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# VOICE OF REVOLUTION

Publication of the U.S. Marxist-Leninist Organization

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## Support Resistance at Home and Abroad



## Our Future Lies in the Fight for the Rights of All

*Voice of Revolution* salutes all those demonstrating at the White House and across the U.S. in support of Palestine and for immigrant rights and immediate legalization for all. *Resistance is a Right!* and we salute all those organizing here and abroad to affirm that right and advance the struggle to defend the rights of all at home and abroad as the path to peace and security.

The U.S. backing and funding of Israel as it slaughters civilians in Gaza, like its backing and funding of the “drug war” in Mexico and Central America, its use of force and

militarization of the border leading to killing of many civilians and deportations of millions more, shows that it has rejected political solutions and imposed use of force.

Its genocide against African Americans, including fomenting violence, police killings and mass incarcerations in the name of the “drug war,” is being replicated in its genocide against the peoples of Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, also in the name of the “drug war,” and now again in Palestine in the name of stopping “terrorism.” Can it be an accident that Obama

is striving to include funding for more Israeli crimes against the Palestinians in the bill providing funds to further militarize the border and attack immigrants, including the tens of thousands of children involved?!

For U.S. imperialism, the rights of the peoples, the rights of African Americans and immigrants, the rights of the many children now being massacred in Palestine, rounded up like cattle and forced into detention camps on the border, and racially profiled and killed by police and thrown into prisons, have no place. Use of

force and unleashing the chaos and violence that comes with it is their only response. This is backward, undemocratic and shows they are no longer fit to rule.

Modern democracy requires that the people themselves govern and decide. Modern democracy begins by recognizing the rights of all and by organizing to guarantee those rights, at home and abroad. Resistance is justified and necessary, as all of us together step up organizing to defend the rights of all.

*One Humanity, One  
Struggle for Our Rights!*

**OPPOSE DEPORTATIONS AND  
MILITARIZATION OF THE BORDER!**

## Defend the Rights of Immigrants and Refugees!

President Barack Obama met with the Presidents of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras July 25 to address the issue

of the tens of thousands of child refugees coming into the country, many trying to reunite  
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**END U.S. AID! END BLOCKADE OF GAZA!**

## All Out to Support Heroic Resistance in Palestine

The people of Gaza and all Palestine continue to intensify their resistance to the brutal crimes of collective punishment and genocide unleashed

by Israel and fully funded and backed by the U.S. The Palestinians are repeatedly organizing to defend their  
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### I • Support Resistance in Palestine

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rights by confronting soldiers and military targets. Much like the American guerrillas of 1776 fighting the British — also an occupying colonial power with far greater weaponry and fire power — Palestinians have a just cause and are using a variety of tactics to contend with the U.S./Israeli occupation of their land.

The resistance includes intense clashes targeting Israeli Special Forces, which were successfully rebuffed in Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza Strip, for example, on July 18 when the ground invasion of Gaza was launched. Again on July 20, according to the Israeli *Jerusalem Post*, Israel's elite Golani Brigade suffered many casualties at the hands of well-prepared resistance fighters: "The Golani Brigade in [Shujaiya] sustained heavy casualties," it reported. Fearing they "would be getting 600 body bags back" containing dead Israeli soldiers, commanders withdrew the Israeli infantry. Then the crime of the massive bombing of Shujaiya, causing mass destruction and the deaths of more than 100 civilians took place. [see page 14]

More recently, organized Palestinian forces made quick surprise attacks at military outposts inside Israel, again killing soldiers and then withdrawing to Gaza without casualties. All but two of the Israeli deaths have been soldiers, unlike that of the Palestinians, where 80 percent of the more than 1,340 killed and more than 7,200 injured have been civilians, hundreds of them children.

While Israel and the U.S. continue to justify the civilian massacres and proclaim the Palestinian guerrilla actions terrorist, much as the British did in their day, the world's people recognize and applaud the fierce Palestinian resistance being waged in the face of great odds. Demonstrations across the U.S. and worldwide have been firm in saying *Resistance is a Right! Free Free Palestine!* Many signs and banners make clear that the terrorists and criminals are the U.S. and Israel, whose actions constitute genocide, a crime against humanity, and the war crimes of collective punishment and repeated targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure.

The U.S./Israeli war crimes include bombing Gaza's power station, which powers sewage treatment systems, water pumps and hospitals — leaving 1.8 million people without these basic necessities. It includes bombing hospitals and UN schools serving as shelters. On July 30, for example, the UN school-turned-shelter in the Jabalya refugee camp was bombed, killing 20 and wounding many more. They also include mass demolitions and bombings of more than 3,300 homes and mass arrests of hundreds, many held in indefinite detention. [See page 15 for elaboration of crimes by more than 100 human rights lawyers and experts.]

Despite these efforts to terrorize the Palestinians into submission,

the resistance continues to intensify, including increasingly large demonstrations and actions on the West Bank in support of Gaza and demanding an end to the aggression and an end to the occupation. These clashes of mainly youth also target the Israeli military and numerous checkpoints imposed on Palestinians. Actions include those in Bethlehem, Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah, Salfit and Tulkarem, where youth are contending with live fire, rubber bullets, tear gas, concussion grenades and arrests of many.

Israel is also attempting to decimate the Palestinian government, arresting eleven Palestinian legislators, including Finance Minister, Dr. Omar Abdul-Razeq, from Salfit in central West Bank, and legislators from Ramallah, Nablus and Jenin in the north and Hebron in the south. This is part of the Israeli effort to block the development of a unity government by Palestinians and disrupt efforts to hold elections in Gaza and the West Bank. The Israeli offensive was launched not long after the Palestinians announced their unity and Israel has made clear that its actions are in part to completely crush Hamas as a political force — something they



have utterly failed to do. Like the U.S. with Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, the Israelis underestimate the drive and determination of a people with a just cause fighting for their right to be.

Despite the air, sea and land invasion and great pressure from the U.S. and Israel, the Palestinians have remained firm in refusing to disarm and that any ceasefire requires the end of the siege against Gaza. They bring out that the November 2012 ceasefire commonly referred to by President Obama and others called for the lifting of the Gaza siege — which Israel failed to abide by. Rejecting yet another postponement of the eight-year-long siege, the Palestinians say it must be lifted now as part of any ceasefire agreement. They have put forward a united proposal for a ceasefire that would greatly contribute to peace and security for all in the region [see p. 9]. The U.S. and Israel refuse to even recognize it, repeating that Israel can continue its aggression — called "self-defense" — while the Palestinians must stop their resistance.

As many of the signs in the hundreds of protests occurring across the country said, *It is not Self-Defense, It is Genocide! Collective Punishment is a Crime! Resistance is a Right!* The Palestinians have continued their rocket fire and many other tactics as an important part of defending themselves and letting the Israeli Zionists and U.S. know they have not been intimidated and are determined to *Free, Free Palestine!*

In Palestine, across the country and worldwide people are united in demanding *End U.S. Aid to Israel! End the Siege of Gaza! End the Occupation!* That is the path to peace.



## ACTIONS ACROSS U.S. DEFEND PALESTINE



INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA



BUFFALO, NEW YORK



NEW YORK, NEW YORK



CHICAGO, ILLINOIS



WASHINGTON, DC



BURLINGTON, VERMONT



DETROIT, MICHIGAN



## ACTIONS ACROSS U.S. DEFEND PALESTINE



TEMPE, ARIZONA



SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA



MIRAMAR, FLORIDA



MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE



LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA



HOUSTON, TEXAS



ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO



OMAHA, NEBRASKA



## ACTIONS WORLDWIDE DEFEND PALESTINE





## ACTIONS WORLDWIDE DEFEND PALESTINE



PUERTO RICO



MEXICO



CANADA



URUGUAY



MEXICO

QUEBEC



COLOMBIA



EL SALVADOR

U.S. WORST CRIMINAL

# Obama's Security Advisor: “We are in Constant Contact, Constant Consultation, Constant Cooperation” with Israel

It is being said in the monopoly media and by various officials that the U.S. does not have “much leverage” in the situation between Israel and Palestine and that efforts by President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry to secure a ceasefire got “nowhere.” The appearance is given that the U.S. is “concerned” about the civilian slaughter in Gaza but can do nothing about it. In fact the U.S. can, and is obligated under international law, to act against Israel and its own crimes.

In the interest of peace and security and finding political solutions, the U.S. could immediately:

- 1) Stop All Aid to Israel, including all military weapons and supplies;
- 2) Support the Palestinian proposal for a ceasefire and urge all to do the same (see p.9);
- 3) Initiate a resolution at the UN Security Council requiring that Israel immediately *End the Siege of Gaza* and end its aggression against Palestine;
- 4) Invoke the Geneva Conventions — which it is legally required to do as a signatory of the conventions — to bring charges for the war crimes of collective punishment and repeated targeting of civilians in Palestine. Such an action could bring all those responsible for such crimes before the International Criminal Court;
- 5) Support the petition by Bolivia to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNCHR) to consider a case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for “crimes against humanity” and “genocide;”
- 5) Support the resolution passed by the UN Human Rights Council which established an independent, international commission of inquiry to investigate all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (the U.S. was the only No vote for the resolution which passed overwhelmingly July 23).

The U.S. refuses to take any of these actions in part because it is guilty of the same crimes and as the one protecting and funding Israel, the bigger criminal. Despite the horrific crimes taking place against civilians, President Obama continues instead to back Israel, saying, “Israel has the right to defend itself against what I consider to be inexcusable attacks from Hamas.” And despite the many bombings of UN schools, which are supposed to be “safe” from attack, and Obama expressing “concern,” and saying Israel should act “in this process in a way that minimizes civilian casualties,” his administration has made clear that it continues to back and fund Israel's crimes.

Obama has requested an additional \$225 million in immediate funds — to be included in the bill now being debated in Congress



targeting immigrant children for deportation. The Pentagon is also allowing Israel to tap a U.S. arms stockpile inside Israel, ensuring Israel can continue to commit its crimes by re-supplying it with 40mm grenades and 120mm mortar rounds. Additional Israeli requests for U.S.-manufactured ammunition are also being filled.

Given the reality of the crimes and U.S. backing, Obama, like Israel's Netanyahu, is once again caught in the double standards and illegitimacy of their claims to defend human rights and support peace and security. Rejecting political solutions, such as that proposed by the Palestinians, their only recourse is to resort to use of force in a futile attempt to crush resistance.

A speech by Obama's National Security Advisor Susan Rice July 28 again emphasized this stand. Speaking to the National Jewish Leaders Assembly, she made clear that Kerry's role is not as an impartial negotiator interested in peace, but rather, “The reality is that John Kerry on behalf of the United States has been working every step of the way with Israel, in support of our shared interests. Both in public and in private, we have strongly supported Israel's right to defend itself against rockets and tunnel attacks, and we've engaged together in sensitive negotiations.” Of course the U.S. does not even attempt to suggest that Israel could stop use of tunnel without aggression by blocking the tunnel openings in Israel!

