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# Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Inside C2

Tuesday, March 23 2021

## Biden sends envoys to Mexico, Guatemala asking help on migrant flow



WASHINGTON/MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - U.S. officials will ask authorities in Mexico and Guatemala to help stem migrant traffic, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said on Monday, as the Biden administration struggles to contain a burgeoning humanitarian challenge along the U.S. border with Mexico.

Migrants crowd a room with walls of plastic sheeting at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection temporary processing center in Donna, Texas, U.S. in a recent photograph released March 22, 2021. Office of Congressman Henry Cuellar (TX-28)/Handout via REUTERS

President Joe Biden dispatched U.S. envoys, including White House border coordinator Roberta Jacobson, to the two countries on Monday for talks on how to manage the increase in the number of migrants heading for the U.S.-Mexican border.

When asked if the U.S. delegation would seek support from local officials, Psaki told a news briefing:

"Absolutely, part of our objective as Roberta Jacobson, ...conveyed when she was in here just a few weeks ago, was that we need to work in partnership with these countries to address the root causes in their countries to

convey clearly and systematically that this is not the time to travel."

Jacobson was joined by Juan Gonzalez, the National Security Council's senior director for the Western Hemisphere, and Hondu-



White House spokeswoman Emily Horne said Jacobson's goal in Mexico is developing "an effective and humane plan of action to manage migration."

The visit was also announced by Mexico's foreign

ran-born diplomat Ricardo Zuniga, just appointed by the State Department as the Northern Triangle special envoy.

Gonzalez will continue to Guatemala to meet Guatemalan officials, as well as representatives from civil society and non-governmental organizations. Biden's promise to end former President Donald Trump's hardline immigration policies has been complicated by a recent spike in the number of migrants crossing

the border illegally.

The increase in the number of migrants fleeing violence, natural disasters and economic hardship in Central America is testing Biden's commitment to a more humane immigration policy.

ministry, which said the talks would take place on Tuesday.

Gonzalez' aim in Guatemala is to "address root causes of migration in the region and build a more hopeful future in the region," Horne said.

U.S. officials are struggling to house and process an increasing number of unaccompanied children, many of whom have been stuck in jail-like border stations for days while they await placement in overwhelmed govern-

ment-run shelters.

Biden has resisted calling the border drama a crisis despite Republicans' insistence that it fits the description.

"Children presenting at our border, who are fleeing violence, who are fleeing prosecution, who are fleeing terrible situations, is not a crisis," Psaki told reporters.

Biden and his team had a mixed message at the outset of the border woes, saying the border was closed but that unaccompanied children would be given care.

Psaki said the Biden administration has placed 17,118 radio ads in Spanish, Portuguese and 6 indigenous languages to discourage U.S.-bound migration from Central America and Brazil. She said 589 digital ads have also been placed. Mexico has beefed up law enforcement at its southern border to stem a sharp increase in migrants entering the country to head for the United States.

"The main issue to discuss will be cooperation for development in Central America and the south of Mexico, as well as the joint efforts for safe, orderly and regular migration," Roberto Velasco, the top official at the Mexican foreign ministry for North America, said on Twitter.

Representatives of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean will also attend the meeting, Velasco said.

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# WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

## CORONAVIRUS DIARY 03/22/2021



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### Stop Asian Hate Vigil & Rally

Just last Saturday the Asian groups in the Houston area hosted a rally at Houston's Downtown Discovery Green on the Grace Events Lawn. My news team and I attended this sad event with many Asians in the Houston area in

attendance. We heard a lot of community leaders and politicians making speeches and expressing their outrage about the murders in Atlanta, Georgia, where six of the



