



Kino Border Initiative
Iniciativa Kino para la Frontera

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 29, 2022

CONTACT

Alba Jaramillo
Arizona Justice For Our Neighbors
alba@azjfon.org
1 (520) 488-3201

Marcela Taracena
ACLU of Arizona
mtaracena@aclu.org
1 (480) 685-6277

Greer Millard
Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project
gmillard@firrp.org
1 (602) 795-7407

Stanford Prescott
International Rescue Committee
communications@rescue.org
1 (646) 628-7837

Gia Del Pino
Kino Border Initiative
gdelpino@kinoborderinitiative.org
1 (786) 451-5459

Gretchen Lopez
The Inn of Southern Arizona
theinnofsa@gmail.com
1 (520) 312-1451

Arizona Advocates Call to End Title 42

In response to mounting rumors that Title 42 may end soon, we stand in solidarity with the hundreds of thousands of migrants who have attempted to exercise their right to seek asylum for over two years, only to be turned away. During this time, the United States government has failed in its moral and legal obligations to afford asylum seekers access to protection, protection that should not wait one more day.

While we agree with Arizona Senators Kyrsten Sinema and Mark Kelly’s call for more investment in and better collaboration with non-profit organizations working to support asylum seekers, we emphatically disagree with the conclusion that Title 42 should remain in place - especially as COVID restrictions have been otherwise loosened across the country. It is inhumane to ask asylum

seekers to continue to wait indefinitely in “dangerous locations, making them vulnerable to exploitation”,¹ to afford the government an opportunity to work on a plan. The government has already had over two years to work on a comprehensive plan for safe and humane asylum access at the border, with few concrete results. Meanwhile, since President Biden took office, [Human Rights First](#) has recorded “at least 9,886 kidnappings, torture, rape, and other violent attacks on people blocked in or expelled to Mexico due to the Title 42 policy.” We continue to hear reports from migrants of the atrocities inflicted upon them under this policy.

We do not believe that any further delay in ending Title 42 will lead to better funding, planning or coordination for those responding to migrants’ needs on the ground. Throughout the arc of the pandemic, local non-profits have worked diligently to respond to migrants’ needs on both sides of the border. We have demonstrated not only that we can rise to the occasion, but also that it was possible to provide meaningful services safely during the pandemic.

Reception and legal services organizations in Arizona continue to be ready and able to welcome asylum seekers when Title 42 ends. The government should provide its fair share of funding for these reception and legal efforts, and ensure that our government agency counterparts coordinate with us as partners. In the wake of the Afghan evacuation and mounting violence in Ukraine, we have seen that mountains can be moved with deliberate speed if there is the political will. Whether you have access to protection in the United States should not depend on where you are from or the color of your skin. We cannot continue to turn a blind eye to those in need at our borders or ignore clear inequities in Title 42’s implementation - inequities that were recently highlighted by [DHS’s explicit support for exempting Ukrainians](#) at our borders from Title 42. While we welcome this change, it stands in stark contrast to DHS’s treatment of black and brown migrants, who have been forced to wait in danger all the while.

We reject the notion that providing asylum seekers a fair opportunity to seek protection, as required under U.S. and international law, is an “unnecessary burden”.² It is a moral obligation and an opportunity for the U.S. to restore its reputation in the world. In our recent responses to global crises, we have demonstrated that we can rise to meet these difficult challenges. We must end Title 42 immediately and in its entirety and rebuild a safe, fair, and humane asylum system. Arizona Advocates stand ready to welcome asylum seekers and look forward to working with partners in the community and in the federal government to restore access to asylum.

¹ Letter from Senator Kyrsten Sinema and Senator Mark Kelly to President Joseph Biden (Mar. 24, 2022), *available at* <https://www.sinema.senate.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/Kelly-Sinema%20Letter%20to%20President%20Biden%20re%20Title%2042%20Planning%5B1%5D.pdf>.

² *Id.*