

# Fall 2018 U.S. Immigration Alert!

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## Nazi's-Style Stealing Children to Private Concentration Camp .. Trump's Real Racist Face

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## 8/10: New revelations about children separated from parents

Barry Sheppard - Green Left Weekly

San Francisco - It is now abundantly clear that the Donald Trump administration's "zero tolerance" policy towards parents with children seeking asylum in the US involves separating children from their parents, keeping the children in the US and deporting the parents.

Earlier, White House Chief of Staff John Kelly said that children in this situation would be placed in "foster care or whatever". After a federal court ruling, the administration reversed course and said it would seek to reunite the children with their parents.

It soon became clear that no records had been kept of which children belonged to which parents. DNA samples were taken in an attempt to organise reunifications.

Many parents had already departed before Trump ordered the reunifications while their children remained in the US. The government admits that 463 parents fall into this category.

Many of these deported parents were fleeing with their children from extreme violence in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. Where they are now in these countries is a mystery, since they have to hide to avoid the violence they fled from.

Obviously, it is very difficult to reunite these families.

Making light of this situation with a sick joke, Trump proposed that the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) be put in charge of finding the parents. The ACLU is one of the groups taking legal steps against the whole evil and cruel “zero tolerance” policy.

Reports from immigration lawyers say that new asylum seekers are being summarily denied asylum at the border. In June, Attorney-General Jeff Sessions announced that fleeing from gang and domestic violence — which most cite as their reason for seeking asylum — would no longer be considered valid reasons to be granted asylum.

A phone call from an official informs the parents that they do not have a valid case and they are not even granted an interview before being denied entry.

On August 7, the ACLU filed a suit in federal court challenging the new policy, arguing it violates due process “in numerous aspects”.

The ACLU filed an earlier suit arguing that many of the parents were coerced or misled to signing forms which authorities used to say means they “voluntarily” agreed to be deported. The ACLU said many could not read the forms and were confused about what they were signing. Many of the asylum seekers are indigenous, and do not read English or Spanish.

The forms contained three choices. One asked: “Do you agree to be deported and reunited with your child outside?” Those who checked that box were then deported and their children left behind.

Another asked: “Do you agree to be deported but reunited with your child before?” Those who checked that box were reunited with their children, if they could be matched up. Hundreds of children have yet to be matched with their parents.

Families that could be matched up get reunited — in jail.

The third alternative asked: “Do you want to speak with your lawyer?” One immigration lawyer reported that a client who checked that box was accosted by an officer who said to her: “Don’t you want to be with your child? Don’t you want to be reunited with your child?”

According to administration figures, 105 of the about 3000 children separated from their parents are under the age of five. Some were still breast feeding.

The government claims to have reunited 57 of them. The remaining 46 won’t be reunited with their parents, because the government claims the parents are criminals or otherwise unfit. It gives no information backing up its determination. Those 46 will now presumably placed in Kelly’s “foster care or whatever”.

Hundreds of parents with children older than five have been similarly ruled as unfit to be reunited with their children.

More information has been uncovered by investigative reporters, lawyers for the parents and their children, and even observant bystanders.

One such observer was Lianna Dunlap in Phoenix, Arizona. She noticed white vans loaded with children pulling up to a vacant office building behind her house on June 4. The next day she videotaped more children being led into the building.

Dunlap never saw children leave or go outside for three weeks, then she and her neighbors saw up to 80 children being led out. The windows were blacked out, so sunlight never entered the building. She contacted local media, which is how reporters found out.

They discovered the site had been leased in March for five years by a private company MVM, which has been contracted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). MVM admitted the building had no kitchen and few toilets. It turns out that ICE has been using private contractors to turn various buildings into detention centres for the asylum-seeking parents and their separated children.

Immigrant advocates report that some children have been released from contractor-run ICE sites with scabies and lice. A Chicago contractor, Heartland Alliance, is being investigated for abuse and neglect of immigrant children.

The *Washington Post* reported that at one Heartland Alliance site, a boy was repeatedly injected with a drug that made him drowsy. Another boy was denied medication for weeks after injuring his arm. It also said children were kept under surveillance with hidden cameras, and prevented from hugging their siblings.

