

America's Barbaric Policies Against Migrants and Their Children

By [Massoud Nayeri](#)

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Light needs to be shed on the horrifying conditions of asylum seekers and the issue of "missing" immigrant children who are in custody of the U.S. government. A discussion or dialogue needs to take place by democratic-minded people and peace and justice activists on how to organize to bring an end to the brutality against the undocumented immigrants, asylum seekers and of course their children. The dire situation of a desperate people who have escaped gang violence in their home countries (mostly from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala) ending up confined in the hellish U.S. detention centers is getting worse. Among them, the voiceless and powerless children are the most ill-treated ones. The shocking abusive treatment of these children in the custody of the U.S. government authorities and their inhumane conditions are ongoing but hidden from the American people.

Recently Steven Wagner, Acting Assistant Secretary at Health and Human Services (HHS) for Children and Families told a Senate subcommittee that the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) has lost track of almost 1,500 unaccompanied immigrant children who were placed in foster care.

This admission unwrapped years of cruel and illegal conduct by the Obama administration which has been continued by the Trump administration. The "missing children" news was already a damaging factor to the Democratic Party since it was their policy to release the unaccompanied immigrant children to the relatives, sponsors or foster families. However it got worse when Jon Favreau (Mr. Obama's speechwriter) and other Democratic Party functionaries posted a 2014 photo showing immigrant kids laying in cages as evidence of today's Trump "Concentration Camp". Naturally President Trump immediately tweeted and reminded his critics that the "steel cage" and photos belong to Mr. Obama.

By now, the secret was out and the American people were able to see a glimpse of the barbaric treatment of innocent migrated children in the U.S. detention facilities. This was an embarrassment to all Democrats who portrayed themselves as the true defenders and protectors of immigrants. They desperately gave all kinds of excuses to correct their mistakes but mainly to cover up the past. Meanwhile the fascistic-minded President Trump and his Attorney General announced their own malicious and illegal "Zero Tolerance" policy. This policy declares that asylum seekers will be treated as criminal because they have violated the U.S. laws of crossing the borders illegally, therefore they were to be detained separately without their children.

"If you are smuggling a child, then we will prosecute you and that child will be separated from you" said Mr. Sessions during a press conference at the U.S.-Mexico border near San Diego.

The Democratic Party operatives upon this announcement quickly strategized and found the opportunity to narrow down the discussion only to the issue of the separation of the children of the asylum seekers from their parents. They literally asked their supporters to STOP talking about the “misinterpreted missing children” and just concentrate on the “separation” issue.

Josie Duffy Rice, a recognized lawyer and journalist in her “public service announcement” said:

“PLEASE STOP SHARING THAT STORY ABOUT 1500 KIDS MISSING.... There are two things going on. 1) HHS doesn’t know where 1500 unaccompanied minors are. 2) We are separating parents and children at the border.” She assured us that the children **“aren’t missing. Some unanswered phone calls does not a missing child make”**. She also said if the released children **“are no longer ORR’s responsibility or problem. THIS IS A GOOD THING. ... ORR is basically a jailer. Do you want the jail keeping track of where every former inmate is?”**

Unfortunately this twisted logic was effective and the issue of the “missing children” was dropped. Most immigrant advocates sympathetic to the Democratic Party, rallied, organized meetings and tweeted around the question of “separation” as the major immigration problem and proposed by voting for the “right” candidates (Democratic Party candidates) in coming elections, there is a chance to fix the awful immigration problems.

The fact is that both issues of the “missing children” and “separation” of children from parents actually are two ends of one terrifying experience for migrants and Asylum seekers. The independent peace and justice activists don’t separate these two issues, since these are interlinked problems. When a frightened child forcefully is separated from the arms of her or his crying mother, that child immediately is dealt with as an unaccompanied child and generally after days of being detained under the custody of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are put in facilities under the supervision of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) -a division of Health and Human Services.

