



HUMAN RIGHTS HERE AND NOW

Addressing Contemporary Human Rights Issues

EVERY CHILD HAS A RIGHT TO A FAMILY... EVEN AT THE US BORDER!



At any given time, more than 2,000 children, some of them toddlers, are held in the custody of US Border Patrol, overcrowded and under-cared for. They're detained for days, sometimes weeks, in facilities without enough food, without bathing – but most important without their parents. Conditions in one facility in Clint, Texas, were so horrifying to investigators checking on the US government's obligations under the Flores Agreement (which governs the care of immigrant children in US custody), that they turned into public whistle blowers.

Recent changes to US immigration policy have contributed to a humanitarian crisis at the southern border. Thousands of families – fleeing life-threatening violence, persecution, and poverty in their home countries – have been separated, often for long periods without adequate information about their status or a means to challenge the separation. There have been reports of children being forcibly medicated, physically and sexually abused, and kept in solitary confinement. At least seven migrant children have died in U.S. custody in the past year.

These conditions not only shock the conscience, but are also a violation of international human rights standards. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted by the United Nations 30 years ago to promote the rights of all children worldwide. Its foundational principles include the ideas that government policies and practices should be based on the best interests of the child. Current immigration policy and practice flout these standards.

CRC ARTICLES & IMMIGRATION

- **Article 9** calls for state parties to ensure that a child “not be separated from his or her parents against their will” and maintain direct, regular contact with parents.
- **Article 19** protects children from all forms of physical and mental violence
- **Article 20** asserts that children deprived of their family environment are entitled to special protection by the State.
- **Article 22** provides for “protection and humanitarian assistance” to a child who is seeking asylum or refugee status.
- **Other articles** address family reunification, sexual exploitation, detention and punishment, and access to health, education, and leisure.

THE CRC & THE UNITED STATES

The CRC is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history, with 193 countries having accepted it. Although the Reagan, G.W. Bush, and Clinton administrations all supported it, the US remains the only UN Member State that has not ratified this treaty. Even so, the spirit and substance of US law has consistently protected the rights of refugees in the past. Until last year the federal government, as a rule, had examined refugees cases without referring them for criminal prosecution. However, according to a recent report by the US Commission on Civil Rights,¹ current immigration policies “violate constitutional due process rights and basic standards of medical and mental health care” causing “lasting trauma and heartache, and shocking detention conditions for both children and adults.” The American Academy of Pediatrics has similarly characterized US immigration policy as “government-sanctioned child abuse”² and called for ratification of the CRC, as have many US states and cities.³

1. US Commission on Civil Rights, <https://www.hsdil.org/?abstract&did=830579>.

2. Cumming-Bruce, Nick. “U.N. Rights Chief Tells U.S. to Stop Taking Migrant Children From Parents.” NY Times, June 18, 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/06/18/world/europe/trump-migrant-children-un.html. Accessed November 12, 2019.

3. See <https://hreusa.org/projects/every-child-every-right/convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child%E2%82%AC%A0BF-campaign/>

WHAT CAN YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS DO?

- **Learn and teach** others in your community about the violation of children's rights at our border!
- **Contact your members of Congress** to let them know you are watching their response to this crisis.
- **Urge your local lawmakers to stop immigration raids** in your location, which often leave children traumatized and without parental support.
- **Support organizations** that are working with the migrants at the border, such as:

[Families Belong Together](#)

[Kids In Need of Defense \(KIND\)](#)

[Refugee & Immigrant Center for Education & Legal Services](#)

[Save the Children - Border Crisis](#)

[Teachers Against Child Detention](#)

[Women's Refugee Committee](#)

[The Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights](#)

RESOURCES

[Human Rights on the Southern Border Toolkit](#)

Human Rights Watch Student Task Force

[Ten Myths about Immigration](#)

Teaching Tolerance

[Here's What to Know About the Status of Family Separation at the U.S. Border, Which Isn't Nearly Over](#)

Time Magazine

[Fact Sheet: Family Separation at the U.S.-Mexico Border](#)

National Immigration Forum

[What Will Infinite Detention Do to Migrant Kids?](#)

New York Times

[The Psychological Impact of Child Separation at the US-Mexico Border](#)

Ted Talk

[Timeline of Family Separation at the Border](#)

Southern Poverty Law Center

[Nightmares and Dreams: Immigrant Voices from Inside Detention \(in English, Spanish, Portuguese\)](#)

Fiesta

LESSON PLANS

[Seeking Asylum in the United States](#)

The Choices Program, Brown University

[Study Guide: How Separating Families Became Official U.S. Government Policy](#)

Share My Lesson

[The Crisis at the Border: What Educators Need to Know](#)

Colorín Colorado

[Different Perspectives on Migrant Detention](#)

Facing History and Ourselves

[Curated Collection of Lessons on Refugee Rights](#)

Human Rights Educators USA

EVERY CHILD, EVERY RIGHT



Resource Kit to Teach & Learn about the CRC

**FREE
CRC
TOOLKIT**

In honor of the 30th Anniversary, HRE USA has created ***Every Child, Every Right!*** - an online curated resource to help anyone learn and teach about the CRC and advocate for child rights!