The Center for Investigative Reporting said that about US\$1.5 billion has been paid by the federal government in the past four years to companies operating immigrant youth detention centers that faced accusations of serious lapses in care. This began under the Barack Obama administration.

Children held at the Shiloh Treatment Center in Texas were restrained and injected with powerful anti-psychotic drugs against their will. This made them dizzy, listless, obese and sometimes incapacitated.

On August 8, the human rights group Dream Defenders held a national day of action at offices of the GEO Group across the country. The GEO Group is ICE's single biggest contractor that runs private immigrant prisons. In retaliation, GEO Group has threatened to sue the Dream Defenders.

The separation of children from their asylum-seeking parents under Trump's "zero tolerance" policy, even if they end up reunited, and the new policy of rejecting asylum seekers at the border, has had the effect Trump aimed for: frightening would-be asylum seekers from even trying.

Trump's anti-immigrant campaign also includes widening deportation of mainly Latino workers without papers. But his sights are also set on greatly reducing legal immigration, as his ban on Muslim immigrants also indicates.

Trump recently tweeted: "I would be willing to 'shut down' government if the Democrats do not give us the votes for Border Security, which includes the Wall! Must get rid of Lottery, Catch and Release etc. and finally go to a system of Immigration based on MERIT! We need great people coming into our country!"

The "lottery" refers to a policy originally set up to give applicants from certain countries Green Cards. This allows them to work in the US. Only a small number of applicants would be chosen by lottery.

"Catch and Release" refers to the previous practice of allowing those seeking to immigrate into the country to live in the community while awaiting the decision of immigration courts on their application to stay.

One aspect of his idea of supposed "merit" was when he infamously said he didn't want people from "shithole countries" like Haiti and African countries to immigrate. Instead, he said he preferred people from places such as Norway. White people, in other words.

Trump's idea of "merit" generally involves keeping out the great unwashed hordes — ordinary workers and peasants. However, some would-be immigrants with advanced degrees needed by the technology sector would be allowed in.

The Trump administration is building on the racist anti-immigrant machinery built under Obama and previous presidents. But Trump is ratcheting up the cruelty to new levels.

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## **6/24: Separation and killing of children**

### **Ron Forthofer – Common Dreams**

President Trump's cruel policy of separating immigrant children from their parents as they sought asylum here mocked the idea that the US government values families. Unfortunately the US has a long and sad history of separating children from their parents. For example, the US took American-Indian children from their parents and Black slave families were often torn apart.

Fortunately the media provided non-stop coverage of Trump's latest abomination. In addition, the US public continues to express its outrage about this horrific situation. This public outrage is one of the factors that finally caused Trump to end his appalling policy.

Unfortunately, the media has not provided much coverage of the reasons these immigrant families are leaving everything familiar behind and seeking asylum. The media sometimes mentions the terrifying violence in Central America while ignoring the US role in creating it.

#### **Some US interventions**

For example, since early in the twentieth century, the US has frequently intervened in Central and South America in support of US corporate interests. For example, in 1935 US Marine Corps Major General Smedley Butler, one of the most highly decorated Marines in US history, wrote:

“I spent 33 years and four months in active military service and during that period I spent most of my time as a high class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism.”

In his writing, Butler specifically referred to his service in Mexico, Haiti, Cuba, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras among other places on behalf of Wall Street, US banks and other corporate interests.

The US has continued to intervene in Central and South America, including the overthrow of elected governments. In 1954 the US supported the illegal coup against the democratically-elected Guatemalan government of Jacobo Arbenz. Perhaps more well known is the US support for the military coup against the democratically-elected Salvador Allende, president of Chile, in 1973 that led to a brutal dictatorship and horrendous human rights abuses.

Skipping over many more interventions, more recently the US quickly recognized the results of a coup in Honduras in 2009 that ousted the democratically-elected President Manuel Zelaya who was not favored by the US. Increasing violence and repression against the Honduran people by the coup government and gangs followed almost immediately and continues today.

Little media coverage of some children’s deaths

Contrast highly warranted public outrage over the separation of families to the relatively little public reaction to the reported large number of extra deaths of Iraqi children during the 1990s. These deaths followed the attack on Iraq in 1991 and the subsequent sanctions. In a 1996 interview, Leslie Stahl asked Madeleine Albright, then US ambassador to the UN: “We have heard that a half-million children have died. I mean, that’s more children than died in Hiroshima. And — and, you know, is the price worth it?” Albright replied, “I think this is a very hard choice, but the price — we think the price is worth it.” The number of deaths reported was likely overestimated but, regardless, Albright’s response is chilling. The sanctions preceded the 2003 US-led attack on Iraq that was even more destructive.