Rice added that Obama is asking for even more aid to go to Israel for the Iron Dome, Israel's U.S.-made shield against missiles: “I'm proud that — with [Obama's] enthusiastic support — the United States will more than double our investment in Iron Dome. The President also instructed the Secretary of Defense to inform Congress last week that we support an additional \$225 million to accelerate the production of Iron Dome components in Israel this year and maintain Israel's stockpile of interceptor missiles.”

Rice also emphasized that the U.S. is fully a part of the current offensive against Gaza. She said, “We are in constant contact, constant consultation, constant cooperation. And by the way, that's why I was late getting here — I was on the phone in the basement with my Israeli counterpart. So it is constant, it is daily and it is highly constructive. Our commitment to protect Israel's qualitative military edge remains absolute. Just ask Israel's generals. Our security assistance to Israel is at a record high.”

These are statements of a criminal administration defending its crimes and those of its colonizer, Israel. The problem is not a lack of leverage. It is U.S. state terrorism, aggression and use of force to commit any crime against the peoples and the funding and



backing of the same by Israel and many others worldwide. The U.S. is guilty of the crimes of collective punishment and genocide, against Palestinians and many others abroad, and at home against immigrants and African Americans.

It is evident to the entire world, from many videos, photos, UN and other reports providing facts that from the start, the U.S. and Israel have not approached “this process in a way that minimizes civilian casualties,” just as the U.S. did not do so in Iraq, Afghanistan

or Vietnam and Korea. Today they are not even attempting to hide their efforts to wipe out the Palestinians, especially in Gaza.

The continued U.S. and Israeli Zionist claims of self-defense and opposing terrorism simply cannot stand. The double standard is clear, the racism of the U.S. state and Zionists is clear, the unjustifiable crimes are clear. As the Palestinians themselves are showing, the way forward is stepping up the resistance and the firm stand of all against U.S./Israeli crimes!

## Hamas’ Just Terms for a Ceasefire

Hamas, joined by the Palestinian Authority and backed by Palestinian public opinion insists that the conditions for a ceasefire with Israel are a full lifting of the blockade and the release of those recently detained in the West Bank.

In a letter sent to the United States, members of the Arab League as well as other governments involved in negotiations, Hamas and the Palestinian Authority outlined their conditions required for a ceasefire:

- the opening of borders and freedom of movement for Gazan residents;
- the opening of the Rafah crossing in coordination with Egypt and the Palestinian Authority;
- the release of prisoners who were re-arrested after they were released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal (during Israel’s “Operation Brother’s Keeper” in which Israel without evidence or any due process began arresting Palestinians following the kidnap and murder of three Israeli teenagers);
- the carrying out of the fourth prisoner release (which Israel refused to do);
- permitting Gazan fishermen to sail up to 12 nautical miles from shore; and
- enabling freedom of movement for Palestinians in currently restricted corridors, including agricultural areas along the Strip’s border.

Hamas and the Palestinian Authority are also demanding an international committee be set up to guarantee to implementation of the agreement.

“We will not accept any initiative that does not lift the blockade on our people and that does not respect their sacrifices,” Khaled Meshaal, Hamas’ leader re-iterated to reporters at a news conference in Qatar on July 23. “The years of blockade have killed more of our people than have the wars,” he added. Meshaal said he does not “wish for war” but reiterated that Hamas “will not yield” unless



their conditions for a ceasefire are met.

Referring to the Israeli blockade in force since 2006, on July 21 former Palestinian Prime Minister and leader of the government in Gaza, Ismail Haniyeh said on television, “We cannot go backwards, to a slow death...The conditions of the Palestinian resistance constitute the minimum required for a truce. The resistance and the sons of our people who have made such sacrifices in this mad war cannot accept anything less.”

The demand for an end to the blockade as a condition for any ceasefire has the broad support of the Palestinian people. Prominent Palestinian academics, public figures and activists who recently published an open letter in the online journal *Electronic Intifada*, wrote:

“We call for a ceasefire only when negotiated conditions result in freedom of movement of Palestinians in and out of the Gaza Strip.” Gaza must be allowed “unlimited import and export” of goods and “unrestricted use of the Gaza seaport,” the letter said.

“Each of these expectations is taken for granted by most countries, and it is time for the Palestinians of Gaza to be accorded the human rights they deserve,” the letter added.

## Daring Palestinian Raids from Gaza Sap Israeli Morale

*Ali Abunimah, July 30, 2014, Electronic Intifada*

The Israeli army is reeling from two attacks behind its lines by fighters of the Qassam Brigades, the military resistance wing of Hamas.

The attacks are feeding a sense in Israel that its ground assault on Gaza is turning into a disaster and there are indications that Israeli anger and frustration are being taken out with even more deliberate killings of Palestinian civilians.

On Monday, four Israeli soldiers were killed and ten injured when Palestinian resistance fighters fired mortars across the boundary from Gaza.

But the most dramatic incident was a commando raid in which seven Qassam fighters emerged from a tunnel, raided a fortified Israeli army outpost at Nahal Oz inside Israel, killed five soldiers according to the Israeli count, and returned safely to

Gaza through the tunnel. Qassam said its fighters killed ten Israeli combatants in the attack.

Multiplying the psychological impact is the fact that Qassam released a video of the incident, which the military correspondent of Israel's Channel 10 television acknowledged "appears to be authentic."

### No ceasefire without end of siege

Along with the video of the raid, Qassam's commander Muhammad Deif released an audio recording saying that his group would not accept a ceasefire, which did not end the siege of Gaza. Deif said that his fighters were prepared for a long battle and were working according to a plan rather than "reacting" to events like Israel.

Deif said that the "enemy" had been "defeated" in its ground war and would continue to pay a heavy price as long as its army was in Gaza. The latest resistance attacks across Israeli lines have rattled frontline Israeli soldiers, one of whom grumbled to *Ynet* that "I'm not sure where is safer, inside or outside" Gaza. [...]

### Israeli exhaustion

While Palestinian civilians have been the main targets of Israeli attacks – the number of fatalities from Israel's 23-day assault has now surpassed 1,200 persons, 80 percent of them civilians – Israel's losses are overwhelmingly military. With more than fifty soldiers dead, a price no one in Israel expected to pay for attacking Gaza, even the country's top leaders appear weary.

After visiting wounded soldiers today, Israeli former president Shimon Peres said the assault on Gaza had "exhausted itself ... and now we have to find a way to stop it," *Ynet* reported. Peres said he hoped the war would end with Israeli-backed Palestinian Authority de facto leader Mahmoud Abbas resuming control of Gaza with the support of Israel and Israeli-allied Arab dictatorships. [...]

### Israel "dragged"

The raids from Gaza have heightened the sense among establishment commentators that Israel has lost – or never had – the initiative in the ground assault that it launched on Gaza.

"From the first day of the operation, we have been dragged and we are still being dragged," wrote Nahum Barnea, Israel's leading columnist, in *Ynet*. " Hamas is dictating the extent and length of the conflict, and our forces have not found a move, an initiative or a patent to break this dictation."

Commenting specifically on the Nahal Oz video, *Ynet's* Yossi YOSHUA wrote that the Israeli soldiers who were targeted appeared "unprepared and off guard, even in broad daylight."

In a sign of the potential impact of the video in Israel, YOSHUA wrote that *Ynet* "has chosen not to post" the video "because of its graphic nature and from the desire not to aid Hamas in its propaganda."



But he acknowledged that the Israeli army "has some tough questions to answer regarding what went down in the pillbox next to Nahal Oz."

### "Massive attack" in Shujaiya routs Golani Brigade

It is well established that the Israeli army deliberately targets civilians, civilian homes and other civilian objects.

Unable to break the resistance on the ground, Israel is going after the civilian popula-

tion to "terrorize" them into submission, dozens of international law experts and human rights experts said in a recent statement [see p.15]. This is a reprise of Israel's so-called "Dahiya Doctrine" used against civilians in Lebanon in 2006 and in Gaza in 2008-2009.

In the latest horrifying massacre, Israeli shells slammed into a UN school in Jabaliya refugee camp, killing sixteen people.

Yet the sheer unpreparedness of the Israeli army for military resistance may be causing it to take its rage out in even more vengeful attacks on Palestinian civilians.

In a revealing account of Israel's July 20 attack on the Shujaiya neighborhood east of Gaza City, *The Jerusalem Post* revealed that the army's elite Golani Brigade suffered a thrashing at the hands of well-prepared resistance fighters who launched a "massive attack."

"The Golani Brigade in [Shujaiya] sustained heavy casualties," the newspaper reported citing an army source, "after Hamas intelligence units mapped out its location."

Fearing they "would be getting 600 body bags back" containing dead Israeli soldiers, commanders withdrew the Israeli infantry and simply shelled Shujaiya, causing mass destruction and the deaths of dozens of civilians.

### Shoot to kill

In a Facebook posting, Eran Efrati, a former Israeli army combat soldier turned dissident researcher and activist, claimed that Israeli soldiers serving in Gaza had leaked information to him in recent days that soldiers were "murdering ... Palestinians by sniper fire in [Shujaiya] neighborhood as punishment for the deaths of soldiers in their units."

Efrati claimed that commanding officers had given shoot-to-kill orders ostensibly meant to protect Israeli forces, but whose real purpose was to "enable soldiers to take out their frustrations and pain at losing their fellow soldiers (something that for years the IDF [Israeli army] has not faced during its operations in Gaza and the West Bank)" by killing Palestinian civilians.

Efrati cited the cold-blood sniper shooting, caught on video, of Palestinian youth Salem Shamaly in Shujaiya on 20 July, as a likely example of this phenomenon.

Efrati spent years working with Breaking the Silence, an Israeli group that collects and publishes testimonies of abuses from Israeli



soldiers but also protects them from consequences by concealing their identities.

Since Efrati's posting, a copy of which was captured by The Electronic Intifada, Efrati's entire Facebook page is no longer available.

#### **Looming political disaster for Netanyahu**

Nahum Barnea points to the political crisis the heavy losses of Israeli soldiers is causing to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is facing pressure to expand a ground attack in Gaza which Barnea and other commentators say is falling far short of the stated aim of destroying the resistance's system of tunnels. [...]

If Netanyahu presses on, Barnea writes, "He will have to deal with the [rising Israeli] death toll. He probably remembers what happened to former Prime Minister Menachem Begin in similar circumstances; if he stops, he will have to deal with disappointment and internal criticism."

Barnea is referring to Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, which killed tens of thousands of Palestinians and Lebanese.

It was seen as a catastrophe in Israel, which lost almost seven hundred soldiers. Begin, once the revered leader of the Irgun Zionist terrorist group in the 1940s, left office in disgrace and died

soon afterwards.

#### **Israel Looking for a Way Out**

In a sign of Israel's eagerness to end the Gaza assault on less than humiliating terms, the foreign ministry advised Netanyahu to initiate a UN Security Council resolution that would set favorable terms for Israel. Israel normally seeks to avoid any action by the UN.

