

Third Country Removals Dashboard

Mobile Pathways | Last updated May 18, 2026 | Data through April 2026

Methodology & Data Documentation

1. OVERVIEW

This dashboard tracks third-country removal orders issued in asylum cases each month in U.S. immigration courts, covering two categories. The first encompasses removals under Asylum Cooperative Agreements (ACAs), which authorize the United States to close an asylum case and order an individual's removal to a designated "safe third country" rather than their country of origin. When the government invokes an ACA, it may move for an immigration judge to pretermite the asylum application, denying the claim without a full hearing on the merits. **A current list of confirmed ACA signatory countries, maintained in partnership with Human Rights First and Refugees International, can be found [here](#).** The second captures other third-country removal orders – cases we identify in the EOIR dataset wherein an individual is ordered removed to a country that does not match their recorded nationality, but where no confirmed ACA agreement applies. Because ACA arrangements are fluid and inconsistently documented, this broader category ensures comprehensive coverage of all third-country removal activity. Monthly totals across both categories provide a measure of how access to asylum and due process protections are affected over time.

2. DASHBOARD STRUCTURE

The dashboard is organized into three sections, each providing a distinct view of third-country removal orders.

Section 1: Monthly ACA Pretermission Removal Orders

This section presents a month-by-month bar chart of confirmed ACA pretermission removal orders. It tracks only cases involving confirmed ACA signatory countries, as identified in collaboration with Human Rights First (hereinafter HRF) and Refugees International (hereinafter RI). Confirmed ACA countries currently include: Ecuador, Honduras, Guatemala, Paraguay, Belize, Liberia, Uganda, and Cabo Verde.

Chart display: The top three destination countries are shown as individually named segments; all remaining confirmed ACA destinations are grouped into a single "Other ACA Destinations" segment. This preserves the full count while surfacing the countries driving the majority of activity.

Available filters:

- Judge
- Court city
- Date range

Section 2: Case Breakdown

This section allows users to explore the composition of pretermission third-country removal cases through a configurable table.

User selections:

- View by: "Deported To" (ordered removal country) or "Originally From" (nationality)
- Country picklist: A selectable list of countries with recorded pretermission third-country removal cases
- Date range: From a selected start date through the most recent available data

Once selections are made, the table displays nationality, case count, and the filtered population's share of the total third country removal orders. This section includes all pretermission third-country removal cases regardless of whether the destination country is a confirmed ACA signatory.

Section 3: Flow Map — Nationality to Deportation Country

This section visualizes the volume and direction of pretermission removal orders as a Sankey-style flow map, showing movement from country of origin (nationality) to ordered removal destination.

Display parameters:

- Limited to cases with 20 or more orders, for readability
- Top 12 origin nationalities shown
- Top 8 destination countries shown

This section covers all pretermission third-country removal cases in the dataset, regardless of confirmed ACA status, to capture the full scope of observed enforcement flows. The flow map does not include filters; it reflects the full date range of available data and is not affected by judge or court city selections made elsewhere in the dashboard.

3. DATA SOURCE

Agency	Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), U.S. Department of Justice
How obtained	Proactive disclosure — EOIR publishes monthly case data extracts to its public FOIA Library (justice.gov/eoir/foia-library-0) pursuant to the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016
Primary tables	Proceedings table and Court Motions table (both pipe-delimited CSV files)

Date range	All available time periods included (records extend from the 1970s through the current release)
Release cadence	EOIR publishes updated extracts approximately monthly; this dashboard is refreshed mid-month for the prior month's data

4. DATA PROCESSING

- **Third-country removal classification logic:** Cases are identified as third-country removals when two conditions are met: (1) a granted motion to premit asylum is recorded in the Court Motions table, and (2) the respondent's nationality does not match the primary country of removal in the Proceedings table. This combined method produces a verifiable count and was developed in consultation with former immigration judges and other subject matter experts.
- **Confirmed ACA countries (Section 1 only):** Section 1 applies a filter to include only cases ordered to confirmed ACA signatory countries, as maintained in collaboration with HRF and RI. Sections 2 and 3 include all cases meeting the pretermission criteria regardless of whether the destination country is a confirmed ACA signatory, as ACA arrangements are not consistently defined or stable over time and this information is not captured as a structured variable in the EOIR source data.
- **Nationality filter:** All nationalities are included except records with a blank nationality field, which were excluded due to insufficient data to classify. Records with nationality coded as "??" (unknown) were retained.
- **Each record represents a single proceeding:** one individual may appear more than once if they have multiple proceedings.
- **Language:** Language can be applied as a filter, however, ACA agreements are inconsistent in their requirement of a shared language.

