

Trump administration misses deadline to reunite immigrant children with parents

By Alec Andersen
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The Trump administration missed a court-imposed deadline Tuesday to reunite all young immigrant children who had been separated from their parents under the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" immigration policy.

In a separate ruling Monday, a federal judge in California ruled that families cannot be detained indefinitely during immigration proceedings.

At the same time, the Trump administration continues to escalate its attacks on immigrants, democratic rights, and the working class as a whole, as exemplified by the detention and imminent deportation of an El Salvadoran journalist by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the Border Patrol's harassment of US and Canadian fishing vessels in waters off the coast of Maine.

On June 26, a federal judge in San Diego set a July 10 deadline for the federal government to reunite all children under the age of five forcibly removed from their parents at the US-Mexico border and held in prison camps pending the result of their parents' immigration court case.

By Monday, however, ICE was only able to locate parents for 54 out of 102 such children the agency reported to be in detention, according to the agency's lawyer Sarah Fabian.

Fabian further stated that nine of those parents have already been deported and an additional nine had been released but their whereabouts are unknown, while an unspecified number have criminal records that prevent reunification. However, she failed to specify the nature of these alleged crimes, so it is likely that at least some of these were convicted of the supposed "crime" of crossing the southern border without proper documentation.

According to Lee Gelernt—a lawyer for the American

Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which brought the lawsuit on behalf of separated parents—the organization's own research found that at least twelve parents had already been deported. Gelernt also said during court proceedings Monday that the ACLU had identified at least ten additional separated children under five years old that were not disclosed by ICE. "I suspect we are going to hear about more."

The Trump administration now admits that at least 3,000 separated migrant children are currently detained in 100 facilities spread across 17 states, which is 50 percent more than the federal government had admitted prior to last week.

ICE has cynically exploited the "reunification" process to secure consent for the deportation of entire families regardless of asylum status and without even a semblance of due process. Guatemala's vice minister of foreign relations said last week that 11 families were set to be returned to his country through this process.

Concurrently, the Department of Justice has attempted to overturn legal precedent and federal policy to allow for the indefinite detention of migrant families pending the result of immigration proceedings.

On Monday, a federal judge in Los Angeles denounced this policy as "cynical" and upheld the restriction on the immigrant child detention to 20 days. The judge failed to provide any rationale for the imprisonment of children who had committed no crime in accompanying their parents escaping the poverty and bloodshed that US imperialism has wrought throughout Latin America.

In a further display of contempt for democratic rights and the right to asylum codified in international law, ICE detained El Salvadoran journalist Manuel Duran and is seeking to deport him for covering the criminality of the Memphis police, who arrested Duran

while he was reporting on a protest in April. Duran was first granted asylum in 2006 after receiving death threats over his coverage of official corruption and violence in El Salvador.

Meanwhile, Border Patrol agents have in recent months begun boarding US and Canadian fishing vessels in disputed waters off the coast of Maine to interrogate workers onboard over illegal immigration, including at least 20 Canadian boats, resulting in not a single arrest to this point but serving to demonstrate the agency's impunity in pursuit of its anti-immigrant aims.

What these developments, in which the Democratic Party is complicit, illustrate above all is that there exists no faction of the ruling class capable of defending immigrants and democratic rights, which can only be secured by the working class as part of a united, international struggle for the socialist reorganization of society.

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