

‘Horrific’ Immigration Policy: In Dead of Night, Trump Administration Transferring Children to Tent Camp with No Schooling and Limited Legal Services

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“A reminder that the Trump administration is diverting money away from Head Start, the National Cancer Institute, the HIV/AIDS programs, maternal and child health programs, and the CDC to pay for these human rights abuses.”

With detention facilities overflowing due to President Donald Trump’s monstrous immigration policies—which have sent the number of children detained by the U.S. government [soaring to a record 12,800](#)—the Trump administration is reportedly carrying out dead-of-night “mass transfers” of children from foster homes and shelters to a crowded Texas tent camp, where they have no schooling and limited access to legal services.

[According to](#) the *New York Times*, more than 1,600 “migrant children have been roused in the middle of the night in recent weeks and loaded onto buses with backpacks and snacks for a cross-country journey to their new home: a barren tent city on a sprawling patch of desert in South Texas.”

The *Times* continued:

Until now, most undocumented children being held by federal immigration authorities had been housed in private foster homes or shelters, sleeping two or three to a room. They received formal schooling and regular visits with legal representatives assigned to their immigration cases.

But in the rows of sand-colored tents in Tornillo, Tex., children in groups of 20, separated by gender, sleep lined up in bunks. There is no school: The children are given workbooks that they have no obligation to complete. Access to legal services is limited.

While the Tornillo tent camp was originally opened for just a short period in June to accommodate the growing number of children the Trump administration was ripping from their parents’ arms and locking up, the “pop-up city” was expanded last month to be able to hold 3,800 children.

“A reminder that the Trump administration is diverting money away from Head Start, the National Cancer Institute, the HIV/AIDS programs, maternal and child health programs, and the CDC to pay for these human rights abuses,” Melissa Boteach of the Center for American Progress [pointed out](#), citing a recent Yahoo News [report](#) that found the White House is taking hundreds of millions of

dollars from key programs to fund its mass detention and deportation policies.

Citing shelter workers who requested anonymity for fear of being fired, the *Times* reported on Sunday that the transfers from shelters throughout the country to the Tornillo tent camp “are carried out late at night because children will be less likely to try to run away. For the same reason, children are generally given little advance warning that they will be moved.”

“Obviously we have concerns about kids falling through the cracks, not getting sufficient attention if they need attention, not getting the emotional or mental health care that they need,” said Leah Chavla, a lawyer with the Women’s Refugee Commission, told the *Times* in an interview. This cannot be the right solution. We need to focus on making sure that kids can get placed with sponsors and get out of custody.”

On waking children up and whisking them away on “midnight voyages” to military tent camps:

“In order to avoid escape attempts, the moves are carried out late at night because the children will be less likely to try to run away.”

Haunting. <https://t.co/KmN6tuZ3pO>

— Adam Klasfeld (@KlasfeldReports) [September 30, 2018](#)

Horrific. Migrant children being moved to *tent camps* in the middle of the night. No schooling. 2018 in the richest country on Earth. <https://t.co/GNZI6xGUqn>

— Brian Klaas (@brianklaas) [September 30, 2018](#)

While the Trump administration’s mass separation and detention of immigrant families sparked outrage at home and throughout the world earlier this year, the fact that hundreds of children remain separated from their families months after the White House’s “zero tolerance” policy [supposedly ended](#) has [slipped from the headlines](#) amid the day-to-day chaos of the Trump era.

“Please remember there are 13,000 migrant children in detention. We can’t forget about them,” immigrant rights activist Julissa Arce [wrote](#) in response to the *Times* report.

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