5. KEY DEFINITIONS

Premit / Pretermission	A procedural ruling by an immigration judge that bars an asylum claim from being heard on its merits, typically because the government has invoked a statutory bar such as an ACA. The claim is denied without a full hearing.
Confirmed ACA Country	A country with a formal Asylum Cooperative Agreement with the United States, as verified in collaboration with HRF. Currently includes: Ecuador, Honduras, Guatemala, Paraguay, Belize, Liberia, Uganda, and Cabo Verde. Used to filter Section 1 only. A current list of confirmed ACA signatory countries, maintained in partnership with Human Rights First and Refugees International, can be found here .
Nationality	The country of citizenship as recorded by EOIR. Records coded "??" indicate unknown nationality and are included in totals; blank values are excluded.
Removed to	The country to which an immigration judge has ordered a respondent removed. In the Proceedings table, judges may designate both a primary and an alternate country of removal; this dashboard uses the primary country-of-removal field. A mismatch between this field and the respondent's nationality is the basis for identifying an ACA third-country removal.
Month of Hearing Completion	"The date on which the immigration judge rendered a decision on the proceeding" (per EOIR definition) ("Comp Date").
Date of Entry	The date the respondent is recorded as having entered the United States, as reflected in EOIR's case records. This field is subject to known data entry variability — it reflects what was entered into the court system and may not always align with DHS entry records.

6. LIMITATIONS & KNOWN DATA GAPS

- **ACA Confirmation:** The EOIR data does not contain any field or flag that explicitly confirms or states that a ruling was made under an ACA agreement. The dashboard only identifies cases that would qualify for a third-country removal based on demographic information and a removal order to a country that is not of their primary nationality. Confirmed ACA country classification in Section 1 is applied by Mobile Pathways based on HRF-verified agreement status.
- **Nationality:** Records coded "??" cannot be attributed to a specific country. Blank nationality records are excluded, which may slightly undercount totals. EOIR records a single nationality even where individuals may have more than one.
- **Removal orders vs. actual removals:** This data reflects individuals ordered removed to a third country after granting a motion to premit. It does not confirm that a physical deportation has taken place.
- **Administrative completion lag:** The "Month of Hearing Completion" field reflects when administrative tasks are marked complete, not when the hearing occurred. Substantial gaps — sometimes spanning years — can exist between a hearing date and its recorded completion date.
- **Multiple Countries for Removal:** In the Proceedings table, judges may designate both a primary and an alternate country of removal. This dashboard relies on the primary country-of-removal field; however, the presence of multiple country designations in a single record can introduce complexity into the analysis. A mismatch between the primary country of removal and the respondent's nationality serves as the basis for identifying a third-country removal.
- **Data entry timeliness:** EOIR data entry is variable in timeliness and accuracy. Hearing dates and outcomes are entered by court staff and may be delayed or miscoded. Results cannot be fully validated at the individual record level; this is a known, systemic issue across the EOIR dataset.

- **Data corrections & updates:** EOIR data will vary from month to month, with recorded values and rows within the dataset changing across periods. These discrepancies are sometimes documented through an 'update date' field, but not consistently. Proceeding records, including bond amounts, may be changed or updated from a previous period without documentation.

7. ANALYTICAL DECISIONS

- **Third-country removal classification over motion tracking:** The methodology identifies third-country removal orders using both granted prepermit motions and nationality-removal country mismatch. This is more reliable than motion-only approaches.
- **Section 1 scope (Titled "Monthly ACA Pretermission Removal Orders"):** Section 1 is intentionally restricted to confirmed ACA countries to provide a clean signal of enforcement under formal ACA agreements. Sections 2 and 3 use the full pretermission dataset to ensure comprehensive coverage of third-country removal activity.
- **Section 2 country picklist:** Populates dynamically from all countries with at least one pretermission third-country removal order within the selected date range.
- **Section 3 flow map thresholds:** Cases with fewer than 20 orders are excluded for readability. The top 12 origin nationalities and top 8 destination countries are displayed; remaining flows are not shown. These thresholds may be adjusted in future releases.
- **Calendar month aggregation:** Data is displayed by calendar month (not fiscal year) to reflect real-time policy impacts as they emerge.
- **Nationality inclusion:** Blank nationalities are excluded (insufficient data to classify); "???" records are retained as they represent real cases with genuinely unknown nationality.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This methodology was developed in collaboration with Mobile Pathways, Human Rights First, Refugees International, Center for Gender and Refugee Studies, and a consortium of former immigration judges and subject matter experts.

9. QUESTIONS & FEEDBACK

Please submit your request or comments [here](#).