MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL

FROM: Juan Osuna  
Director, Executive Office for Immigration Review

RE: Status Report on the Role of the Executive Office for Immigration Review in the Interagency Response to the Southwest Border Situation

DATE: July 6, 2014

This is the latest update on how EOIR is responding to the surge of border crossings in Texas. Two weeks ago EOIR began reassigning immigration judges, either in person or by video teleconference (VTC), in the following four Texas locations: Port Isabel (near Harlingen), Pearsall (near San Antonio), Houston and El Paso. With the exception of one courtroom in El Paso, this deployment has gone smoothly.

Since it has become evident that addressing the surge will require a reconfiguration of the entire immigration court system, we have reset the priorities in the system. From now on, the following four types of cases will be the highest priority for the immigration courts: unaccompanied children; detained cases involving families; cases involving families released on alternatives to detention (such as electronic monitoring) and other detained cases. These priorities have been communicated to all immigration courts.

We also have immigration judges available to begin hearing cases of persons detained by ICE in Artesia, New Mexico, the new detention center opened to detain families. Unfortunately, while we made judges available on July 2 with the expectation that they would begin hearing Artesia cases, no cases were available. ICE has indicated that this week will be different, and that our judges can expect to be receiving cases as early as tomorrow (July 7). We understand that ICE is also preparing other detention sites in various parts of the country for families. We will reassign immigration judges to those facilities as needed as soon as we hear from ICE where those detention centers will be located.