Perhaps this lack of public outrage was partially related to the US media that didn’t provide non-stop coverage of US war crimes similarly to its current coverage of Trump’s sickening and indefensible separations.

Also note the meager media coverage of the killing of children and their families and the US role in these murders in Yemen, Syria, Libya and Afghanistan. Have we as a people become so jaded to the deaths of the other when it is supported by both major political parties? Or is the lack of outrage related to the media’s poor coverage?

In addition, where is the outrage against the illegal siege of and the lethal Israeli attacks on Gaza that are incredibly devastating to the entire Palestinian population in Gaza, particularly to the children? Unfortunately the US media pays little attention to Palestinians, allowing the incredible suffering and the trauma to continue.

Lastly, consider the Israeli treatment of Palestinian children who are forcefully separated from their families and imprisoned where they are often further abused. Rep. Betty McCollum has introduced H.R. 4391 that would stop US support for Israeli abuse of Palestinian children. Encourage your representative to support this bill.

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## **7/3: Targeting The Most Vulnerable: Children in Detention In The US and Palestine**

**Alice Rothchild - Mondoweiss**

When kids are brown does anyone care?

Americans are grappling with the incarceration of 10-year-olds and the concept of “tender age detention centers” while morally bankrupt politicians wring their bloodied hands. As courts begin to respond, many folks across the political spectrum are wondering, “What happens to the children caught in this catastrophe?” Interestingly, there is much we can learn from research in the US and from the Israeli experience with regard to children and prisons. The US and Israel both perceive themselves as enlightened “western democracies,” yet both have high incarceration rates, particularly for children of color, sometimes involving the same global prison industries. In both countries, these kinds of children are perceived as the “other,” the “enemy,” the “invading hordes ready to destroy America,” the “Muslim terrorists seeking to kill Israelis.” They are presented as less human and less deserving than white and/or Jewish children and less likely to evoke an empathic reaction.

The New York Times reported that the approximately quarter of a million children with incarcerated single mothers in the US are at risk for ending up in foster care, and as with the recent children on the US/Mexico border, they have the potential to being lost. Stop a moment. Can you imagine losing your own child to bureaucratic chaos and mismanagement? The Dallas Morning News noted, "No one in the criminal justice system is responsible for the safety of children whose mothers go to jail." It seems that misplacing children in the bureaucracy of prisons and foster care is not a new phenomenon.

Juvenile detention facilities in the US currently hold more than 30,000 children. The Sentencing Project reports that black children are incarcerated at a rate five times higher than white children. "More than 60 percent of child offenders are being held for nonviolent offenses like drugs, theft or even violations that only apply to minors." Some facilities are still guilty of appalling conditions and practices such as the use of violence, restraints, solitary confinement, and the denial of education to a minor.

The approximately 400,000 children in the foster care system are often prohibited from any contact with their parents. Twelve percent of those live in group homes or institutional settings.

The Times article concluded:

These children are typically taken by officials they have never met, without warning, then subjected to intrusive interrogations, medical examinations and sometimes strip searches.

Some three-quarters of cases nationwide involve not abuse, but neglect, a "really broad umbrella" that "often just looks like poverty... There's no consistent evidence that removing kids is, on average, beneficial, and there's substantial evidence that it does harm."

Much has been written about the extensive psychological and cognitive costs of abruptly removing children from their parents and placing them in prisons for indeterminate amounts of time. There is also significant trauma created by imprisoning families with their children indefinitely while basically the US justice system figures out a way to deport them to the dangers they fled, the gangs, rape, poverty, and domestic abuse. Additionally, it appears that the US government has no clear plan to reunite the 2,300 children separated at the border from their parents, including 400 children under the age of 12. Children are likely haunted by the experience of being abandoned and filled with self-doubt regarding their own worth.