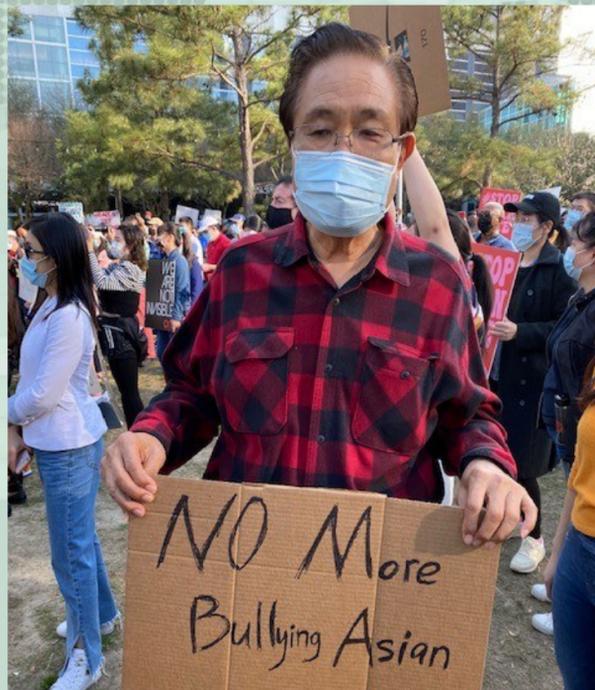
eight victims were Asian Americans. Even though President Biden and Vice President Harris went there to try and comfort our community, the fundamental problem is still there.

Now more and more poor people are suffering at the bottom of our society.

Today our community as a minority is facing the whole economic downturn directly. Many radical groups use us as a scapegoat. They are blaming Asians as the ones who are stealing their jobs and brought the virus to America.

When we look back, the political situation in our country and our race issues are related to our leaders and economic conditions. Because of the pandemic, many working class people lost their jobs which created a special poor class in the country. The political elite and a few of the wealthy class were in control of our society.

This is a very sad time. We all need to be united. We also need to depend on the wisdom of our leader to lead us to the brighter tomorrow.



**Southern DAILY** Make Today Different

### Editor's Choice



People hold placards during a "Stop Asian Hate" rally, following the deadly shootings, in Atlanta, Georgia. REUTERS/Shannon Stapleton



Migrants cross the Rio Bravo river to turn themselves in to U.S Border Patrol agents to request for asylum in El Paso, Texas, as seen from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. REUTERS/Jose Luis Gonzalez



Loretta Johnson prays during open prayer at the Faith Temple Church in the Fifth Ward, known as the historic Black community, in Evanston, Illinois. In 1955, Johnson was not allowed to be born at the local hospital in Evanston where her father worked, instead she was born at Cook County Hospital. REUTERS/Eileen T. Meslar



People mourn as they attend the funeral of Thet Paing Soe, who was shot and killed during a protest against the military coup in Yangon, Myanmar. REUTERS/Stringer



Firefighters pose for a selfie as they rest next to members of the National Guard, during a wildfire at the Sierra de Santiago, on the outskirts of Monterrey, Mexico. REUTERS/Daniel Becerril



U.S. President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden return to the White House after a trip to Camp David, in Washington. REUTERS/Erin Scott

## Biden Urges Unity Against Hate, Racism After Meeting With Asian American Leaders



President Biden and Vice President Harris at a COVID-19 briefing at the headquarters for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta on Friday.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

President Biden and Vice President Harris called for unity after attacks against Asian Americans have surged since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

“There are simply some core values and beliefs that should bring us together as Americans,” Biden said during a speech at Emory University in Atlanta on Friday. “One of them is standing together against hate, against racism, the ugly poison that has long haunted and plagued our nation.”

Biden’s remarks came three days after a gunman opened fire at three massage businesses in the Atlanta area, killing eight people, including six women of Asian descent. While the suspect, 21-year-old Robert Aaron Long of Georgia, told investigators that the shootings were not racially motivated, physical violence and verbal harassment against members of the Asian American community have spiked over the past year. “Whatever the motivation, we know this, too many Asian Americans walking up and down the streets are worried,” Biden said.

“They’ve been attacked, blamed, scapegoated, harassed, they’ve been verbally assaulted, physically assaulted, killed.” The president said that these incidents are evidence that “words have consequences.”



