



659 KNOWN, SUSPECTED TERRORISTS CAPTURED IN FISCAL 2023, MOST IN RECORDED HISTORY - THE CENTER SQUARE

Posted on October 11, 2023 by Bethany Blankley | The Center Square



Majority are coming through northern border

More known or suspected terrorists have been apprehended at the northern and southwest borders in fiscal 2023 than any other fiscal year in recorded history.

In fiscal 2023, 659 known or suspected terrorists (KSTs) were apprehended attempting to illegally enter the U.S. - with the majority being apprehended at the northern border, according to [CBP data](#) last updated Sept. 15. The fiscal year ended Sept. 30.

In fiscal 2023, 432 KSTs were apprehended at the northern border compared to 227 at the southwest border, totaling 659, the greatest number in recorded history.

These numbers don't include [gotaways](#), which are believed to also include KSTs. "Gotaways" is the official U.S. Customs and Border Patrol term that refers to those who illegally enter the U.S. between ports of entry, don't return to Mexico or Canada, and are not apprehended. They total at least nearly 1.7 million since January 2021.

With people illegally entering the U.S. from over 170 countries, former ICE Chief Tom Homan told The Center Square some of these countries they are coming from are sponsors of terrorism.

"If you don't think a single one of the 1.7 million is coming from a country that sponsors terrorism, then you're ignoring the data," he said. "That's what makes this a huge national security issue."

KSTs are primarily apprehended two different ways by two different federal agents. Office of Field Operations (OFO) agents, who work at land ports of entry, are tasked with stopping "inadmissibles," or illegal foreign nationals, KSTs and a range of other people or contraband prior to entering the U.S.

Border Patrol agents work between ports of entry, patrolling the border to apprehend foreign nationals who've already illegally entered the U.S.

OFO agents working at northern ports of entry have apprehended more than those at southwest ports of entry in four out of the last

seven fiscal years. OFO agents have also historically apprehended more KSTs at ports of entry than Border Patrol agents between ports of entry due to varying factors.



In fiscal 2023, OFO agents apprehended 429 KSTs at northern border ports of entry and 76 KSTs at southwest border land ports of entry, totaling 505 at ports of entry at both borders.

Border Patrol agents apprehended 151 KSTs between ports of entry along the southwest border and three between ports of entry along the northern border, totaling 154.

The Terrorist Screening Dataset is the federal database that contains sensitive information on terrorist identities, CBP said. It originated as a consolidated terrorist watchlist “to house information on known or suspected terrorists but evolved over the last decade to include additional individuals who represent a potential threat to the United States, including known affiliates of watchlisted individuals.”

By comparison, OFO and Border Patrol agents combined apprehended a total of 478 KSTs in fiscal 2022, 173 in fiscal 2021, 199 in fiscal 2020, 541 in fiscal 2019, 357 in fiscal 2018, and 353 in fiscal 2017.