In The New Yorker, one ER physician working in Colorado described what she was seeing as "government-mandated child abuse." These children will be scarred for life because our President has created a false, racist narrative and incessant fear mongering regarding the dangers of migrants and asylum seekers. One could argue that this is a cynical move to keep his base happy as midterm elections loom ahead and as he plans for a glorious re-election. Famously, the President tweeted: "We cannot allow our Country to be overrun by illegal immigrants as the Democrats tell their phony stories of sadness and grief."

This level of depravity should be met with universal condemnation by anyone with even a shred of moral fiber or perhaps a Christian understanding of our responsibilities towards the weak, the powerless, and the destitute. To have the Vice President invoking his wrathful God to justify such unconscionable policies would be shocking if we were not already so inundated with the daily shocks from the White House.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children should not be deprived of liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily and that arrest, detention, or imprisonment should only be used in extreme circumstances for the shortest period of time. Ironically, the US is the only country in the world that has not signed the treaty as reported by the ACLU.

But signing the treaty is clearly not enough. According to Defense of Children International-Palestine, last year an average of 310 Palestinian children were imprisoned for "security offenses" each month, with 60 children 12 to 15 years of age. An estimated 700 children are prosecuted each year in military courts with a 99+% conviction rate. The most common charge is stone throwing which can result in up to 20 years in prison. There have been multiple reports of physical, sexual, and verbal abuse during arrest and interrogation, with 74.5% of children reporting physical violence during arrest and 62% reporting verbal abuse, intimidation and humiliation. Solitary confinement during interrogation has been documented, with an average period of 12 days. The Israeli military courts also put children in administrative detention for months, basically imprisoning them without charges or trial.

To be absolutely clear on this, if a Jewish Israeli child was caught throwing stones at a PA security officer or a Palestinian farmer harvesting his olives, he would not end up in detention. Indeed, if he was from certain Jewish settlements, he would be celebrated as a hero. Such is the justice under military occupation. Jewish children live under civil law and of course are not viewed as the enemy.

According to Addameer, since 2000, more than 12,000 Palestinian children have been detained. The child's sentence "is decided on the basis of the child's age at the time of sentencing, and not at the time when the alleged offense was committed." Children are arrested by Israeli security often in the middle of the night by a large and intimidating group of well-armed, helmeted soldiers. Families cower in the darkness of their homes while mothers and fathers scream to keep their sons from being blindfolded, handcuffed, and taken away. Targeting the most vulnerable puts pressure on the entire community to end any form of resistance. The soldiers also seek to force the children to become collaborators, to deter future participation in demonstrations and stone throwing, and to extort their families financially with large fines. In high conflict areas, there is a pattern of indiscriminate arrests and detention with little or no evidence except the testimony of a soldier.

The arrests are highly dangerous and traumatizing, leading to epidemics of bed wetting, anxiety, depression, PTSD, agitation, and dropping out of school. Childhood trauma also increases the risk of psychological and behavioral disorders in adulthood. Psychologists in the Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture in Ramallah note that targeting adolescents disrupts a critical point in character formation and disturbs the bonds between a child and his family and society. The arrest also causes havoc with the educational process as adolescents are often in the final stages of secondary school, preparing for exams and college.

While children from Mexico and Central and South America have different experiences from Palestinian children, they have much in common. One group is suffering from gangs, poverty, drugs, repression, and violent societies while the other is suffering from a brutal military occupation, recurrent IDF incursions, soldier and settler violence, home demolitions, and poverty. Under these circumstances, taking dangerous desert journeys at the hands of coyotes or heaving a stone at a jeep spewing teargas is an understandable response. Imprisoning either group is a political and racialized decision that creates deep and long-lasting trauma in the children and their families.

While the outrage builds in the US, will anyone pay attention to the fate of the children in the West Bank and Gaza? Their lives may depend on us.

## **6/30: Coast-to-coast protests denounce Trump immigration policies**

**Dakin Andone - CNN**

Americans young and old took to the streets of US cities Saturday to say "Families Belong Together" nearly two months after the Trump administration implemented its "zero tolerance" policy toward undocumented immigrants, prompting the separation of thousands of children from their parents.

The main rally was in Washington, DC, but hundreds of marches, protests and rallies took place across the country in cities like New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Milwaukee, Denver, Miami, St. Louis, San Francisco and Los Angeles, where crowds called for the immediate reunification of migrant families and an end to family detentions and separations.