Flowers and signs adorn Gold Spa in Atlanta during a demonstration on Thursday opposing violence against women and Asians following this week’s deadly shootings in the area. (Photo/Megan Varner/Getty Images) Hate crimes against Asian Americans in the United States increased 149%

in 2020, according to the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism. That increase roughly tracks with the COVID-19 pandemic and former President Donald Trump’s efforts to blame China for spreading the coronavirus, repeatedly referring to it as the “China virus,” “China plague” and “Kung flu.” Harris, who joined Biden during the trip to Atlanta, called Tuesday’s shooting rampage a “heinous act of violence” that has no place in Georgia or the United States.

She also said that the uptick in anti-Asian hate crimes is a reminder that racism, xenophobia and sexism is real in America and “always has been.”

Biden and Harris met with local leaders of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community behind closed doors during their visit to Georgia’s capital. The president also called on Congress to pass the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act.

The previously planned visit to Atlanta had initially been intended as a victory lap for the passage of the president’s \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package, which won approval in the closely divided Senate thanks to Democratic victories in two Georgia runoff elections.

To honor the victims, Biden on Thursday ordered the U.S. flag to be flown at half-staff at the White House and all federal buildings and installations.

In Atlanta, Biden and Harris also visited the headquarters of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, where they received an update on efforts to fight COVID-19.



White House deputy press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters traveling on Air Force One that Biden will offer support for Asian Americans in the state and across the country and talk about his

commitment to battling xenophobia and hatred. The president wants to hear about the impact of the violent incident from local elected officials, she said. (Courtesy npr.com)

### Related

#### Asian Americans Grieve, Organize In Wake Of Atlanta Attacks

Asian Americans were already worn down by a year of pandemic-fueled racist attacks when a white gunman was charged with killing eight people, most of them Asian women, at three Atlanta-area massage businesses.

Hundreds of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders turned to social media to air their anger, sadness, fear and hopelessness. The hashtag #StopAsianHate was a top trending topic on Twitter hours after the shootings Tuesday evening.

“I think the reason why people are feeling so hopeless is because Asian Americans have been ringing the bell on this issue for so long... We’ve been raising the red flag,” said Aisha Yaqoob Mahmood, executive director of the Atlanta-based Asian American Advocacy Fund, which does political and advocacy work across Georgia.



Many also were outraged that the suspect, 21-year-old Robert Aaron Long, was not immediately charged with hate crimes. Authorities said Long told them the attack was not racially motivated and claimed that he targeted the spas because of a sex addiction. Six of the seven slain women were of Asian descent.

Mahmood said Asian American business owners in the Atlanta area were already fearful because of incidents like graffiti and break-ins. The shootings will raise that worry to new heights.

“A lot of Asian American business owners in the beauty parlor industry and food ser-

vice — these are often the most visible front-line faces in the community,” Mahmood said.

Meanwhile, from Phoenix to Philadelphia, Asian American organizations organized events aimed at showing unity. Asian Americans United, the Asian Pacific Islander Political Alliance and several other partner groups held a vigil Wednesday afternoon in Philadelphia’s Chinatown neighborhood.

For the past several weeks, Asian Americans have questioned how to deal with a recent wave of assaults — many on the elderly — that have coincided with the pandemic. The virus was first identified in China, and former President Donald Trump and others have used racial terms to describe it.



Numerous Asian American organizations say Trump’s rhetoric has emboldened people to express anti-Asian or anti-immigrant views. Nearly 3,800 incidents have been reported to Stop AAPI Hate, a California-based reporting center for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and its partner groups, since March 2020. Nationally, women reported hate crimes 2.3 times more than men.

Following the release Wednesday of a report showing a surge in white supremacist propaganda in 2020, the Anti-Defamation League told The Associated Press that a significant amount of the propaganda included anti-immigrant rhetoric.

“The path forward for us is really just standing together and making sure we don’t let these types of tragedies divide our communities.” (Courtesy apnews.com)

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# COMMUNITY

Wear Mask!

## WHO Points To Wildlife Farms In Southern China As Likely Source Of Pandemic



Bamboo rats are among the wild animals farmed for food in China and other parts of Asia. A member of the World Health Organization team investigating the coronavirus pandemic says its report will conclude that such animal farms are likely the place where the pandemic began. Above, a live rat is on sale at a food market in Myanmar. (Photo/Jerry Redfern/LightRocket via Getty Images)

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

A member of the World Health Organization investigative team says wildlife farms in southern China are the most likely source of the COVID-19 pandemic.

