

## IMMIGRATION &amp; MIGRATION

# Trump administration shuts down CBP One app after inauguration, leaving Haitian migrants in limbo

*The sudden decision to end the border app disrupts legal pathways for migrants, including thousands of Haitians fleeing instability*



BY THE HAITIAN TIMES  
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Vice President J.D. Vance, center, stands with President Donald Trump, far right, and Sen. Amy Klobuchar, far left, during Trump's inauguration as the 47th president of the United States at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 20, 2025.

## Overview:

On his first day in office, President Donald Trump ordered the immediate shutdown of the CBP One app, which had been a critical tool for asylum seekers and migrants to schedule legal border appointments. The move leaves thousands of Haitian migrants, who relied on the app as a safer way to seek refuge, uncertain about their future as legal entry pathways shrink.

In a swift and sweeping move just hours after being sworn in, President Donald Trump ordered the immediate shutdown of the **CBP One app**, a digital tool that had become a vital lifeline for migrants seeking legal entry into the United States. The decision, announced on the Customs and Border Protection website shortly after Trump's inauguration, canceled appointments for migrants attempting to cross the southern border legally.

“Effective January 20, 2025, the functionalities of CBP One™ that previously allowed undocumented aliens to submit advance information and schedule appointments at eight southwest border ports of entry is no longer available, and existing appointments have been canceled,” U.S. Customs and Border Protection published on the CBP One website.

Haitian migrants are among the groups affected by the app's closure. For many, the CBP One app provided an important option for navigating the U.S. immigration process, allowing them to schedule appointments at border ports of entry. About 1 million people have been able to legally enter the United States through the app with already having work eligibility. This tool offered a safer and more organized pathway for migrants fleeing challenges such as political instability, violence, and economic hardship, while also helping U.S. officials streamline border processing.

## The shutdown's immediate impact

The CBP One app, introduced by U.S. Customs and Border Protection in 2020, provided a digital platform for migrants to submit their information and schedule appointments at eight designated U.S.-Mexico border crossings. Each day, up to 1,450 migrants were granted **appointments** under the program, which facilitated asylum claims and parole requests. For Haitian migrants, who often face discrimination or dangerous conditions while traveling through Central and South America, the app was a crucial resource.

However, Trump's order has now canceled all existing appointments, leaving thousands of migrants in limbo. The abrupt nature of the shutdown means that many Haitian families who had already traveled to border towns in Mexico are now stranded without a clear alternative.

## Legal entry pathways narrow further

The CBP One app was part of a broader effort to bring order to the asylum process at the southern border. By organizing migrant entry through a structured system, the app aimed to reduce overcrowding and chaos at ports of entry, while also ensuring that U.S. immigration authorities could vet applicants before allowing them to cross.

Its termination is the latest in a series of restrictive immigration measures announced by the Trump administration, including plans to reinstate the “Remain in Mexico” policy, which forces asylum seekers to wait in Mexico during their legal proceedings. These moves reflect Trump’s campaign promises to tighten immigration controls, though critics argue they also dismantle legal avenues for those fleeing violence and persecution.

“I will declare a national emergency at our southern border. All illegal entry will immediately be halted, and we will begin the process of returning millions and millions of criminal aliens back to the places in which they came,” said Trump during his inauguration.

Haitian migrants have faced unique challenges amid these policy shifts. Haiti’s ongoing crises—including the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, escalating gang control, and the aftermath of natural disasters like the 2021 earthquake—have driven tens of thousands to flee the country. For many, the CBP One app represented a safer and more dignified way to seek refuge in the U.S.

## Misinformation and political rhetoric

The CBP One app has also been at the center of heated political debates, with critics falsely claiming that it created a “loophole” for migrants to bypass immigration laws. During the vice-presidential debate on Oct. 1, Republican Senator J.D. Vance argued that the app effectively “waves in” Haitian migrants, a claim immigration experts have debunked.

In reality, the app required migrants to meet strict legal standards for asylum or humanitarian parole. CBP officers retained full authority to accept or deny applications based on the merits of each case. The app did not guarantee entry or legal status but rather provided a more organized framework for processing migrants at the border.

For Haitians, the loss of the app adds another layer of uncertainty to an already precarious journey.



**Janet H Brackett**

Jan. 20, 2025 at 5:14 pm

What a horrible man. Shame on the USA for putting him in charge.

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## Carol Yost

Jan. 20, 2025 at 9:23 pm

This is terrible. We all knew Trump was very, very bad. It unfortunately comes as no surprise. We have to fight back with every tool in the box.

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Jan. 20, 2025 at 9:42 pm

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