According to organizers, protesters have three demands:

- They want separated migrant families to be reunited immediately.
- They want the government to end family detentions.
- And they want the Trump administration to end its zero tolerance policy.

Attendees in Washington braved the summer heat and marched from Lafayette Square to the White House -- though the President is at his golf resort in New Jersey -- and down Pennsylvania Avenue, past the Trump Hotel, where chants of "Shame! Shame! Shame!" broke out.

In Atlanta, demonstrators carried cages with dolls inside, and marchers in Chicago encouraged each other to "fight back."

Protesters in Houston chanted, "No baby jails," outside City Hall. Farther to the south, crowds gathered in McAllen, Texas, the border town where one of the Customs and Border Protection agency's processing detention centers sits.

Several celebrities joined the rally in Los Angeles, like singer-songwriter John Legend, who sang his song "Preach," and Cher, who encouraged people to go vote in November.

Many attendees carried signs, some demanding a change to the administration's policy, others celebrating the contributions that immigrants make to the country.

"We are all immigrants," one said.

"Seeking safety is not a crime," said another.

"Let our children dream. Let them go!" a sign in Washington said.

And there were plenty of signs and shirts declaring, "I really do care, do u?" -- a dig at the jacket first lady Melania Trump wore while departing for a trip to the southwest border last week.

"I'm outraged that families are being separated," said Margaret Stokes, 54, a Virginia teacher protesting in the nation's capital. She carried a sign that asked, "Where are the children?"

"Separating families, especially young children, without a plan to reunite them is abhorrent," Stokes said. "This is not America.

"We need to let the administration know that we will not become numb to these atrocities."

Rachel Gregory, 39, was one 575 activists arrested Thursday during a protest at a US Senate office building.

She said she brought her 5-year-old son, Aaron, to Saturday's protest in Washington to show him she doesn't want to be a part of an America like that. She said the policy indicates the country has "no morals," adding that "the GOP claims to be pro-life but is stealing babies from their family."

But Saturday's protests drew people from both sides of the aisle.

"It's unconscionable, immoral. None of the words are quite strong enough," said Allison Thompson, 49, a lawyer from Fayetteville, North Carolina. She said she was a registered Republican attending her first protest.

"Separating a child from a parent -- as a parent -- is the most inhumane thing ever," the mother of two said. "There is just nothing worse to me."

The crisis has been building for weeks

More than 2,500 undocumented children were separated from their parents in the weeks since the zero-tolerance policy took effect. Under the policy, any adult caught crossing the border illegally faced prosecution, and their children were sent to federal shelters all over the United States.

Outrage over the separations has been at a fever pitch for weeks. The anger hasn't abated either, even after President Donald Trump signed an executive order June 20 reversing the family separation policy.

Six days after that order was signed, only six children had been reunited with their parents -- meaning more than 2,000 children were still in limbo, feeding the furor and raising questions about whether the government actually has a plan to reunify families.

A federal judge this week ordered a halt to most family separations at the border and the reunification of families. Within 14 days, children under 5 were to be back with their parents, and within 30 days, children 5 and older were to be reunited with theirs.

But Families Belong Together protesters don't want to wait.

Protesters share why they're in the streets

Jose Flores, a 34-year-old protester in Washington, posted a picture of his daughter Isabella on Instagram, flanked by signs supporting immigrants. He told CNN about his father who came to the United States illegally from Guatemala more than three decades ago.

"With a little luck and some persistence he was able to get his papers and brought us to the USA in 1987," Flores said. "He passed away in 2000 a homeowner, business owner and citizen.

"That is why I march today, to honor his sacrifice. And to teach my daughter of the same sacrifice."

Diane Norris of Mission, Texas, joined the protests in McAllen. Her sign said, "Now you've pissed off grandma."

"I know what it's really like down here and how scared and desperate the refugees are," she told CNN via Instagram. "Trump's policy is cruelty personified and we ALL need to speak out against it."

MacKenzie Banks, 19, carried a sign at the Washington protest that read, "If these children lived in my uterus would y'all start

caring."

"I am protesting in DC today because I cannot turn a blind eye to the clear human rights abuses brought forth by this administration," Banks told CNN. "They deserve to be held accountable for the atrocities they are committing against our brothers and sisters."

