

Catholics say: Stop the Inhumanity

We denounce the deplorable conditions and inhumane treatment of immigrant children by our own government. It is not only a violation of human dignity and rights, but also contrary to religious teachings and the sacred call to care for all people, especially those most at risk, such as children. The deaths of children in detention demands our attention and our faith compels us to speak out in defense of children who continue to experience terrible, harmful conditions in immigrant detention centers along the southern border and children in the interior who live in fear that their parents will be deported.

Dangerous overcrowding, as well as the unsanitary conditions at immigrant detention centers run by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency have been [documented by the agency's Inspector General](#).

The clear intent of the administration to use fear tactics and the detention of children and families as a means to deter migrants seeking safety and asylum in the United States is inconsistent with international law, a violation of human rights, and a denial of the inherent dignity of every human being created in the image of God.

National Campaign Policy Recommendations:

1. Unaccompanied children should be released to family, a family designated sponsor, a licensed foster-parent, or if that is impossible, then a community-based, small-scale (100 beds or less), licensed child-care facility to await their immigration hearings. Unaccompanied children should not be detained in large-scale permanent shelters or temporary influx facilities. All Health and Human Services (HHS) influx facilities should be closed.
2. Migrant children should never be separated from a parent or guardian unless the parent or guardian poses an immediate danger to the child or to others. Accompanied children should be released with their parents or guardians as they await their immigration hearings. They should not be detained in family detention centers.
3. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) processing centers must not exceed the 72-hour custody limit as required by the 1997 Flores Settlement Agreement and must not function as child/family detention centers.

4. All Customs and Border Protection (CBP) processing facilities must have licensed child welfare professionals, medical professionals, and interpreters and must be fully equipped with potable water, appropriate food, separate and enclosed bathrooms and showers, and individual beds or cots, in order to maintain the safety and wellbeing of those in the custody of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).
5. The April 2018 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between DHS and HHS, which requires HHS to share the immigration status of potential sponsors for UACs with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) must be rescinded. It is a leading cause of overpopulation in HHS shelters because sponsors fear coming forward could lead to their own detention and deportation.
6. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) must make regular, public reports on the number of processing centers in operation, the population size in each center, the average length of stay in each center, and the average length of stay in all Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) short-term detention facilities.
7. Congress must legislate standards and provide aggressive oversight of all Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) interactions with children and families.

National Organizations

Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach

Conference of Major Superiors of Men

Faith in Action

Faith in Public Life

Franciscan Action Network

Ignatian Solidarity Network

Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

Pax Christi USA

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

Stuart Center: Society of the Sacred Heart