China shut down those wildlife farms in February 2020, says Peter Daszak, a disease ecologist with EcoHealth Alliance and a member of the WHO delegation that traveled to China this year. During that trip, Daszak says, the WHO team found new evidence that these wildlife farms were supplying vendors at the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan with animals.

Daszak told NPR that the government response was a strong signal that the Chinese government thought those farms were the most probable pathway for a coronavirus in bats in southern China to reach humans in Wuhan.

Those wildlife farms, including ones in the Yunnan region, are part of a unique project that the Chinese government has been promoting for 20 years now. “They take exotic animals, like civets, porcupines, pangolins, raccoon dogs and bamboo rats, and they breed them in captivity,” says Daszak.

The agency is expected to release the team’s investigative findings in the next two weeks. In the meantime, Daszak gave NPR a highlight of what the team figured out.



WHO officials inspect seafood market

ket at epicentre of the original coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan. A team led by the World Health Organization (WHO) visited the Huanan seafood market in Wuhan, China, on January 31, 2021, as part of a long-delayed mission to trace the origins of the pandemic. 14 scientists and WHO officials are spending a month in China as part of the investigation.

“China promoted the farming of wildlife as a way to alleviate rural populations out of poverty,” Daszak says. The farms helped the government meet ambitious goals of closing the rural-urban divide, as NPR reported last year.

“It was very successful,” Daszak says. “In 2016, they had 14 million people employed in wildlife farms, and it was a \$70 billion industry.”

Then on Feb. 24, 2020, right when the outbreak in Wuhan was winding down, the Chinese government made a complete about-face about the farms.

“What China did then was very important,” Daszak says. “They put out a declaration saying that they were going to stop the farming of wildlife for food.”

The government shut down the farms. “They sent out instructions to the farmers about how to safely dispose of the animals — to bury, kill or burn them — in a way that didn’t spread disease.”

Why would the government do this? Because, Daszak thinks, these farms could be the spot of spillover, where the coronavirus jumped from a bat into another animal and then into people. “I do think that SARS-CoV-2 first got into people in South China. It’s looking that way.”

First off, many farms are located in or around a southern province, Yunnan, where virologists found a bat virus that’s genetically 96% similar to SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes the disease COVID-19. Second, the farms breed animals that are known to carry coronaviruses, such as civet cats and pangolins. Finally, during the WHO’s mission to China, Daszak said the team found new evidence that these farms were supplying vendors at the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan, where an

early outbreak of COVID-19 occurred. The market was shut down overnight on Dec. 31, 2019, after it was linked to cases of what was then described as a mysterious pneumonia-like illness.



Members of the WHO mission to Wuhan meet Chinese officials

“There was massive transmission going on at that market for sure,” says Linfa Wang, a virologist who studies bat viruses at Duke-NUS Medical School in Singapore. He’s also part of the WHO investigative team. Wang says that after the outbreak at the Huanan market, Chinese scientists went there and looked for the virus.

“In the live animal section, they had many positive samples,” Wang says. “They even have two samples from which they could isolate live virus.” And so Daszak and others on the WHO team believe that the wildlife farms provided a perfect conduit between a coronavirus-infected bat in Yunnan (or neighboring Myanmar) and a Wuhan animal market.



Bamboo rats are prized for their ample flesh. This year was looking to be a good year for rat breeders like Liu Ping — consumption of the grilled delicacy was increasingly popular and prices were going up — until the coronavirus struck. (Photo Liu Ping)

“China closes that pathway down for a reason,” Daszak says. “The reason was, back in February 2020, they believed this was the most likely pathway [for the coronavirus to spread to Wuhan]. And when the WHO report comes out ... we believe it’s the most likely pathway too.” The next step, says Daszak, is to figure out specifically which animal carried the virus and at which of the many wildlife farms. (Courtesy npr.org)



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