The resolution would call for Gaza to be "disarmed," *Haaretz* reported, and for Abbas to return to Gaza. It would be modeled on resolution 1701, which allowed Israel to retreat from Lebanon in 2006.

But despite the face-saving 2006 resolution, no one in Israel doubts that Lebanese resistance forces are likely to be fiercer than ever should Israel ever plan a return. No matter what the Security Council says, Palestinian resistance groups are not going to unilaterally disarm, giving Israel the victory it could not achieve in battle.

The 1982 and 2006 Lebanon wars, like so many of Israel's aggressions, showed that if "winning" is measured in slaughtering civilians, Israel, like the United States in Vietnam, remains the champion.

But politically and strategically, Israel and its leaders may be realizing that they are facing another defeat in Gaza.

## **UN Official Condemns Israeli Massacre of Gaza School**

*Leila Zerrougui, Middel East Monitor, 31 July 2014*

Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict Leila Zerrougui called yesterday for holding accountable and prosecuting all those responsible for "war crimes" in Gaza.

In a statement reported by Anadolu, Zerrougui condemned the Israeli attack on the UN school in the Jabalia Refugee Camp in the north of the Gaza Strip that killed at least 15 civilians.

She said there are "no safe places for the children of Gaza... Another UN school, used to shelter 3,300 displaced people was hit by Israeli shelling, despite clear information provided to the Israeli army from the UN that the school was housing internally displaced persons (IDPs). Civilians, including children, were killed and injured. I strongly condemn this grave violation of international law."

Zerrougui explained that more than 40 per cent of the Gaza Strip has been affected by the Israeli offensive, either because of "evacuations or declared no-go zones, the civilian population

is left with little possibility to seek protection." In addition, she said healthcare facilities are being destroyed.

She added that more than a quarter of those killed since the assault began were children, with numbers now reaching 315.

The UN official encouraged all sides to put an end to the violations against children, abide by the international laws and respect their sanctity. She called upon them to protect schools.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza said that the Israeli attack on the UN school killed 15 and wounded at least 100. This was the second such attack. Last week, Israel attacked another school, killing 16 and scores of wounded.

Since the beginning of the ground operation by the Israeli occupation, the UN schools in Gaza became shelters for more than 215,000 Palestinian civilians, according to UN statistics.

Since the beginning of the Israeli war on Gaza, the Israeli army has killed 1,374 Palestinians and wounded more than 7,500 others.

## **Collective Punishment in Gaza**

*Rashid Khalidi, The New Yorker, July 29, 2014*

Three days after the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu launched the current war in Gaza, he held a press conference in Tel Aviv during which he said, in Hebrew, according to the Times of Israel, "I think the Israeli people understand now what I always say: that there cannot be a situation, under any agreement, in which we relinquish security control of the territory west of the River Jordan."

It is worth listening carefully when Netanyahu speaks to the Israeli people. What is going on in Palestine today is not really about Hamas. It is not about rockets. It is not about "human shields" or terrorism or tunnels. It is about Israel's permanent control over Palestinian land and Palestinian lives. That is what Netanyahu is really saying, and that is what he now admits he has "always" talked about. It is about an unswerving, decades-long

Israeli policy of denying Palestine self-determination, freedom, and sovereignty.

What Israel is doing in Gaza now is collective punishment. It is punishment for Gaza's refusal to be a docile ghetto. It is punishment for the gall of Palestinians in unifying, and of Hamas and other factions in responding to Israel's siege and its provocations with resistance, armed or otherwise, after Israel repeatedly reacted to unarmed protest with crushing force. Despite years of ceasefires and truces, the siege of Gaza has never been lifted.

As Netanyahu's own words show, however, Israel will accept nothing short of the acquiescence of Palestinians to their own subordination. It will accept only a Palestinian "state" that is stripped of all the attributes of a real state: control over security, borders, airspace, maritime limits, contiguity, and, therefore, sovereignty. The twenty-three-year charade of the "peace process" has shown that this is all Israel is offering, with the full approval of Washington. Whenever the Palestinians have resisted that pathetic fate (as any nation would), Israel has punished them for their insolence. This is not new.

Punishing Palestinians for existing has a long history. It was Israel's policy before Hamas and its rudimentary rockets were Israel's boogeyman of the moment, and before Israel turned Gaza into an open-air prison, punching bag, and weapons laboratory. In 1948, Israel killed thousands of innocents, and terrorized and displaced hundreds of thousands more, in the name of creating a Jewish-majority state in a land that was then sixty-five per cent Arab. In 1967, it displaced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians again, occupying territory that it still largely controls, forty-seven years later.

In 1982, in a quest to expel the Palestine Liberation Organization and extinguish Palestinian nationalism, Israel invaded Lebanon, killing seventeen thousand people, mostly civilians. Since the late nineteen-eighties, when Palestinians under occupation rose up, mostly by throwing stones and staging general strikes, Israel has arrested tens of thousands of Palestinians: over seven hundred and fifty thousand people have spent time in Israeli prisons since 1967, a number that amounts to forty per cent of the adult male population today. They have emerged with accounts of torture, which are substantiated by human-rights groups like B'tselem. During the second Intifada, which began in 2000, Israel reinvaded the West Bank (it had never fully left). The occupation and colonization of Palestinian land continued unabated throughout the "peace process" of the nineteen-nineties, and continues to this day. And yet, in America, the discussion ignores this crucial, constantly oppressive context, and is instead too often limited to Israeli "self-defense" and the Palestinians' supposed responsibility for their own suffering.

In the past seven or more years, Israel has besieged, tormented, and regularly attacked the Gaza Strip. The pretexts change: they elected Hamas; they refused to be docile; they refused to recognize Israel; they fired rockets; they built tunnels to circumvent the siege; and on and on. But each pretext is a red herring, because the truth of ghettos — what happens when you imprison 1.8 million people in a hundred and forty square miles, about a third of the area of New York City, with no control of borders, almost no access to the sea for fishermen (three out of the twenty kilometers allowed by the Oslo accords), no real way in or out, and with drones buzzing overhead night and day — is that, eventually, the ghetto will fight back. It was true in Soweto and Belfast, and it is true in Gaza. We might not like Hamas or some of its methods, but that is not the same as accepting the proposition that Palestinians should supinely accept the denial of their right to exist as a free people in their ancestral homeland.

This is precisely why the United States' support of current Israeli policy is folly. Peace was achieved in Northern Ireland and in South Africa because the United States and the world realized that they had to put pressure on the stronger party, holding it accountable and ending its impunity. Northern Ireland and South Africa are far from perfect examples, but it is worth remembering that, to achieve a just outcome, it was necessary for the United States to deal with groups like the Irish Republican Army and the African National Congress. That was the only way to embark on a road toward true peace and reconciliation.



The case of Palestine is not fundamentally different.

Instead, the United States puts its thumb on the scales in favor of the stronger party. In this surreal, upside-down vision of the world, it almost seems as if it is the Israelis who are occupied by the Palestinians, and not the other way around. In this skewed universe, the inmates of an open-air prison are besieging a nuclear-armed power with one of the most sophisticated militaries in the world.

If we are to move away from this unreality, the U.S. must either reverse its policies or abandon its claim of being an "honest broker." If the U.S. government wants to fund and arm Israel and parrot its talking points that fly in the face of reason and international law, so be it. But it should not claim the moral high ground and intone solemnly about peace. And it should certainly not insult Palestinians by saying that it cares about them or their children, who are dying in Gaza today.

*(Rashid Khalidi is the Edward Said Professor of Arab Studies at Columbia University and the editor of the Journal of Palestine Studies, and was an adviser to the Palestinian delegation at the Madrid-Washington Palestinian-Israeli negotiations of 1991-93.)*



FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHT TO BE

# All Out to Support the Victory of the Palestinian People in Smashing the Blockade of Gaza and Ending the Occupation of Their Homeland

K. C. Adams

The people of Palestine have been engaged in a courageous battle for their right to be since WWII. Following the war, the Anglo-U.S. imperialists decided to form a Zionist colonial entity in Palestine as a military base to strengthen their empire in West Asia



and North Africa. The imperialist front provided arms, other assets and displaced people from Europe to occupy Palestine and force out the indigenous Palestinians from much of their land.

Using overwhelming military power, money and people supplied by Anglo-U.S. imperialism, a Zionist colonial entity occupied Palestine and negated the Palestinian people's right to be. The Zionist colonial entity's right to exist and defend itself has required the negation of the right to be of the Palestinian people, the theft of their land, their suppression and brutalization, and the continuing military occupation of Palestine.

Within occupied Palestine, one of the enclaves, reserves or ghettos where the Palestinians have been forced to exist is a small strip of land called Gaza. The Zionist colonial entity has isolated the Gaza Strip within occupied Palestine and blockaded it from any contact, trade or other normal activity with other areas of occupied Palestine and the outside world.

The Palestinian people of Gaza and throughout occupied Palestine have never accepted their negation and have consistently fought for their right to be. Their heroic resistance against a powerful military machine backed by the U.S.-led imperialist system of states has gained their people respect and a special place of honor within humanity. Their leadership throughout the long resistance, including the current Hamas movement as the governing political force in Gaza, has sworn that their struggle will continue until Palestine is free from occupation and the people's right to be blossoms and is assured.

The peoples of the world should reject with contempt the slanders and disinformation of the U.S.-led imperialist system of states against the Palestinian resistance to the Zionist colonial entity. The monopoly media and political representatives in power and in official opposition within the U.S.-led imperialist system of states have never dealt seriously with the demands and program of the Palestinian resistance and its political representatives such as Hamas or allowed their views to be widely discussed objectively amongst the polity. They have reduced the Palestinian political

and resistance organizations and their programs to epithets such as terrorists, and for purely propaganda purposes characterize as anti-Semitic the people's refusal to recognize and accept occupation of Palestine by the Zionist colonial entity.

The imperialists consider their disinformation and slander justification for the continued slaughter of Palestinians and the occupation of their homeland. On the contrary, to denigrate the Palestinians' fight for their right to be and against the occupation of their homeland is unacceptable and a crime against humanity. The political and mass media conciliation with the fascism and militarism of the Zionist colonial entity and its special role as an imperialist military base in West Asia and North Africa to threaten the people and inhibit their movements for change towards the new is a gross insult to all peoples. Resistance to oppression and occupation is a right and people everywhere should provide the Palestinian resistance as much assistance as possible and completely isolate the Zionist colonial entity from all international affairs.

As the great Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat proclaimed at the United Nations, Zionism is racism and has no place in modern society. As long as Palestine is occupied and the people's right to be denied, all humanity is sullied and dragged down by such a retrogressive and dangerous state of affairs.

Such it was with the German Nazi warmongers and their occupation of other people's lands and destruction of their right to be prior to and during WWII. Only resistance to and destruction of the German Nazi state would allow humanity to assert its rights and cast off the humiliation, state-organized terror and degradation of living under fascism and militarism. Conciliation with fascism and militarism was an enormous crime at that time just as it is today. This great humanity can assert itself and break with all vestiges of medievalism and colonialism by casting off the old and building the new.

