



**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

Muriel Bowser

Mayor

Dr. Christopher Rodriguez

Director

July 19, 2022

Executive Secretariat
Office of the Secretary of Defense

To the Executive Secretariat,

On behalf of DC Mayor Muriel Bowser, I am writing to request the assistance of the DC National Guard (DCNG) to help prevent a prolonged humanitarian crisis in the nation's capital. As you know, in April, Texas Governor Greg Abbott and Arizona Governor Doug Ducey announced they would bus migrants from the southern border to Washington, DC in defiance of the Biden Administration's pledge to lift former President Trump's pandemic restriction policy, Title 42, which reduced the number of migrants entering the United States. In the nearly four months since, the nation's capital has encountered over 4,000 individuals arriving on nearly 200 buses. As a city, we have supported the multiple NGOs that have stepped up to meet and care for arriving migrants and facilitated nearly \$1 million in FEMA grants for the lead NGO's staffing, facilities, and transportation.

In the last month, however, the pace of arriving buses and the volume of arrivals have reached tipping points. Our collective response and service efforts have now become overwhelmed: the regional welcome center we helped establish in Montgomery County, Maryland is at capacity; our homeless services system is already under great strain; and tragically, many families arrive in Washington, DC with nowhere to go, or they remain in limbo seeking onward destinations across the United States. With pledges from Texas and Arizona to continue these abhorrent operations indefinitely, the situation is dire, and we consider this a humanitarian crisis—one that could overwhelm our social support network without immediate and sustained federal intervention.

Immigration is a federal issue, one that needs to be addressed by the federal government with federal resources. The federal grantee requires immediate federal assistance. To help address this humanitarian crisis, on behalf of Mayor Bowser and at her direction, I am requesting immediate DCNG support in a Joint Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration (JRSOI) mission in Washington, DC. This request falls squarely within DCNG's humanitarian mission set and has been implemented for Guard missions across the nation during natural and manmade emergencies. Specifically, we seek 150 DCNG personnel per day to assist the lead NGO with staffing, utilizing shift schedules to cover a 24/7 operation. Further, we request the use of DCNG transportation assets to shuttle migrants to a temporary processing center at the DC Armory—or another suitable federal location in the National Capital Region such as Joint Base Bolling or Fort McNair—for reception and eventual onward movement to their final destinations. These functions are not dissimilar to the use of military personnel and facilities for other humanitarian missions, including assisting Afghan refugees.

This mission would begin as soon as possible and continue indefinitely until the city relieves them. As with all missions, DCNG personnel will not be involved in domestic surveillance or law enforcement-related activities, nor should they be armed. The Federal Tort Claims Act, 28 U.S.C. 2671-2680, is applicable to National Guard serving under Title 32 orders. Therefore, all DCNG members acting within the course and scope of their duties for purposes of this mission possess civil liability protection.

To be clear, I recognize the magnitude of this request. But the Governors of Texas and Arizona are making a political statement to the federal government, and instead, their actions are having direct impacts on city and regional resources in ways that are unsustainable. The situation we collectively find ourselves in necessitates a whole-of-community response, with DCNG support. DCNG has been there for our local community for prolonged missions in the past, most recently for the COVID-19 pandemic. This humanitarian crisis is no less important. A JRSOI mission and use of the DC Armory or another federal facility are essential to stabilizing our operating environment as we support migrants arriving in the nation's capital.

You may call or email me with any questions. I will be your point of contact for this mission.

Sincerely,



Dr. Christopher Rodriguez
Director of HSEMA