Jennifer Podkul, director of policy at Kids in Need of Defense, that advocates for the rights of unaccompanied minors in the US says:

“When they apprehend the parent, he or she goes over to the US Marshals, and the government has essentially created an unaccompanied minor [by separating the child]. They are treated just like any child who arrives by themselves. So it was unaccompanied minors that HHS didn’t make contact with over the phone, and now they’re putting an incredible burden on HHS by adding 700 new unaccompanied children to that population. ... Right now, under this administration, there is a climate of fear. Parents and families that are undocumented might be scared to pick up the phone. The administration has specifically targeted sponsors of unaccompanied minors. They did raids against them last year. ”

The fact that HHS is overwhelmed with the new situation and at the same time refuses to be legally responsible for the “missing children” is another reason to make sure that the children are safe after they are released to sponsors and do not become missing numbers and have to live in the shadows without any rights and vulnerable to all kind of

unimaginable abuses. No one wants to see the children end up in the hands of the human traffickers as it happened during Mr. Obama administration. Ron Nixon of the New York Times reports:

“Two years ago [2016] the subcommittee released a report detailing how health and human services officials placed eight children with human traffickers who forced the minors to work on an egg farm in Marion, Ohio. The report found that department officials had failed to establish procedures to protect the unaccompanied minors, such as conducting sufficient background checks on potential sponsors and following up with sponsors. As a result, the children were turned over to the people who contracted them out to the egg farm. ... Allison E. Herre, a lawyer with Catholic Charities of Southwestern Ohio, said she had seen sponsors who forced the children to work instead of attending school and who failed to ensure that the children attended their court proceedings.”

In the Trump anti-immigrant era the situation is getting worse. There are many informative articles that are available on social media to help us understand the barbaric treatments that migrants are facing today. One of the MUST read articles is the “Hidden Horrors of ‘Zero Tolerance’ — Mass Trials and Children Taken From Their Parents” article by Debbie Nathan published by the Intercept. She masterfully describes the strange procedures in the Federal Courthouse, Pecos, Texas; which are unusual and frightening. She writes:

“The courtroom was filled with exhausted immigrants, with hands cuffed and shackled to their waists, their legs in chains — dozens of defendants stumbling, shuffling, clanking, and clanging in tandem. ‘Raise your right hand,’ [Judge Ronald G.] Morgan commanded as a translator spoke Spanish into their headphones. The shackled defendants struggled to comply. ... A young father then said he’d been separated from his 6-year-old and was very worried. ... One woman who spoke about her children in open court was from Honduras. ‘Is my little girl going to go with me when I get deported?’ she asked [Judge] Morgan.”

Unfortunately, the world is witnessing many atrocities and injustices against the children from Palestine and Yemen to the Rohingya children in Myanmar and elsewhere; however today the inhumane treatments of the migrants and their children in the U.S. is very alarming for Americans democratic values. As Martin Luther King Jr. said:

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

True peace and justice activists defend the rights of migrants and their children independent of the Democratic and Republican Party. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) May 2018 report*: “Neglect and Abuse of Unaccompanied Immigrant Children by U.S. Customs and Border Protection” is helpful to understand how important it is to bring an end to the barbaric policies of the Democratic and Republican Parties against migrant and their children as soon as possible. In part the report reads:

“A 16-year-old minor in CBP custody with her infant reported that a Border Patrol agent stood near the door of her holding cell and told her, in Spanish,

‘right now, we close the door, we rape you and fuck you.’ ... Another minor reported that after being apprehended by Border Patrol agents, she was put into a room for questioning. Then four agents came into the room, removed their name badges, and threatened to send her to a separate building with another agent. ... The agents informed her that they would not be responsible for whatever happened to her there, and the young woman understood them to be threatening her.”

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Massoud Nayeri is a graphic designer and an independent peace activist based in the United States. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

Note:

*[The Intercept](#)

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