*All out to support the victory of the Palestinian people in smashing the blockade of Gaza, ending the occupation of their homeland and affirming their right to be!*

*Down with the murderous Zionist colonial entity and its imperialist backers, collaborators and conciliators!*

*Long Live the Palestinian Resistance and Free Palestine!*  
(TML Weekly, cpcml.ca)

# The Massacre at al-Shujaiyya Underscores Zionist Crimes

*Pauline Easton, TML Weekly, Canada*

The world continues to watch in horror as the Palestinian residents of Gaza are slaughtered by the Zionist occupiers of their land, while the residents of the West Bank are also wantonly killed for protesting. On July 21, the Occupation Forces committed a massacre in the al-Shujaiyya neighborhood of Gaza city. As of 2 pm on



July 26, medical teams had already recovered 85 bodies from the rubble. In addition to the killing of Palestinians, the massacre forced some 60,000 Gazans to flee their homes in the area for fear of more attacks, adding to a total number of internally displaced persons that has now hit 183,000 out of a population in Gaza of 1.8 million residents. All Palestinians, unable to flee due to the blockade of Gaza by land, sea and air, are targets of the Israeli onslaught.

Many drew comparisons between the ongoing assault on Gaza and the Nakba of 1948, when 750,000 Palestinians were expelled from their homes in what became Israel. More than half of Gaza's people are Nakba refugees, descendants of those who were dispossessed by Israel, the Ma'an news agency reports.

Because all borders are closed, the vast majority has sought refuge in UN-designated shelters in zones further from the epicenter of fighting.

These refugees, however, are not necessarily safer — an Israeli shell hit a Beit Hanoun shelter on July 23, killing at least 17. [On July 30, yet another UN school sheltering thousands was bombed, killing 20 people and wounding many more — VOR Ed. Note]

To prevent and eliminate the resistance, the Zionists have systematically bombed hospitals, schools and religious institutions. Only if the resistance ends, will the attacks end, they claim.

The Palestinian plight is captured by Uruguayan author Eduardo Galeano who says: The Palestinians lost their land, their homes, their water, their homeland itself. They are not permitted to choose their own leaders. They cannot even breathe without permission.

However, the more massacres take place, the more the Resistance is vindicated and the more the Israelis stand condemned. Only the most craven allies of Israel such as the U.S. and Canada defend the massacres, claiming Israel has the right to defend itself against Hamas which they have declared a terrorist organization for waging the Resistance struggle and persisting in affirming Palestine's right to be.

Speaking at a pro-Israel rally in Montreal, Canada's arch reactionary misnamed Minister of Democratic Reform Pierre Poilievre stated: "You can't establish an equivalence between a great liberal democracy, Israel, which absolutely must defend its citizens against violent rocket attacks, and a terrorist organization, Hamas, which

has not ceased to sow chaos and destruction. One hundred per cent of the blame is attributable to Hamas. Israel uses its weapons to protect its civilians while Hamas uses its civilians to protect its weapons."

At the time of Hamas' election in 2006, the Canadian government was the first to refuse to recognize

the result of the election because it claims Hamas is a terrorist organization. It shows its hypocrisy when it comes to democratic elections and vile hatred for the resistance struggle. At the time, [Canadian] Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated that he would only recognize a "de-militarized" Palestinian state living side by side with Israel. In other words, the Harper government's claim today that Hamas uses civilians "to protect its guns" is in fact a cover for its stand that it wants the resistance completely disarmed so that Israel can establish settlers on the entire territory of Palestine and impose its Hitlerite final solution on the Palestinian people. This is why Canada works to train Palestinian security forces — not to protect Palestinians from the Occupation Forces, but to suppress any resistance to occupation.

In this vein, at another pro-Israel rally in Ottawa on July 17, the Harper government's Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird went to great lengths to claim there are no rockets coming from the West Bank and emphasized Canadian aid to assist the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank build institutions they allegedly need for an independent Palestinian state which provides security for a separate Israeli state. It is a fraud because Israel has no intention of recognizing any Palestinian state but instead, it wants all Palestinian land without exception.

To their shame the Opposition parties in the House of Commons also blame the resistance for the suffering of the Palestinian people. Their craven spirit merely blames the Harper government for no longer having influence in international affairs to negotiate a peace in favor of Israel. Their refusal to fall in line with Canadian public opinion and international law denies that occupation is a crime and resistance is a right. They also refuse to demand an immediate end to the blockade of the occupied, blockaded and besieged Palestinian people while they call for an immediate end to their resistance. [...]

Join actions across Canada to show Canadians stand with the Palestinian Resistance and its just demands to end the siege of Gaza, return all prisoners, stop the killings and end the occupation!

*O Martyrs of Zionist Genocide! May the World Rise up to End the Slaughter of Your Valiant People!*



# The International Community Must End Israel's Collective Punishment of the Civilian Population in the Gaza Strip

*Richard Falk, John Dugard, Former UN Special Rapporteurs on Human Rights in Palestinian and more than 140 other human rights and international and criminal law scholars and experts*

As international and criminal law scholars, human rights defenders, legal experts and individuals who firmly believe in the rule of law and in the necessity for its respect in times of peace and more so in times of war, we feel the intellectual and moral duty to denounce the grave violations, mystification and disrespect of the most basic principles of the laws of armed conflict and of the fundamental human rights of the entire Palestinian population committed during the ongoing Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip.

We also condemn the launch of rockets from the Gaza Strip, as every indiscriminate attack against civilians, regardless of the identity of the perpetrators, is not only illegal under international law but also morally intolerable. However, as also implicitly noted by the UN Human Rights Council in its Resolution of the 23 July 2014, the two parties to the conflict cannot be considered equal, and their actions – once again – appear to be of incomparable magnitude.

Once again it is the unarmed civilian population, the “protected persons” under International humanitarian law (IHL), who is in the eye of the storm. Gaza’s civilian population has been victimized in the name of a falsely construed right to self-defense, in the midst of an escalation of violence provoked in the face of the entire international community. The so-called Operation Protective Edge erupted during an ongoing armed conflict, in the context of a prolonged belligerent occupation that commenced in 1967. In the course of this ongoing conflict thousands of Palestinians have been killed and injured in the Gaza Strip during recurrent and ostensible “ceasefire” periods since 2005, after Israel’s unilateral “disengagement” from the Gaza Strip. The deaths caused by Israel’s provocative actions in the Gaza Strip prior to the latest escalation of hostilities must not be ignored as well.

According to UN sources, over the last two weeks, nearly 800 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed and more than 4,000 injured, of whom the vast majority were civilians. Several independent sources indicate that only 15 per cent of the casualties were combatants. Entire families have been murdered. Hospitals, clinics, as well as a rehabilitation center for disabled persons have been targeted and severely damaged. During one single day, on Sunday 20 July, more than 100 Palestinian civilians were killed in Shujaiya, a residential neighborhood of Gaza City. This was one of the bloodiest and most aggressive operations ever conducted by Israel in the Gaza Strip, a form of urban violence constituting a total disrespect of civilian innocence. Sadly, this was followed only a couple of days later by an equally destructive attack on Khuzaa, east of Khan Younis.

Additionally, the offensive has already caused widespread destruction of buildings and infrastructure – according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, over 3,300 houses have been targeted resulting in their destruction or severe



damage. As denounced by the UN Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) on the Gaza conflict in the aftermath of Israel’s “Operation Cast Lead” in 2008-2009: “While the Israeli Government has sought to portray its operations as essentially a response to rocket attacks in the exercise of its right to self defense, the Mission considers the plan to have been directed, at least in part, at a different target: The people of Gaza as a whole” (A/HRC/12/48, par. 1680). The same can be said for the current Israeli offensive.

The civilian population in the Gaza Strip is under direct attack and many are forced to leave their homes. What was already a refugee and humanitarian crisis has worsened with a new wave of mass displacement of civilians: the number of IDPs [internally displaced persons] has reached nearly 150,000, many of whom have obtained shelter in overcrowded UNRWA schools, which unfortunately are no safe areas as demonstrated by the repeated attacks on the UNRWA school in Beit Hanoun. Everyone in Gaza is traumatized and living in a state of constant terror.

This result is intentional, as Israel is again relying on the “Dahiya doctrine,” which deliberately has recourse to disproportionate force to inflict suffering on the civilian population in order to achieve political (to exert pressure on the Hamas Government) rather than military goals.

In so doing, Israel is repeatedly and flagrantly violating the law of armed conflict, which establishes that combatants and military objectives may be targeted, i.e. “those objects which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action and whose total or partial destruction, capture or neutralization, in the circumstances ruling at the time, offers a definite military advantage.” Most of the recent heavy bombings in Gaza lack an acceptable military justification and, instead, appear to be designed to terrorize the civilian population. As the ICRC clarifies, deliberately causing terror is unequivocally illegal under

customary international law.

In its Advisory Opinion in the Nuclear Weapons case, the ICJ [International Court of Justice] stated that the principle of distinction, which requires belligerent States to distinguish between civilian and combatants, is one of the “cardinal principles” of international humanitarian law and one of the “intransgressible principles of international customary law.”

The principle of distinction is codified in Articles 48, 51(2) and 52(2) of the Additional Protocol I of 1977 to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, to which no reservations have been made. According to Additional Protocol I, “attacks” refer to “acts of violence against the adversary, whether in offence or in defense” (Article 49). Under both customary international law and treaty law, the prohibition on directing attacks against the civilian population or civilian objects is absolute. There is no discretion available to invoke military necessity as a justification.

Contrary to Israel’s claims, mistakes resulting in civilian casualties cannot be justified: in case of doubt as to the nature of the target, the law clearly establishes that an object which is normally dedicated to civilian purposes (such as schools, houses, places of worship and medical facilities), are presumed as not being used for military purposes.

During these past weeks, UN officials and representatives have repeatedly called on Israel to strictly abide by the principle of precaution in carrying out attacks in the Gaza Strip, where risks are greatly aggravated by the very high population density, and maximum restraint must be exercised to avoid civilian casualties. Human Rights Watch has noted that these rules exist to minimize mistakes “when such mistakes are repeated, it raises the concern of whether the rules are being disregarded.”

Moreover, even when targeting clear military objectives, Israel consistently violates the principle of proportionality: this is particularly evident with regard to the hundreds of civilian houses destroyed by the Israeli army during the current military operation in Gaza. With the declared intention to target a single member of Hamas, Israeli forces have bombed and destroyed houses although occupied as residences by dozens of civilians, including women, children, and entire families.

It is inherently illegal under customary international law to intentionally target civilian objects, and the violation of such a fundamental tenet of law can amount to a war crime. Issuing a “warning” – such as Israel’s so-called roof knocking technique, or sending an SMS five minutes before the attack – does not mitigate this: it remains illegal to willfully attack a civilian home without a demonstration of military necessity as it amounts to a violation of the principle of proportionality. Moreover, not only are these “warnings” generally ineffective, and can even result in further fatalities, they appear to be a pre-fabricated excuse by Israel to portray people who remain in their homes as “human shields.”

The indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, the targeting of objectives providing no effective military advantage, and the intentional targeting of civilians and civilian houses have been persistent features of Israel’s long-standing policy of punishing the entire population of the Gaza Strip, which, for over seven years, has been virtually imprisoned by Israeli imposed closure.

Such a regime amounts to a form of collective punishment, which violates the unconditional prohibition set forth in Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and has been internationally condemned for its illegality. However, far from being effectively opposed by international actors, Israel’s illegal policy of absolute closure imposed on the Gaza Strip has relentlessly continued, under the complicit gaze of the international community of States.

As affirmed in 2009 by the UN Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict: “Justice and respect for the rule of law are the indispensable basis for peace. The prolonged situation has created a justice crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory that warrants action” (A/HRC/12/48, para. 1958) Indeed: “long-standing impunity has been a key factor in the perpetuation of violence in the region and in the reoccurrence of violations, as well as in the erosion of confidence among Palestinians and many Israelis concerning prospects for justice and a peaceful solution to the conflict” (A/HRC/12/48, para. 1964).

Therefore,

- We welcome the Resolution adopted on 23 July 2014 by the UN Human Rights Council, in which an independent, international commission of inquiry was established to investigate all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

- We call upon the United Nations, the Arab League, the European Union, individual States, in particular the United States of America, and the international community in its entirety and with its collective power to take action in the spirit of the utmost urgency to put an end to the escalation of violence against the civilian population of the Gaza Strip, and to activate procedures to hold accountable all those responsible for violations of international law, including political leaders and military commanders. In particular:

- All regional and international actors should support the immediate conclusion of a durable, comprehensive, and mutually agreed ceasefire agreement, which must secure the rapid facilitation and access of humanitarian aid and the opening of borders to and from Gaza;

- All High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Conventions must be urgently and unconditionally called upon to comply with their fundamental obligations, binding at all times, and to act under common Article 1, to take all measures necessary for the suppression of grave breaches, as clearly imposed by Article 146 and Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention; these rules are applicable by all interested parties as well;

- Moreover, we denounce the shameful political pressures exerted by several UN Member States and the UN on President Mahmoud Abbas, to discourage recourse to the International Criminal Court (ICC), and we urge the Governmental leaders of Palestine to invoke the jurisdiction of the ICC, by ratifying the ICC treaty and in the interim by resubmitting the declaration under Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute, in order to investigate and prosecute the serious international crimes committed on the Palestinian territory by all parties to the conflict; and

- The UN Security Council must finally exercise its responsibilities in relation to peace and justice by referring the situation in Palestine to the Prosecutor of the ICC.



### I • Defend Immigrant Rights

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with family members in the U.S. Many are also striving to escape the violence unleashed in their countries as a result of the U.S. “war on drugs,” including arming and backing death squads and drug gangs and other interference. This includes the U.S. imposed coup in Honduras, with levels of violence and murder, especially of youth and those resisting U.S. interference, greatly increasing since that time, long years of interference in El Salvador and backing military forces in Guatemala known for their genocide. It includes militarization of these countries in service to the U.S. using the Central American Regional Security Initiative and the Merida Initiative against Mexico.

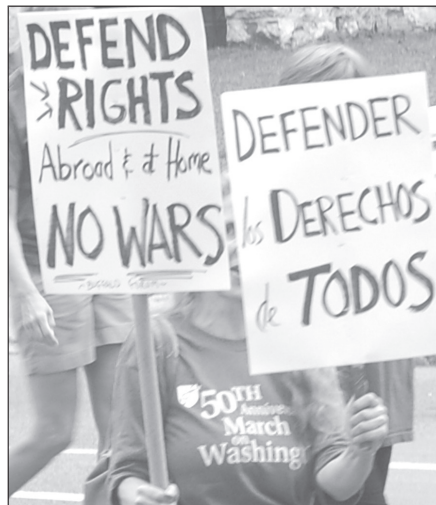
Obama’s main response has been turning this issue of rights into an opportunity for yet more militarization and repression at home and abroad. He has asked Congress for \$3.5 billion in supplemental funding, mainly for increasing militarization of the border, with, as he put “unprecedented numbers of Border Patrol agents,” more spying and more prosecution and deportations, this time of children. On July 24, he also had a team of officials from the Pentagon and Homeland Security (DHS) in Texas — to assess a federal deployment of the National Guard, fully armed and using their helicopter gunships to “detect” suspicious activity. This comes after Texas Governor Rick Perry announced plans to deploy 1,000 Texas National Guardsmen to the border. Both could take place, indicating that the terrorizing of people and towns both sides of the border is to increase.

Militarization of the border is no solution and has already shown itself to cause more deaths of civilians, including unarmed youth gunned down by Border Patrol, even while standing in Mexico! Militarization denies rights, increases insecurity while serving U.S. efforts to divide and repress the peoples.

#### Parents and Children Are Not to Blame

In remarks made after meeting with the three presidents, Obama also targeted the parents and children for “putting themselves at risk”: “I also emphasized to my friends here that we have to deter a continuing influx of children putting themselves at great risk and families who are putting their children at great risk.” The children and their parents are not to blame for the poverty and violence unleashed in their countries as a result of U.S. interference, including unequal and unjust trade agreements and the “war on drugs.” The U.S. and its police agencies are well-known for not only supplying guns to the drug cartels but also for funding drug gangs and fomenting gang violence and using drug money for repression at home and abroad. All of these results are well known to the African American community here at home, who has long been subject to the government’s racist “war on drugs.”

The children and parents are also not to blame for the unjust U.S. immigration and refugee laws, that block family reunification and force millions to contend with being undocumented and for the



children, unrecognized as refugees.

It is no accident that Obama, in his remarks, did not once refer to the tens of thousands of children as refugees, in fear of their lives. Honduras, for example, since the U.S.-imposed coup, is now considered the murder capital of the world, while El Salvador and Guatemala are also in the top 5. Parents already in the U.S. rightly want their children with them, but are blocked from reuniting by unjust U.S. laws.

Unlike immigrants, refugees are removed from Border Patrol and its detention camps and turned over to the Department of Health and Human Services to be assisted and as possible reunited with family members in the U.S. While family members and child

advocates are demanding Obama recognize the children as refugees, he refuses to do so. Instead he refers to them as “unaccompanied minor children.” And while saying he has “compassion” and wants an “humanitarian framework” and “due process” he also emphasized plans to deport the children and has already begun doing so.

An “humanitarian framework” cannot be established without recognizing the rights of the children, as children and as refugees. What is humane about forcing them to return to their countries, especially when their families are in the U.S.? What is humane about sending them before an immigration judge with no lawyer to assist them, as occurs most of the time? How can it be due process when the rights of the children are not put in first place?

Obama’s stand toward the refugee children, like that toward the two million immigrants he has deported, is not based on upholding rights. The actions being taken are a means to further terrorize, repress and divide the peoples, while also justifying increased militarization of all aspects of life. As Obama put it, the U.S. wants to “Come up with more aggressive action plans to improve security and development and governance in these countries.”

The actions taken to date resemble more of a live-exercise for all the various agencies involved in policing and humiliating the peoples. This is evident from Obama’s formation June 2 of a “Unified Coordination Group,” which includes the Pentagon, DHS, Justice, State, Health and the General Services Administration. In turn, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson designated Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Fugate to coordinate the U.S. government-wide response. As well, family detention centers have again been established and military bases are also being used for detention of thousands of children. This is not humanitarian it is criminal.

The issues of immigration and child refugees are issues of rights, not more repression. *Voice of Revolution* stands with all those demonstrating and organizing to defend the rights of immigrants and refugees and demanding *No Deportations! Legalization for All Now!* We urge all to advance on the path of *Defending the Rights of All, at Home and Abroad!*

**NORTHWEST DETENTION CENTER, WASHINGTON STATE**

## **Hundreds of Detained Immigrants Begin Hunger Strike to Oppose Deportations**

Hundreds of detainees at the Northwest Detention Center, in Tacoma, Washington, began a hunger strike July 30 in support of the August 2 demonstration in Washington, DC demanding an end to deportations and justice for immigrants. The strikers are also demanding better conditions and an end to their indefinite detention. This hunger strike is at least the third such action this year.

According to Latino Advocacy, at least 10 pods, each containing 55 to 85 people, have refused food. The facility in Tacoma has had several hunger strikes since the start of the year and is run by GEO Group, the second-largest for-profit prison company in the US. They are contracted by the government and paid with public funds.

In March of this year, 1,200 detainees went on hunger strike to join protests against deportations and demand humane conditions. They targeted the grossly inadequate medical care, poor quality and quantity of food, exorbitant fees for commissary items like bonds and phone calls, and the one-dollar-a-day pay rate for work inside the jail. Many were forced into solitary confinement and then 130 were summarily deported in an effort to crush resistance. The existing strike shows the government did not succeed.

In 2012, GEO was forced to close a youth detention center in Walnut Grove, Mississippi, after being condemned by Judge Carlton Reeves for allowing “a cesspool of unconstitutional and inhuman acts and conditions to germinate, the sum of which places the offenders at substantial ongoing risk.” Prisoners at GEO facilities have also staged hunger strikes in Conroe, Texas, and Stewart, Georgia. Even so, the government continues to supply them with huge contracts.

The Northwest Detention Center is one of the largest and it is part of a network of 250 facilities across the U.S. that collectively hold 34,000 people — a number mandated by Congress, with the daily bed costs of \$150 plus paid for with public funds. Many of those on strike are also organizing to challenge their deportation orders. About 80 percent of them do not have lawyers to assist with what is a complex and often years-long process.

In addition, there are no “contact visits” allowed at the Tacoma jail. Glass panes separate detainees from visitors, and they must speak through phones. Relatives of detainees and immigrant rights groups have staged regular rallies outside the jail and together with the hunger strikers continue to demand *No Deportations! Justice for Immigrants!*

**CHILD MIGRANTS ARE REFUGEES OF FAILED US POLICIES**

## **Activists Demand Obama Uphold and Defend the Rights of Children**

***Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, July 28, 2014***

On July 25, as President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden met at the White House with the presidents of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador to discuss the increasing numbers of Central American children crossing the border into the United States, activists gathered outside to call on the U.S. government to take responsibility for its role in causing this crisis, to respect the children’s legal and human rights and prioritize family reunification in the United States.

Activists from Washington DC-based immigrant service groups, Central American policy and human rights organizations, and religious groups chanted “When migrant children are under attack, what do you do? Stand up, fight back!” and held signs that read “Protect refugees of failed US policies” and “CAFTA + CARSI = Forced Migration,” in reference to the U.S.-Central American Free Trade Agreement and the U.S.-funded Central American Regional Security Initiative.

This year alone 57,000 unaccompanied migrant children have been detained at the US-Mexico border, with about 75 percent of them coming from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. Most of them are fleeing situations of extreme violence and trying to

reunite with a parent who came to the U.S. in the past decade due to a lack of economic opportunities at home.