Crowds in Washington also heard from the immigrant communities most directly affected by the Trump administration's policies and rhetoric.

A 12-year-old girl named Leah, the daughter of undocumented immigrants, stepped up to the podium and spoke about living in fear of "losing my mom to deportation."

"I don't like to live with this fear," she said through tears streaming down her face. "It's scary. I can't sleep. I can't study. I am stressed."

"I am afraid that they will take my mom away while she is at work, out driving or at home," she continued. "I don't understand why this administration won't support mothers who just want a better life for their children."

'This is beyond politics'

Event organizers said Saturday's protests were about addressing an ethical issue.

"This is not left or right," said Anna Galland, executive director of MoveOn.org, one of the organizations leading Saturday's protests. "It is right and wrong."

Galland said she and US Rep. Pramila Jayapal put out a call for protests less than two weeks ago, and they were "overwhelmed" by the response.

Rallies were to take place in 750 cities big and small all over the country, Galland said.

"I think if you asked someone on the street, 'Is it a political question whether we should tear babies out of their mother's arms?' they would say, 'No, that's a moral question,'" Galland told CNN's Christi Paul. "And this is a moment of moral outrage."

Jayapal, who was also arrested during the protest at the Senate office building earlier this week, agreed.

"This is beyond politics," the Washington state Democrat said Saturday morning. According to her, the rallies are about keeping the issue "at the front of the agenda" and sending a message to Trump that he can change his policy immediately.

"You don't put kids in cages," she said. "You don't separate breastfeeding babies from their mothers. You don't put asylum-seekers in prison, and we're calling for an end to that today."

Sen. Elizabeth Warren also echoed that sentiment at a rally in Boston.

"This moment is a moral crisis for our country," the Massachusetts Democrat said.

"We will not be silent. We cannot be silent. We will build a country that reflects our values. That is why we are here."

## **8/7: FBI Pressed Detained Anti-ICE Activist for Information on Protests, Offering Immigration Help**

**An end to "administrative closure" in immigration court foreshadows a dramatic ramp-up of detentions.**

### **Cora Currier – The Intercept**

On Friday, after Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents arrested a longtime U.S. resident protesting against ICE in San Antonio, Texas, the FBI stepped in for an interrogation, telling the resident, 18-year-old Sergio Salazar, that his immigration status had been revoked because he was a "bad person." The FBI agents asked him to inform on fellow protesters and said if he did so it could help his immigration case.

“It seems evident that he was targeted here because of his involvement in the anti-ICE protests,” said Jonathan Ryan, Salazar’s lawyer from RAICES Texas, an immigrant advocacy group. “We’re very concerned about how directed and targeted and aggressive and quick this was.” ICE has been criticized for recent detentions and deportations of other activists, but little else has emerged that indicates an FBI interest in anti-ICE protests.

Salazar, an aspiring filmmaker who came to the U.S. when he was two, was quoted extensively in the San Antonio Express-News in late July under his nickname “Mapache,” saying that his group planned to remain in its encampment in front of an ICE processing facility until “ICE no longer operates in San Antonio.” He was arrested as he stepped away from the encampment a few days later.

“An ICE agent pulled up in a truck behind me, called me over,” Salazar said in a recorded call from the detention center where he is being held. “He yelled that I was under arrest...I saw another truck come up behind me and they pushed me into a van and took me away.”

The agents took him behind an abandoned Walmart, Salazar said, where they shackled him and emptied his pockets before carting him off to the South Texas Detention Complex, in Pearsall, southwest of San Antonio. Salazar is originally from Mexico, and for several years he has had legal status under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, the Obama-administration initiative that protects some immigrant youth from deportation and which the Trump administration has tried to terminate. Salazar had applied for a renewal of his status about a month earlier, but it wasn’t until he was in detention that ICE agents told him that his application had been denied. What’s more, at Pearsall, he was interviewed by FBI agents, who said his DACA hadn’t been renewed because he was a “bad person .”

“I was taken aside to a little room by the FBI,” Salazar said in the recording, which was provided to The Intercept by RAICES. “They wanted to ask me about my friends. Their words were that I am someone who has a lot to say, and they’d like to hear it. But they also were implying that if I got them useful information, about something I’m about to be a part of, that, the fact that it was useful would get to an immigration judge.”

