

Criteria Defining Cases That Are Presumed to be Priorities

Priority Category 1: National Security. A noncitizen is *presumed* to be a national security enforcement and removal priority if:

- 1) he or she has engaged in or is suspected of engaging in terrorism or terrorism-related activities;
- 2) he or she has engaged in or is suspected of engaging in espionage or espionage-related activities;⁴ or
- 3) his or her apprehension, arrest, or custody is otherwise necessary to protect the national security of the United States.

In evaluating whether a noncitizen’s “apprehension, arrest, or custody is otherwise necessary to protect” national security, officers and agents should determine whether a noncitizen poses a threat to United States sovereignty, territorial integrity, national interests, or institutions. General criminal activity does not amount to a national security threat (as distinguished from a public safety threat) and is discussed below.

Priority Category 2: Border Security. A noncitizen is *presumed* to be a border security enforcement and removal priority if:

- 1) he or she was apprehended at the border or a port of entry while attempting to unlawfully enter the United States on or after November 1, 2020⁵; or
- 2) he or she was not physically present in the United States before November 1, 2020.

To be clear, the border security priority includes any noncitizen who unlawfully entered the United States on or after November 1, 2020.

Priority Category 3: Public Safety. A noncitizen is *presumed* to be a public safety enforcement and removal priority if he or she poses a threat to public safety and:

- 1) he or she has been convicted of an aggravated felony as defined in section 101(a)(43) of the INA⁶; or

⁴ For purposes of the national security enforcement priority, the terms “terrorism or terrorism-related activities” and “espionage or espionage-related activities” should be applied consistent with (1) the definitions of “terrorist activity” and “engage in terrorist activity” in section 212(a)(3)(B)(iii)-(iv) of the INA, and (2) the manner in which the term “espionage” is generally applied in the immigration laws.

⁵ The statutory mandates in Section 235 of the INA (regarding asylum seekers) continue to apply to noncitizens.

⁶ This criterion tracks Congress’s prioritization of aggravated felonies for immigration enforcement actions. Whether an individual has been convicted of an aggravated felony is a complex question that may involve securing and analyzing a host of conviction documents, many of which may not be immediately available to officers and agents. Even when all conviction documents are available, whether a conviction is for an aggravated felony may be a novel question under applicable law. Accordingly, in deciding whether a noncitizen has been convicted of an