As the call for the rally brought out: “Let’s join together to call on President Obama to uphold and defend the legal rights of children, ensure that families can be reunited and protected here in the U.S., and to take responsibility for U.S. economic and military policies in Mexico and Central America that helped create this crisis in the first place.

There are many powerful political forces who are exploiting this crisis to increase deportations, further militarize the U.S.-Mexico border and increase U.S. funding for repressive police and military forces under the banner of the so-called “War on Drugs.”

Speakers at the protest highlighted how U.S.-pushed economic policies like privatizations and free trade destroyed local Central American economies, forcing many of the children’s parents to migrate and fostering conditions for street gangs to take root in impoverished communities. Arturo Viscarra from School of the Americas Watch explained how militarized security policies that are part of the U.S.-sponsored “War on Drugs” have only made narco-violence worse and empowered human rights abusing military and



security forces in Guatemala and Honduras. He also denounced the role of the Obama administration in legitimizing the 2009 coup d'états in Honduras that has ushered in an era of violent repression against community activists and journalists, giving Honduras the highest murder rate in the world.

Jacob Blickenov of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) called on the Obama administration and the U.S. Congress to "recognize that immigrants, especially the children making the dangerous journey, are refugees of failed U.S. policies," and spoke to the fact that the Obama administration has tried to undermine the poverty eradication programs of the Salvador Sánchez Cerén administration in El Salvador in order to promote corporate interests.

In his meeting with the Central American presidents, Obama

affirmed that most of the children will be deported. [...] Legislative proposals to address the crisis focus on more funding for border enforcement and regional militarized security programs as well as plans to fast track the children's deportations. Those present at the demonstration were encouraged to call the White House and their elected representatives in Congress to tell them not to reverse the *Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008* which guarantees all detained immigrant children the right to a trial with legal representation, as proposed, and to fund health and human services initiatives in Central America, rather than border and regional militarization efforts.

The action was sponsored by CISPES, School of the Americas Watch, the Washington Peace Center, the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission and the Central American Resource Center.

### **LAWSUIT LAUNCHED**

## **Federal Government Fails to Provide Legal Representation for Children in Deportation Proceedings**

*American Civil Liberties Union*

The American Civil Liberties Union, American Immigration Council, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, Public Counsel, and K&L Gates LLP today filed a nationwide class-action lawsuit on behalf of thousands of children who are challenging the federal government's failure to provide them with legal representation as it carries out deportation hearings against them.

Each year, the government initiates immigration court proceedings against thousands of children. Some of these youth grew up in the United States and have lived in the country for years, while many have fled violence and persecution in their home countries. The Obama administration even recently called an influx of children coming across the Southern border a "humanitarian situation." And yet, thousands of children required to appear in immigration court each year do so without an attorney. This case seeks to remedy this unacceptable practice.

"If we believe in due process for children in our country, then we cannot abandon them when they face deportation in our immigration courts," said Ahilan Arulanantham, senior staff attorney with the ACLU's Immigrants' Rights Project and the ACLU Foundation of Southern California. "The government pays for a trained prosecutor to advocate for the deportation of every child. It is patently unfair to force children to defend themselves alone."

The plaintiffs in this case include:

- A 10-year-old boy, his 13-year-old brother, and 15-year-old sister from El Salvador, whose father was murdered in front of their eyes. The father was targeted because he and the mother ran a rehabilitation center for people trying to leave gangs.
- A 14-year-old girl who had been living with her grandparents, but was forced to flee El Salvador after being threatened and then attacked by gang members.
- A 15-year-old boy who was abandoned and abused in Guatemala, and came to the United States without any family or friends.



• A 16-year-old boy born in Mexico who has lived here since he was 1 year old and has had lawful status since June 2010.

• A 16-year-old boy with limited communication skills and special education issues who escaped brutal violence exacted on his family in Honduras, and who has lived in Southern California since he was 8 years old.

• A 17-year-old boy who fled gang violence and recruitment in Guatemala and now lives with his lawful permanent resident father in Los Angeles.

All are scheduled to appear at deportation hearings without any legal representation and face a very real risk of being sent back into the perilous circumstances they left.

While the Obama administration recently announced a limited program to provide legal assistance to some youth facing deportation hearings, this proposal does not come close to meeting the urgent need for legal representation for all children whom the government wants to deport. And there is no guarantee that additional funding proposed by the administration will materialize or meet the overwhelming need. In the meantime, children continue to appear alone in court every day.

“While our law firm, and others around the country, provide free legal services to children facing the injustice of appearing alone in court, we can help only a small fraction of the children in need,” said Theo Angelis, a partner at K&L Gates LLP.

Kristen Jackson, senior staff attorney with Public Counsel, a not-for-profit law firm that works with immigrant children, added, “Each day, we are contacted by children in desperate need of lawyers to advocate for them in their deportation proceedings. Pro bono efforts have been valiant, but they will never fully meet the increasing and complex needs these children present. The time has come for our government to recognize our Constitution’s promise of fairness and its duty to give these children a real voice in court.”

The complaint charges the U.S. Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Health and Human Services, Executive Office for Immigration Review, and Office of Refugee Resettlement with violating the U.S. Constitution’s Fifth Amendment Due Process Clause and the Immigration and Nationality Act’s provisions requiring a “full and fair hearing” before an immigration

judge. It seeks to require the government to provide children with legal representation in their deportation hearings.

“Deportation carries serious consequences for children, whether it is return to a country they fled because of violence and persecution or being separated from their homes and families. Yet children are forced into immigration court without representation – a basic protection most would assume is required whenever someone’s liberty is at stake. Requiring children to fight against deportation without a lawyer is incompatible with American values of due process and justice for all,” said Beth Werlin, deputy legal director for the American Immigration Council.

The case, *J.E.F.M. v. Holder*, was filed in U.S. District Court in Seattle, Washington.

“It is simply unacceptable that children are forced to stand alone before an immigration judge, pitted against trained attorneys from the federal government,” said Matt Adams, legal director for Northwest Immigrant Rights Project. “Any notion of justice or fair play requires that these children be provided legal representation.”

The complaint is available at: <http://www.publiccounsel.org/tools/assets/files/0519.pdf>

## Massive Rights Violations Charged at New Mexico Detention Facility

*National Immigration Law Center*

After touring a New Mexico detention facility housing Central American refugees, immigrant advocates and lawyers have charged the Obama Administration with violating due process rights.

In a July 24 telephonic press conference hosted by the National Immigration Law Center, representatives of an advocates’ group that were allowed to conduct a short visit July 22 of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Artesia, New Mexico, where hundreds of Central American women and children are being held, detailed a laundry list of grievances.

In comments to reporters, advocates said women and children were held in crowded conditions; not adequately informed of their due process rights or given timely access to legal counsel, as per U.S. refugee law; hustled through deportation proceedings; and forced to read complex forms in English. Additionally, serious concerns were raised about the physical and emotional health of children and their mothers.

Marielena Hincapie, executive director of the National Immigration Law Center assessed the overall conditions in Artesia as “horrific.”

“Given the egregious due process violations, the administration must cease any deportations from Artesia until we can guarantee that each individual’s due process rights are being safeguarded,” Hincapie demanded.

She urged the Obama administration to enact a moratorium on deportations while seeking alternatives to detention. The immigrant rights activist said visiting Artesia required a court order to allow advocates access to the mothers and their children.

Backed by a Los Angeles federal court, representatives of 22

organizations from New Mexico and other states, including lawyers and legal workers, held two separate meetings with detainees. Members of the legal team interviewed more than two dozen detained women, many of whom said U.S. officials told them that they would be immediately deported, according to Hincapie.

Royce Bernstein Murray, policy director for the National Immigrant Justice Center, said the women held in Artesia were “profoundly confused” about their situations. Only two cubicles were set up for attorney consultations while the “law library” consisted of two computers connected to Lexus Nexus, Bernstein Murray said.

For communication with the outside world, two dozen Blackberry phones were on hand, with users limited to two-minute calls. However, women detainees complained the devices were being used as discipline tools to control “misbehaving” children.

Michelle Brane, migrant rights and justice director of the Women’s Refugee Commission said the advocates heard complaints of children not eating or losing weight, and detected depression, trauma and desperation in both women and children. In response to a reporter’s question, Bernstein Murray said mental health issues were being attended by two psychiatrists via Skype. Conditions in Artesia were “clearly not up to” international and national legal standards governing refugees, Brane asserted.

Cecilia Wang, director of the American Civil Liberties Union Immigrant Rights Project spoke about the implications of the Orantes-Hernandez case, a decades’ old legal case which specifically protects Salvadoran refugees from rapid deportation. Wang said representatives of the advocacy organizations talked with 26



mothers from El Salvador who reported widespread kidnappings, killings and intimidations in their homeland.

One mother told the visitors how her eight-year-old son was being pressured into a gang, and another family reported moving from one village to escape a gang only to encounter a new one in a different village. In such a context, the detention and deportation rhetoric emanating from Washington is “illegal and immoral as well,” Wang said.

Michelle Brane said she was initially heartened by President Obama’s declarations of the refugee situation as a humanitarian

crisis, but did not consider subsequent administration actions as matching up with the stated intentions.

On July 22, Department of Homeland Secretary Jeh Johnson, who earlier visited Artesia, reiterated Washington’s stance that any person caught entering the U.S. illegally would be sent back.

As President Obama prepares for his July 25 meeting with Central American leaders, a big question is whether the U.S. Congress will take action on the Central American refugee situation before it leaves Washington for a one-month recess [as of July 31, no bill has been passed in the House or Senate — VOR ed. note].

## **U.S. Shamefully Detaining Families Seeking Asylum with “Bond” Rule**

*American Immigration Lawyers Association, July 31, 2014*

According to documents obtained at the remote family immigration detention facility in Artesia, New Mexico, the U.S. government is refusing to allow release on bond of Central American mothers and children who have fled the uncontrollable violence in their home countries, or is setting bonds so prohibitively high as to be meaningless. The new “bond” rule will be imposed even upon those individuals who have demonstrated a strong initial claim for protection and who have the right to a full hearing before an immigration judge.

“This bond rule approach is built around the excessively punitive policy imposed briefly in 2003 by immigration hardliners John Ashcroft and Kris Kobach. That approach has since been widely discredited, and largely discarded by this Administration. How is it, then, that bona fide refugees who need our assistance, are the ones for whom the Administration is dusting off this shameful policy?” asked Leslie Holman, President of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). “These women and their children are entitled to their day in court. They should be permitted to seek the comfort and stability of life outside a detention facility while

they wait for a fair decision. The detention of families goes against the principles of fundamental fairness, human dignity, and family unity...” Holman added, “Study after study has shown that those who are found to have demonstrated a basis for relief will appear for a hearing. So why should the hardships of detention continue to be imposed upon these families at great expense to the government? The Central American families we are seeing today are voluntarily giving themselves up at the border, are affirmatively seeking protection, and have demonstrated at a preliminary government screening that they meet the threshold criteria for relief.”

