

Five Ways Trump's Enforcement Regime is Devastating Children and Families

Despite Trump's executive order, the humanitarian crisis continues. These are just a few of the human rights abuses being committed.

1. The June 20th executive order doesn't end family separation. But it does require the detention of parents and children together, possibly for months or even years.

Trump's June 20th executive order is not a solution to the family separation crisis that Trump himself created. It continues the administration's "zero tolerance" policy, which has led to more than 2,300 children being torn away from their parents. It allows federal agencies to continue separating parents and children, and it adds the specter of family detention to the mix. Under the executive order, parents and children will be placed into family detention centers for the entire time their legal cases move through the courts. NGOs have [documented the inappropriate conditions in family detention](#), including sexual abuse, deprivation of medical care, and the threat of separation as a disciplinary tactic. Detention [has lifelong consequences for children](#). The [government's own advisory committee](#) has even found that detention is neither appropriate nor necessary for families.

2. There is no process or plan to get 2,300 separated children back to their parents.

The Trump administration unleashed its policy of family separation despite having no process for tracking children and parents, facilitating communication between them, and helping families to reunify. Now more than 2,300 children are stuck in federal care even though they have loving, willing parents who are desperate to get them back.

3. The Trump administration is blocking women and children, including survivors of domestic violence, from reaching safety.

The administration has repeatedly stated that families seeking asylum will not be separated if they present themselves to immigration officials at a US port of entry. In reality, [these families are being separated too](#). And many asylum seekers are not even able to make it to the port to ask for protection because of artificial scheduling policies and other [hurdles designed to make them wait in a line that doesn't exist](#). Women and children are stuck on bridges between Mexico and the US, hoping they will eventually have a chance to ask for asylum. But having a chance to ask for asylum doesn't mean much, since a recent decision by the Attorney General attempts to cut off access to asylum for most people fleeing gang and domestic violence.

4. The Trump administration is rushing to increase its capacity to detain immigrants, including young mothers and pregnant women.

More than 40,000 people are held in detention facilities every day, and not because they committed a crime. The Trump administration is increasing its ability to detain people, recently adding [1,600 more detention beds in federal prisons](#), a highly unusual move. More beds mean more arrests and more deportations. Women in detention, many of them survivors of domestic violence and other trauma, are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and assault, struggle to access reproductive health care, and are cut off from often very young children. The administration took the time to [issue a new policy](#) that eliminates a presumption of release for pregnant women, with 506 pregnant women detained between late 2017 and March 2018. [Pregnant women are at even greater risk in detention](#) and have suffered miscarriages.

5. Immigration raids in the interior of the country are terrorizing communities and leaving U.S. citizen children without loving parents.

The trauma of Trump's enforcement regime is not just being unleashed at the border. Immigration enforcement actions in the form of [worksite raids](#), traffic stops, and home raids occur with alarming frequency. These raids are leaving gaping holes in communities, decimating school attendance rates, plunging families into poverty, and leaving children without the care of a parent and at increased risk of involvement with the child welfare system. These children face the prospect of long-term, and even permanent separation, from their parent.

It doesn't have to be this way.

The administration has presented a false choice between detention and family separation, but humane, cost effective, community-based alternatives to detention exist.

To learn more about alternatives to detention, go to:

<https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/images/zdocs/The-Real-Alternatives-to-Detention-FINAL-06-27-17.pdf>

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