Salazar refused to speak with them, and was then transferred to another facility, the Webb County Detention Center, on the border in Laredo, Texas. There, FBI agents questioned him again, but this time they said they had a warrant to search his cellphone, related to “impeding a federal officer,” and something to do with threats of bomb making, Salazar said.

Salazar hazarded a guess that maybe “some of my friends and I were singing protest songs and one of the words is ‘Molotov,’ so now on that basis they want to search for incendiary stuff.” But the FBI didn’t mention anything specific, and his lawyer hasn’t seen the warrant. Local law enforcement told the San Antonio Express-News that he was being looked at because of his or his group’s online postings.

Ryan said that Salazar’s work permit under DACA had expired on August 2. His letter of denial, which makes no mention of any specific reason, was dated August 3, the day of his arrest: “It’s a one-liner, saying you don’t merit prosecutorial discretion.” Up to that point, they had assumed the process for renewal was moving along; indeed, Salazar had an appointment to give fingerprints for his new work permit this week.

Salazar had joined the Occupy ICE encampment that sprang up in San Antonio in mid-July. A Facebook page called “Free Mapache,” linked by the “Occupy ICE SATX” group describes him as “a dedicated, long-time community activist who has committed himself to fighting deportations, police violence, and corporate exploitation. He is overflowing with generosity and is always willing to put himself on the line for others.” On the call with RAICES, Salazar said he spent his time at the camp distributing food and toys to children who were visiting family at the ICE facility.

On July 28, members of the fascist white supremacist group Patriot Front had descended on the camp, scattering tents, signs and coolers, and chanting, “Strong borders! Strong nations!,” a scene captured in a video posted by the Occupy group. Mapache gave his quotes to the Express-News that day, telling the newspaper that he was a self-identified anarchist. “They outnumbered us five-to-one, so we pretty much stood back and allowed them to take their videos and to attempt to tear apart the camp,” he said. He spoke out about Occupy ICE SATX’s goals, saying that ICE “is doing what (Patriot Front) wants.” In an interview with The Intercept, Salazar’s father said that he had just graduated from high school and hoped to study filmmaking in Austin. He idolized Mexican-American filmmaker Roberto Rodriguez and the Mexican directors Alejandro Iñárritu and Guillermo del Toro.

“He is not a violent person, in fact he’s a pacifist,” said the father, who declined to use his name out of concern for the family’s privacy and safety. “He’s not a criminal and he should not be in jail.”

But about three weeks before Salazar’s arrest, a neighbor told the family she’d noticed a strange car idling in front of their house.

“She went up to them to ask what they were doing. And they lowered the glass and she saw that they had the initials FBI on their shirts,” Salazar’s father said. The neighbor said the FBI asked her about who lived in Sergio’s house, and she told them it was a couple and their two sons. She came soon after to tell Sergio’s father about the incident.

“It was really strange, we’ve never had problems with the law, we don’t get involved in anything,” he said.

As ICE cracks down on undocumented immigrants across the country, detaining people who previously would not have been priorities for deportation, many advocacy groups are expressing concern that the agency is singling out activists. In February, The Intercept reported on a lawsuit brought by a coalition of groups after two high-profile New York-based immigrant leaders were detained and one of them deported.

William Perdue, a lawyer with Arnold & Porter who is working on the case, said he had tallied at least a dozen instances of activists who’d faced immigration enforcement actions.

“It’s really very simple,” said Perdue. “The government can’t retaliate against someone for criticizing the government, and that includes immigration officials. They’re not allowed to take enforcement action against activists because of their activism.”

Jacob Hutt, a fellow with the American Civil Liberties Union’s Speech, Privacy and Technology Project, added that the ramifications extended beyond an individual’s First Amendment rights: “It tells everyone else in your community what they can expect to happen to them if they speak out on an issue, and that’s especially chilling when people are already fearful because of their immigration status.”

A spokesperson for ICE said that Salazar was arrested “for being in violation of federal immigration law.” The statement said that ICE “does not target unlawfully present aliens for arrest based on advocacy positions they hold or in retaliation for critical comments they make,” but added that “target information is based on intelligence-driven leads – this may include open source information.” United States Citizenship and Immigration Services did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Salazar’s DACA denial.