New opinion polls indicate that the majority of Americans believe that the waves of children crossing into the United States from Central America are bona fide refugees fleeing persecution at home. Polls confirm public opinion that the United States should support these children while reviewing their cases and that they should not be deported immediately. “This is a humanitarian crisis that demands compassion. It is beyond belief that President Obama would support blanket refusal of this small form of relief. That is an approach that belongs in the worst of our past,” said Holman.”

## **Open Letter to the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Rebuking President Obama’s Plan for Child Refugees**

*National Coordinating Committee for Fair and Humane Immigration Reform 2014*

The influential National Coordinating Committee for Fair and Humane Immigration Reform 2014 has sent the following rebuke to President Barack Obama for his administration’s handling of the surge of women and unaccompanied minors along our nation’s borders.

Among key signatories with the 50-member committee are Protect Our Families and Save the Children Campaign, Hermandad Mexicana, Mexican American Political Association and California-Mexico Studies Center.

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Honorable Members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC):

We write you with grave concerns regarding the refugee crisis of unaccompanied minors besetting our southern border with Mexico

and the public posture and proposed actions articulated by President Barack Obama for his administration and the country.

Prior to enumerating these concerns, however, we wish to express our full support of the CHC’s April memorandum addressed to President Obama in relation to the types of executive action immigration relief urgently needed by our communities. In many ways this is central to our concerns.

While we believe that appropriate immediate attention must be paid to the current crisis — most particularly the human factor, this in no way should be an occasion or pretext not to address the pending matter before the nation: fair and humane immigration reform. Short of that, executive action in the form of broad and generous relief would be in order.

While President Obama held out in a taunting manner the

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## OPPOSE MILITARIZATION OF BORDER

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prospect of executive action by the end of summer if House Republicans don't find their way towards immigration legislative reform, we are not convinced of his sincerity for the following reasons.

President Obama's request for \$2 billion for additional border enforcement by moving more interior enforcement elements to the southern border to demonstrate his willingness to secure the perceived border sieve does not address the underlying causes of the humanitarian crisis. Further militarization of the border will not stop children in search of safe refuge from the violence that assails them in their countries of origin. Expedited deportation of the children, as proposed by the president, flatly contradicts existing statutory and constitutional protections in place to safeguard the well-being of the unaccompanied minors.

President Obama has made clear his intention to seek to undermine and undercut the statutory due process rights, protections and procedures codified into law by President George W. Bush's signature of the 2008 bipartisan legislation to address the growing challenge of unaccompanied minors arriving on U.S. territory. You are certainly aware that once a person touches U.S. soil s/he is immediately accorded both constitutional and statutory protections no different than any other U.S. citizen. In this particular case, there is special consideration accorded to children due to the tenuousness of their situation. The 2008 statute clearly delineates the procedure whereby these children refugees are to be treated and protected by the Office of Refugee Resettlement under the Department of Health and Human Services. More importantly, they are to be availed the opportunity to have legal counsel of their choosing and a hearing before a federal immigration court to address appropriately their legal status.

We are very concerned that the CHC has not vigorously opposed any effort to undermine existing constitutional and statutory protections as referenced above. Any effort to ignore or undermine these protections, either legislatively or through executive action, will have ominous consequences and implications for the rights of all U.S. citizens and permanent residents.

The current humanitarian crisis of the explosive number of unaccompanied minors on the U.S. southern border is no mere accident. Over the past two years the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has tracked the incremental increase of minors attempting to cross the border, more than two-thirds of them from Central American countries and the remaining one-third from Mexico.

For example, DHS was aware that more than 25,000 minors arrived unaccompanied at the U.S. border seeking entry in 2013. Aside from doing nothing to address the underlying causes of this refugee exodus - failing states and collapsing economies in a region where the United States has historically meddled economically and militarily -- it is a crisis that could easily have been anticipated and



prepared for and not presented by the corporate media and the administration to the public as a sudden unexpected occurrence. And, yet, without seeming insensitive to the plight of tens of thousands of children and youngsters, this situation is symptomatic of a deeper systematic catastrophe.

Record deportations, now exceeding 2 million, have resulted in devastating and near unprecedented separation of families; 25 percent of the deported are reported to have U.S.-born children; and an estimated 500,000 U.S.-citizen minors find themselves in Mexico as undocu-

mented Americans obliged to accompany their deported undocumented Mexican parents. In effect, these children find themselves exiled from their birthright to a land foreign to them. The number of similarly exiled youngsters to Central American countries are unavailable, but undoubtedly also large. Additionally, 36,000 privatized jail beds are permanently filled by the migrant adult wards of the state because they are arbitrarily budgeted to be so by Congress with the complicity of the president.

The mutual acrimonious rhetoric and foot-dragging between the Democrats and Republicans related to "comprehensive immigration reform" has come to naught as the country moves closer to November's midterm elections. Even the proposed legislation passed by the Senate last year, numbered S.744, is primarily enforcement laden and defers preferentially to the cheap labor demands of industry and agriculture. The brokered provisional legal status offered to the 11 million undocumented looks nothing like the generous amnesty signed into law by Republican President Ronald Reagan in 1986. Reputable legal experts estimate that fewer than 60 percent of the potential applicants would qualify for the tenuous status. Minimum wage earning female heads of household with children, for example, would not qualify and therefore be held deportable.

For all the reasons enumerated above, we appeal to you to oppose the enforcement measures proposed by President Obama, most especially his penchant toward expedited removals of the minors by undoing constitutional and statutory protections. The current crisis along the border is truly humanitarian and of a refugee character. Therefore, it is imperative that this administration recognize the minors as refugees as defined in U.S. legal statutes and United Nation declarations and conventions related to the treatment of refugees of which the U.S. is a signatory.

This, we expect nothing less from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus as the representative body that aspires to represent the legitimate interests of all U.S. Latinos irrespective of their legal status or whether they just arrived and touched U.S. soil seeking safe haven and refuge.

We stand ready to work with the Caucus to assure that the most basic constitutional and statutory protections accorded all persons in the United States are not weakened or ignored.



# Declaration of “Humanitarian Situation” Opens Way for Border Militarization

On June 2, 2014, President Obama issued a memorandum terming the influx of children along the border “an urgent humanitarian situation” under the *Homeland Security Act*, requiring coordination of federal government agencies. President Obama then directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a Unified Coordination Group, which includes DHS and its components together with the Departments of Health and Human Services, Defense, Justice, and State, and the General Services Administration. In turn, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson designated Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Fugate to coordinate the U.S. government-wide response.

A White House fact sheet stated that the government is “taking steps to improve enforcement and partnering with our Central American counterparts in three key areas: combating gang violence and strengthening citizen security, spurring economic development, and improving capacity to receive and reintegrate returned families and children.” Secretary Johnson, in his testimony before the House Committee on Homeland Security, laid out DHS’ plan to address the situation. It includes adding capacity to process and house the children, increasing Spanish-speaking staff, increasing transportation assets, coordinating with faith-based and voluntary organizations, and initiating a public affairs campaign in Spanish in Central America about the dangers of the journey to the United States.

Since the increase in arrivals of unaccompanied children, HHS requested and received approval from the Department of Defense for the use of Lackland Air Force base in San Antonio and a Naval Base in Ventura County in California. These facilities hold 1,290 and 600 children, respectively. Facilities at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, also were housing roughly 1,000 children as of June 25 and had capacity to hold up to 1,200. Secretary Johnson also announced plans to create new family detention centers, starting with a large temporary facility in Artesia, New Mexico.

On June 30, 2014, the President sent a letter to Congress outlining additional administration steps and requests for congressional action. The President stated he was “taking aggressive steps to surge resources to our southwest border.” The Justice Department and DHS will be deploying additional immigration judges, ICE attorneys, and asylum officers to the border. The administration’s stated goal is that “cases are processed fairly and as quickly as possible, ensuring the protection of asylum seekers and refugees while enabling the prompt removal of individuals who do not qualify for asylum or other forms of relief from removal.”

“Part of this surge will include” family detention (in the letter’s words, “detention of adults traveling with children”), and DHS will be “working to secure additional space that satisfies applicable legal and humanitarian standards.” Reports indicate the government will seek to send families held in the new immigration detention centers back to their home countries within 10 to 15 days. The letter also stated that “expanded use of the Alternatives to Detention program” would be used “to avoid a more significant humanitarian situation.”

On July 8, the Obama administration asked Congress for \$3.7 billion to address the situation. Congress must approve the funding, which would, according to news reports, speed up removal proceedings to decide if unaccompanied children can stay in the U.S. or if

they will be sent back to Central America. In a letter to House Speaker John Boehner, the White House laid out how the sum would be split between multiple government agencies to apprehend, care for, and remove unaccompanied minors who are in the U.S. According to the White House, the \$3.7 billion would consist of:

\$1.8 billion to the Department of Health and Human Services for additional capacity to care for unaccompanied children transferred from Homeland Security custody and the necessary medical response to the arrival of these children.

\$1.1 billion to Immigration and Customs Enforcement that would cover \$879 million for the detention, prosecution, and removal of apprehended undocumented families; \$116 million for transportation costs associated with the surge in apprehensions of unaccompanied children; and \$109 million for expanded domestic and international investigative and enforcement efforts.

\$433 million to Customs and Border Protection, including \$364 million for operational costs associated with apprehending unaccompanied children and families; \$29 million for expansion of the Border Enforcement Security Task Force program; and \$39 million to increase air surveillance capabilities to detect illegal activity in the Rio Grande Valley region

\$300 million to the Department of State to cover \$295 million for repatriation of migrants to Central America and to help governments in the region better control their borders and address the root causes of the migration. And \$5 million would support State Department media campaigns in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras to tell potential migrants not to make the dangerous journey.

The Department of Justice Administrative Review and Appeals is to get \$64 million, including \$45.4 million for additional immigration judge teams to increase case processing, \$2.5 million for expansion of legal orientation program, \$15 million for direct legal representation services to children in immigration proceedings, and \$1.1 million for additional legal activities.

*(Reprinted from the American Immigration Council)*



# The Process Congress Wants to Use for Child Migrants is a Disaster

Dara Lind, Vox

Congress and the Obama administration are scrambling to respond to the humanitarian crisis of 57,000 unaccompanied Central American children who have crossed the border into the U.S. this year.

One policy change that Republicans are expected to demand (in order to give the Obama administration the \$3.7 billion in emergency funding it has asked for) has actually gotten the support of members of Congress from both parties, and encouraging hints from the White House. That change: updating a 2008 law so that Central American children could be returned to their home countries as quickly as Mexican children are today.

But a secret UN report obtained by Vox paints a very disturbing picture: the current process is totally failing to protect Mexican children from harm. Children who have reason to fear for their lives, or who are victims of human trafficking, are almost certainly being sent back into danger.

And now Congress wants to use the process that is already failing to identify which Mexican children are being victimized, and expand it to Central American children fleeing the most dangerous places on earth.

Here is what you need to know.

