

JULY 15, 2019



Speak Out Now

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Stop the Abuse! Close the Camps!

Imagine your three-year old child being ripped from your arms and caged in a prison with other terrified children. Your kidnapped child is then sent to live with a family of total strangers for several months, or even years. They cry inconsolably for days on end, begging to see you. You have no way to communicate with them, and all attempts to connect with your child are ignored by the authorities. This is the situation many families find themselves in at the U.S. border. It's child abuse, plain and simple – the U.S. government is terrorizing innocent children and families.

The government reports that nearly 3,000 children have been separated from their parents, but investigative journalists say the number is likely far higher. The Trump administration claims it will take *two years* to reunite children and their families. Not two weeks, not two months...two years!

In total, the government detained over 396,000 people in 2018, most of whom are first imprisoned in detention centers run by the Customs and Border Patrol (CBP). The temperature in these camps is so cold that immigrants refer to them as "*hieleras*," or iceboxes. Lights are left on 24 hours a day, and people are given a single foil blanket to stave off the bitter cold. Due to a lack of beds, many end up sleeping on the concrete floor.

There are camps with no soap, toothpaste, or toothbrushes. In some cases, there are no diapers, so babies are left to soil their own clothes. Adults have been held in standing-room only conditions for up to a week at a time. In some cells, the crowding is so severe that people are forced to stand on top of toilets. There is often no access to laundry or showers, so men, women and children spend up to a month in the same clothes. As a result, an overwhelming stench hangs in the air.

Private prison companies run these prisons and profit from this humanitarian crisis, getting millions of dollars for warehousing human beings whose

only crime is their very existence. If anyone should be locked up, it's those who are responsible for creating these camps.

Some Democrats have voiced opposition to the camps, but have taken no real action – using this situation for their own political purposes. And the Democrats are just as responsible as the Republicans. They set the stage for the attacks on people fleeing to the U.S. In 1994, it was Clinton who ordered the construction of the border wall, a strategy which pushes people into the most dangerous terrain when trying to cross the border. More than 7,000 people have died since then. Obama deported more undocumented immigrants than any president in U.S. history: 2.6 million in total, almost 900 people per day! In 2013 alone, more than 72,000 children lost their parents to deportation under the Obama administration.

While Obama tried to downplay the impact of his policies, Trump has boasted about deportations in an attempt to divide workers and reinforce his racist, nationalist messages. Trump has escalated the situation and magnified this crime against humanity. He gleefully tweeted that if people disliked the conditions in the concentration camps, "Just tell them not to come. All problems solved!"

Trump has announced massive immigration raids starting last weekend. They haven't happened - yet. Instead he launched a racist attack on Ocasio-Cortez and other newly elected Democrats who have denounced his policies.

We cannot allow the humanitarian disaster at the southern border to be carried out in our name. We have to oppose these camps and the attacks on those who don't have official documentation in every way we can. The people coming here – fleeing terror and poverty, seeking a better life – are not our enemies. Our enemies are those who are responsible for the crises in the world and this horrific crisis on the border - the big banks and the big corporations.