

Hundreds More Immigrant Children Detained Than Previously Reported

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On Thursday, Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Alex Azar told reporters that the number of immigrant children separated from their parents was around 3,000—50 percent higher than the 2,000 previously reported. Many of these children have been separated from their parents for weeks.

According to Azar, 101 of the children are under the age of five. The Justice Department reported that of the youngest children, 16 have not yet been linked to any parents, while the parents of 19 children have already been deported. The government is unable to locate the parents of another 19 children. It is likely that many will never see their children again.

Earlier on Thursday, Commander Jonathan White, HHS assistant secretary for preparedness and response, reported that the government was performing DNA tests of immigrant children to test whether those seeking their liberation from detention were their biological parents.

The compilation of a DNA database of immigrant children calls to mind the types of measures employed by the Nazis against Jews and other “undesirables.” And those few parents who have been able to free their children have been forced to pay for the cost of relocation—often thousands of dollars—echoing the Nazi requirement that the relatives of those shot pay for the bullets.

Late Thursday night, the Trump administration filed a motion requesting an extension of a court deadline requiring the government to reunite children with their parents. The administration claimed that more time was needed to genetically test immigrant children and locate their parents. A judge responded by saying he needed more time to consider the administration’s request, meaning the children will remain in limbo.

Though the media reported Trump’s announcement of an “end” to family separation last month as an “about face” and a “reversal,” only a handful of detained children have been united with their parents. The *Los Angeles Times* wrote of one mother’s letter about her detained son:

“It’s been a month since they snatched him away and there are moments when I can’t go on... If they are going to deport me, let them do it—but with my child. Without him, I am not going to leave here.”

The Trump administration has responded to growing popular protest by defending the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

agencies and ramping-up its inflammatory xenophobic rhetoric.

On Thursday, Trump tweeted:

“Every day, the brave men and women of ICE are liberating communities from savage gangs like MS-13. We will NOT stand for these vile Democrat smears in law enforcement. We will always stand proudly with the BRAVE HEROES of ICE and BORDER PATROL!”

He reiterated his demand that immigrants be stripped of all due process rights, tweeting,

“Tell the people “OUT,” and they must leave, just as they would if they were standing on your front lawn. Hiring thousands of ‘judges’ does not work and is not acceptable – only Country in the World that does this!”

He also tweeted,

“A vote for Democrats in November is a vote to let MS-13 run wild in our communities, to let drugs pour into our cities, and to take jobs and benefits away from hardworking Americans. Democrats want anarchy, amnesty and chaos—Republicans want LAW, ORDER and JUSTICE!”

Trump’s denunciation of Democrats for being “pro-immigrant” is a farce. Those Democrats who have spoken about “abolishing” ICE have clarified that this does not mean putting an end to deportation and mass detention of immigrants. On the contrary, Democrats seek to return to the policies of the Obama administration, when a record 2.7 million immigrants were deported and hundreds of thousands of parents were torn from their children.

Responding to Trump’s claim that Democrats support abolishing borders, Minority Leader Charles Schumer tweeted on June 21,

“Open borders, @realDonaldTrump? The bipartisan immigration bill I authored had \$40 billion for border security and would have been far more effective than the wall.”

Vice President Mike Pence gave a televised address at ICE headquarters yesterday, calling the American immigration Gestapo “American heroes” and proclaiming: “We will never abolish ICE.” He denounced those who are demanding the agency’s abolition, stating:

“The American people have a right to their opinions, but these spurious attacks on ICE by our political leaders must stop. The type of language that’s being used to describe the men and women in this agency and the work that you do every day is unacceptable.”

Behind the rhetoric aimed at shoring up institutional support for the US deportation forces, the government is rapidly militarizing ICE and preparing for a new round of mass raids. According to a July 3 report by Ken Kippenstein of the *Young Turks*,

ICE “is quietly training its deportation officers in the use of weapons more familiar to the US military than to domestic law enforcement, federal records show.”

Citing federal procurement records and contracts, Kippenstein reported that

ICE’s “enforcement and Removal Officers are being trained in the use of M4 assault rifles, chemical agents, stun grenades, and flash bangs.”

The M4 is the primary service weapon of the US Marine Corps. ICE and CBP have recently doubled their M4 contracts, acquiring 8,000 assault rifles, records show.

“Sounds like they’re getting ready for war,” former ICE agent Rob Uribe Alvarez told the *Young Turks*.

In June, the *Young Turks* reported that

“ICE had retained a former CIA interrogator to train agents in handling ‘terrorist suspects.’”

In a further sign the government is preparing to use the military to raid immigrant neighborhoods, the military has begun discharging dozens of immigrants. The Associated Press reported Thursday that dozens of “US Army reservists and recruits who enlisted in the military with a path to citizenship are being abruptly discharged.”

Some recruits were told they posed “security risks because they have relatives abroad,” AP reported.

Hector Barajas, a military veteran who was deported from the US, told the *World Socialist Web Site*:

“Just like with the mistreatment of immigrant children, this has been going on since the Obama administration, only now it is worse and the government is more blunt.”

Barajas, who fought in the Persian Gulf War, was allowed to return only in April after a years-long struggle to win re-admittance to his home country.

“I’ve been deported for 14 years,” he said. “There’s always been anti-immigrant sentiment, whether against the Italians, Irish or whoever. Now it’s Hispanics mostly. Right now, they say immigrants are causing problems by crossing borders. How many people did Obama deport? Millions of people. Now Trump says to immigrants, ‘We don’t need you.’ But if there’s a war with Russia, they’re going to take everyone and they don’t care if you speak English or not. They will send us to war even though they treat us like second class soldiers.”

Polls show that Trump’s anti-immigrant policies are increasingly unpopular. Nearly 70

percent of Americans said they opposed the family separation policy, according to a new poll from the *Washington Post*. The Trump administration's attack on immigrants, including the establishment of detention camps and the arming of special Gestapo-like deportation units, is directed ultimately against the entire working class and all social opposition to inequality and war.

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