa Cartel run by Ismael Zambada Garcia (“El Mayo”) and Jalisco New Generation Cartel run by Nemesio Ruben Oseguera Cervantes (“El Mencho”).

Along the southwest border, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) TSDS encounters between ports of entry of non-U.S. citizens have continually risen over the past six years. The following are the number of TSDS encounters according to CBP: 2017 – 2 encounters, 2018 – 6 encounters, 2019 – 0 encounters, 2020 – 3 encounters, 2021 – 15 encounters, 2022 – 98 encounters, and 2023 YTD – 151 encounters. Since 2021, this represents a 906% increase in TSDS encounters; there are still three months left in 2023.

In addition to these alarming rates of TSDS encounters, other criminal statistics continue to rise. The number of arrests of individuals with criminal convictions or those wanted by law enforcement by noncitizens has increased exponentially from 6,562 encounters in 2021 to 16,992 in 2022, and year to date in 2023, there have been 18,586 encounters, which marks a 183% increase since 2021 with again three months left this year.

The statistics for TSDS encounters and those with criminal convictions or who are wanted by law enforcement reflect only those who have encountered authorities. It is unknown how many concerning individuals have entered the United States who have yet to be accounted for. CBP reported that they have estimated a total of 600,000 got-a-ways this year, but there is no way of knowing the exact numbers. These alarming statistics are extremely concerning to the Alliance, and there are major homeland security concerns with these individuals especially, with the lack of information and vetting as to their intentions, criminal histories, or connections to our adversaries worldwide.

Further, the strain on local resources both for border sheriffs and law enforcement across the country who do not have the adequate staffing or funding to respond to this influx of migrants is troubling. The continued effect on communities across the country who are left to deal with violent criminals, illicit narcotics and the increase in overall criminal activity is straining public safety resources. To say nothing of the pressure felt on community services including housing, medical services, and the judicial system.

“When the number of people dying from drug poisonings is equivalent to a 737-airplane crashing each day, and the number of migrants that we are aware of coming across the border could fill the

Caesars Superdome in New Orleans weekly, we have to sound the alarm,” said Sheriff Greg Champagne of St. Charles Parish, Louisiana, and President of the National Sheriffs’ Association (NSA). “If a plane crashed daily, there would be immediate action taken, and yet instead of seeing numbers decrease, we continue to set records for those who are dying from illicit narcotics mostly originating from the drug cartels in Mexico.”

“Communities across the United States, whether or not they are located near a southern, northern, or maritime border, are being affected by the lack of resources available to address the overwhelming challenges in stopping the volume of violent criminals and illicit narcotics flowing into our country at the hands of the cartels,” stated Major County Sheriffs of America Executive Director Megan Noland. “The implications to the nation’s homeland security threat picture continues to expand as migrant flows and cartel activity continue to increase with no relief in sight. Terrorists and foreign bad actors are monitoring the current weak border policies, and they will absolutely exploit these failings given the opportunity.”

Sheriff Leon Wilmot of Yuma County, Arizona and a Western States Sheriffs’ Association member stated, “The pressure on law enforcement at the local level is unsustainable with the continued daily increases at the southern ports of entry. With the sustained unrelenting flow of migrants coming from all over the world and the limited background checks and vetting process, it is concerning who is being released into the interior. The cartels are actively promoting the weak border policies through social media networks, and it is clear they have been, sadly, very successful in their mission.”

“While we know that these pressures are affecting U.S. borders from all sides, the southern border is clearly the center of concern when we see migrants from countries across the world enter our country into the Southwest Border,” said Sheriff Eddie Guerra of Hidalgo County, Texas, and President of the Southwestern Border Sheriffs’ Coalition. “CBP has reported that migrant encounters at the southwest border cover 180 international countries – many who are adversaries with the United States, which should be concerning to every American citizen.”

Sheriff Tom Schmerber of Maverick County, Texas, and President of the Texas Border Sheriff’s Coalition noted, “While federal, state, and local law enforcement are doing everything they can to keep their local communities secure and ensure humane conditions for migrants who are truly seeking asylum, there is no doubt that the asylum system is being abused and the traditional avenues are overwhelmed to keep up requests forcing the release of these individuals without any accountability. El Mencho, El Mayo, and other troubling cartel criminals will continue to exploit these easy loopholes without action from our elected officials.

The American Sheriff Alliance encourages elected officials at every level of government to speak out and draw attention to the need of making proper reforms to these extreme challenges. This includes actions needed to be taken by the White House Administration as well as Congress to ensure our borders are secure. With hundreds of violent criminals entering communities every day around the country as well as the flow of illicit narcotics poisoning our citizens, the Alliance is demanding the rule of law in this country be followed and that all available sanctions and statutes be used to help alleviate the pressure the men and women of law enforcement are facing during this unprecedented period in our nation’s history. With a potential government shutdown on the horizon where staff will deal with this crisis unpaid, the environment is ripe for the perfect storm with American citizens suffering the consequences. Further, the Alliance is asking for the public’s support to demand the necessary reforms.

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*The **American Sheriff Alliance** consists of sheriffs, leadership, and chief law enforcement officers from the National Sheriffs' Association, Major County Sheriffs of America, the Western State Sheriffs' Association, the Southwestern Border Sheriffs' Coalition, and the Texas Border Sheriff's Coalition. This Alliance was formed to advocate for policy change and reform to keep our nation's citizens safe as well as support the men and women who protect and serve the United States of America at the federal, state, and local levels.*