The FBI has leveraged immigration charges to gain information in the past. For years, Muslim immigrants in particular have complained that the FBI leaned on them for information about terror investigations. The Intercept has published FBI documents showing that the bureau works with Customs and Border Protection to identify potential sources, offering them an “immigration relief dangle” in exchange for cooperation. Internal FBI policy documents also confirm that the FBI coordinates with immigration authorities to locate and deport informants who are no longer useful to the bureau.

Asked about this specific case, San Antonio FBI spokesperson Michelle Lee said “our policy is to neither confirm or deny the existence of an investigation.” She added that “we’re not aware of any criminal charges against Mr. Salazar at this time.”

FBI involvement has not surfaced in recent stories of deported immigration activists, but over the past several years documents have shown FBI and Department of Homeland Security surveillance of Black Lives Matter activists. The surveillance in those cases was often triggered by social media posts that law enforcement identified as signaling a potential threat, as may have happened in Salazar’s case.

Ryan said that Salazar was likely to have an immigration hearing scheduled in the next few months, and that RAICES is demanding his immediate release in the interim.

In a call with reporters over the weekend from Laredo, Salazar said that he had never previously felt persecuted, and that the ICE arrest came out of nowhere.

His father last spoke with him on Sunday. “He’s doing a little better, but he’s still sad, still desperate,” he told The Intercept. “I feel really angry, really sad, really frustrated and the only thing I want is for him to come back home.”

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## **8/8: At White House CEO Dinner, Trump Call Most Chinese Students “Spies”**

### **Trump rants behind closed doors with CEOs**

**The president rails against China over dinner with execs and senior White House staff.**

**Annie Karni – Politico**

Over a dinner of beef tenderloin and lobster tail at his private golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, President Donald Trump on Tuesday night unleashed a rant about China as corporate executives listened on.

The president entertained a group of 15 CEOs and senior White House staff at a dinner in the middle of his annual working vacation. The dinner was billed as “an opportunity for the president to hear how the economy is doing ... and what their priorities and thoughts are for the year ahead.”

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Trump, who headed into vacation frustrated that China was retaliating against his tariffs, said it was going to be his priority to stop the rival world superpower from getting unfair trade advantages.

China has reacted to American tariffs on Chinese goods in kind, imposing new duties on \$50 billion worth of American products. That retaliatory action has angered and surprised Trump, according to people familiar with his thinking.

Trump in April tweeted that "Xi and I will always be friends, no matter what happens with our dispute on trade," and that he saw a "great future for both countries!"

At one point during the dinner, Trump noted of an unnamed country that the attendee said was clearly China, “almost every student that comes over to this country is a spy.”

The White House declined to comment.

The 13 CEOs assembled included Pepsi CEO Indra Nooyi, Fiat Chrysler CEO Michael Manley, Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg, Ernst & Young CEO Mark Weinberger and Johnson & Johnson CEO Alex Gorsky, among others. The group included some longtime Trump friends, including supermarket magnate John Catsimatidis, Newsmax CEO Chris Ruddy and New York City real estate developer Richard LeFrak.

Over dessert — a “signature Trump cookie,” served with Tahitian vanilla ice cream and chocolate and caramel sauces — Trump entertained questions from the executives, many of whom pressed him on immigration policy. The business world, which wants the administration to soften its hard immigration policies, was told, at least on Tuesday night, exactly what it wanted to hear.

Twice during the dinner, Trump yelled over to Chris Liddell, a deputy chief of staff in attendance, and told him to prepare an executive order for Monday that would allow top performers in schools, who he called “first in their class,” to stay in the country for at least five years on a visa, the attendee said.

Trump also grilled the CEOs about what reforms he could enact that would help them. At one point when he was taking questions, the attendee said, Trump asked several attendees for advice on how to fix the student loan crisis.

The senior staffers who promote the most hard-line immigration policies, like Stephen Miller, were not in attendance. Instead, the president’s son-in-law and daughter, Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump, attended the dinner, along with economic adviser Larry Kudlow and others. Ivanka Trump last week called the family separations that have been occurring under her father’s watch a “low point” in her time serving in his administration.

Overall, according to the attendee, the dinner was a friendly gathering. Trump, who at about this time last year alienated the corporate world after his comments on race after the violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, received a positive reaction from the same crowd Tuesday night.

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