## Mexican Children are Treated Differently than Central American Children at the Border

The process for unaccompanied Central American children who cross the border — and for any other child who is not coming from Mexico or Canada — has been the same for decades. After being apprehended at the border and processed, they are turned over to Health and Human Services. (Prior to 2002, they were turned over to another branch of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which is now defunct.) After that, children are either released to a responsible relative or given long-term housing and care while working through immigration court proceedings.

But that is not how children are treated if they come from “contiguous countries”: Canada or Mexico. Before 2008, a child from Mexico apprehended at the border would just be turned right around and sent back — the same way an adult immigrant would be.

That meant there was no protection for children in danger back home. Worse, it meant that child victims of human trafficking — children who were being taken into the U.S. not by choice, but to be exploited for labor or forced into prostitution — were getting shipped right back to the traffickers to try again.

In 2008, Congress passed a new law called the *William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection and Reauthorization Act*, or the TVPRA. One of the provisions of that law attempted to close the loophole for Mexican children. To do that, Congress came up with



a new, relatively quick screening process for children from contiguous countries, designed to make sure no children were being sent back to danger.

Wendy Young of Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), an advocacy and support organization for unaccompanied immigrant children, calls the TVPRA screening system a “compromise.” It was not at all controversial at the time, she says — “nobody really talked about it.”

Now, Congress and the administration agree that it is important to respond to the current crisis by sending back tens of thousands of Central American children — as quickly as possible. And that would require changing the TVPRA to expand the current screening system to Central American kids in addition to Mexican ones.

## How a Border Patrol Agent Screens a Mexican Child

Under current law, a Border Patrol agent is responsible for interviewing a Mexican child after apprehending her. The Border Patrol agent is only allowed to send the child back to Mexico after the interview if:

- the child is not afraid of going back to her home country because she’d be persecuted;
- the child is not a victim of human trafficking;
- the child will not be at risk of human trafficking after being sent back;
- the child is capable of making her own decision to return to Mexico.

If the Border Patrol agent is not sure that all four of these conditions are met, the child gets sent into full immigration proceedings and long-term care — just like children from any other country.

## The Screening Process Is Not Working to Protect Mexican Kids

But a secret UN report shows that the screening process, as it works now, simply fails to protect Mexican children.

In June 2014, the government allowed the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees to review Border Patrol’s screening of Mexican kids. The review was confidential, and UNHCR refuses to comment on it publicly or privately. But Vox obtained a copy of the final report that UNHCR submitted to the Department of Homeland Security.

The secret report concludes that the system is biased against Mexican children — and that Border Patrol should not be in the business of figuring out whether or not children should be sent home at all.

The way the law is written, any Mexican child should be



presumed to be in danger until proven to be safe by the screening process. But UNHCR found that in practice, Border Patrol agents are assuming that children are not in danger until proven otherwise. The way agents are actually implementing the screenings puts the burden on the children to prove they are being persecuted or trafficked. According to the report, “in all sectors (of the border) visited, CBP communicated to UNHCR that Mexican unaccompanied alien children are always returned to Mexico.”

It is not that Border Patrol agents are not sympathetic to the plight of Mexican children — indeed, they are personally very kind to the children in their care. But the secret report shows that Border Patrol agents simply do not know what to look for to figure out if a child is being victimized, or what to do if he or she is. [...]

Most of the time, though, agents never get a chance to find out about the threats facing children. “In general,” the UNHCR report says, “CBP’s style of interviewing Mexican unaccompanied alien children seemed to focus on producing quick answers rather than substantive ones.” Agents usually conducted interviews in an open room — with other interviews happening all around, and plenty of adults, children and other officers watching — even though private rooms were available. That means that trafficking victims could have been interviewed while their traffickers were just feet away.

Often, agents read questions off a form in a flat voice — not even pausing to make sure children understood. And when agents could not speak Spanish well enough for the interview, some just conducted it in English with hand gestures. One agent even typed the questions from the form into Google Translate, and then read the questions off the screen, never making eye contact with the child.

“In the cases observed” by UNHCR researchers, the report says, “the entire interview” — including two separate forms — “took approximately ten minutes.”

The screening happens so quickly that most children do not even understand what is happening. UNHCR researchers interviewed several Mexican children from each sector of the border as they were being returned to Mexico. At the Rio Grande Valley sector — the one that Central American kids are coming into today — “only one of the five Mexican unaccompanied alien children interviewed there said he was asked if he was afraid to return.”

### **Traffickers are now forcing Mexican children to work for them because they know children will be sent back**

Multiple sources have confirmed to *Vox* that at least one group really has taken advantage of the 2008 law: cartels and criminal gangs engaged in human and drug trafficking. As a separate, public UN report found earlier this year:

“Mexican children — precisely because of their age and vulnerability — are frequently recruited by criminal rings and other adults to work as human smuggling guides, because if caught, they are typically returned to Mexico without delay. These factors led to the result that 39 — almost half — of the 84 Mexican children interviewed while in the custody of the Border Patrol in South Texas were involved in the human smuggling industry.” [...]

Even children who are not already working for traffickers are ripe targets for them once they’re sent back to their home countries, says Young. Smugglers might be sending children right into the

arms of Border Patrol, but traffickers “are very adept and savvy at getting across the border without detection,” she says. “And then those kids are sold into labor or sex work.”

### **It is not that Central American Kids need to be Protected Less; It is that Mexican Kids need to be Protected More**

The first of UNHCR’s confidential recommendations to the federal government: stop putting Border Patrol agents in charge of figuring out which kids get to stay. Instead, UNHCR recommends that all unaccompanied children apprehended by Border Patrol should automatically be turned over to HHS custody — no matter where they come from. Then, Mexican children can be interviewed by a child-welfare professional who knows what to look for in figuring out if a child is being trafficked or persecuted.

That is not nearly as lengthy a process as the one that children from non-contiguous countries go through now — Mexican children who did not pass the screening interview would still be sent back to Mexico, rather than going through with a court hearing. But it is substantially more involved than the process Mexican children go through now.

But Congress and the administration are looking for ways to deport children more quickly, not less. It is generally assumed that if Central American children were put through the expedited screening that Mexican children go through, the overwhelming majority of them would not pass — and would get sent back.

Everyone agrees that the current crisis is overloading Border Patrol agents, and agents themselves are concerned that the amount of time they are spending processing children is taking away from their ability to fight crime.

Congress’ proposal would certainly save Border Patrol agents the time they currently spend supervising Central American children who are waiting to be sent into long-term care — because only a few children would get to stay that long. But it would give them a lot more work to do in terms of conducting screenings. Right now, Border Patrol agents are apprehending about 46 Mexican kids a day — and those are the only ones they are responsible for fully processing and returning. If they had to interview and process Central American children as well, they would have to deal with 211 children a day.

This means that, if anything, screenings would get even hastier and more careless. If Border Patrol agents are taking only ten minutes to interview children now, how long would they take if there were more than four times as many children to interview? It would also give Border Patrol agents another big task to complete that has nothing to do with monitoring activity at the border — which, Border Patrol agents emphasize, is the core of their job.

Democrats in Congress, Republicans in Congress, and the administration agree that the federal government should respond to the current crisis by deporting tens of thousands of children. And changing the 2008 law to expand the Border Patrol screening process to Central American children is the way that many in Congress have seized on to do it. If that really is the only immigration bill Congress manages to pass this year, the evidence indicates that it will certainly work as intended: most, if not all, children will be sent home.

# Border Crisis Exposes GOP Nativism, Democrats Indifference

*Arturo Carmona, Presente.org*

This crisis at the border has hit a nerve in the Latino community. When watching the evening news, you can hear a pin drop and feel the blood boil in the living rooms of millions of Latino homes across America. The current situation on the border in which thousands of unaccompanied Latino children are being held in detention centers is a humanitarian crisis of major proportions; and it is exposing the true colors of our political parties.

Anger and frustration are building in Latino communities. We see Latino children used as political pawns, attacked, used as props, and mocked in national media. The only thing our political leaders seem able to agree on in this crisis is on plans to deport these children by the thousands and to further militarize our border. It's shameful, and it exposes a growing disregard for Latino lives, even the lives of small children.

Republican politicians, as they trip over each other to express why these refugee children must be immediately deported, have finally come out clean on their true intentions — they never really intended or intend to pass humane immigration reform that addresses the needs of the Latino and immigrant community. Meanwhile Democratic politicians, including the president, rushing to keep their “tough on crime” image, have shown impressive indifference to the lives of small children.

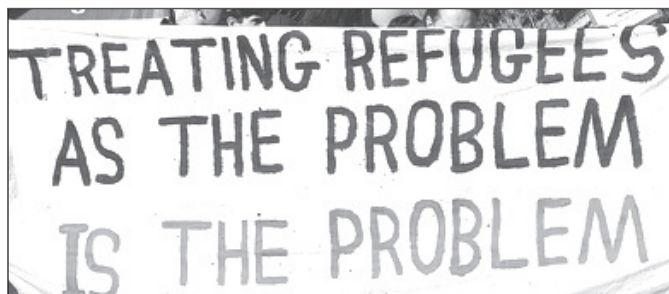
Is it any surprise that recently in Murrieta, California the scene looked eerily reminiscent of those 1960's post Brown vs. Board of Education protests-- with angry white adults yelling and screaming at small children of color, telling them to ‘go home?’

The hatred that has emerged from Republican ranks against unaccompanied children is in one way refreshing. The charade is over: their opposition to immigration reform is not about distrust of President Obama or about securing the border. This opposition is about xenophobia and complete disregard for Latino lives from Tea Party-aligned Republican leaders and rank and file party members.

This is a party that has lost its compass, unwilling to challenge the most racist of its ranks. The Republican party of today is unable to support the type of immigration reform that our country, economy and society demand.

But Latino anger is not limited to the Republicans.

On the other side of the coin you have President Obama, who in spite of efforts to impeach and sue him, continues to stall as he



tries to find ‘middle ground’ on this issue with the far right.

As the unaccompanied minors crisis continues to grow and the calls for executive leadership escalate, it's shameful that the president has not ceded to the calls for him to visit the border and see the living conditions of these children. He needs to meet with the children we are sending to Latin America to their likely death. According to Latino Decisions, a major Latino polling firm, mass deportations are leading to a hemorrhage of support from the Democrats, particularly among young Latino voters. And according to a recent Gallup poll, no other community has lost more faith in Obama than Latinos in the last year.

For many Latino leaders, Speaker John Boehner's (R-Ohio) admission to Obama a few days ago that immigration reform stood no chance of passing the House this year is long overdue, but it allows us to finally focus all our energy on the only possible solution: administrative action.

Obama still has a major opportunity to do right by Latinos. The president must use his executive authority on immigration to stop the deportations by both dismantling the enforcement dragnet raging in our communities and by issuing administrative relief that protects the millions of undocumented immigrants contributing to our society every day.

Latino leaders will not forget this moment in American history. If Obama deports thousands of innocent children, the true depths of the value he places on Latino lives will finally be out for all to see. And if even our children are not worthy of his consideration, our movement will only grow in its anger, its sense of purpose, and its righteousness in the fight to restore the value we place on all American lives. Neither Republicans nor Democrats can sit this fight out.

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