

‘Beyond Barbaric’: Internal Government Report Reveals Migrants Forced to Stand on Toilets for Breathing Space at Overcrowded US Detention Center

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“This is insane. Not only can they not move, they can’t breathe, they can’t eat, they can’t do anything like this. Children have died and will continue to die if this is not stopped now.”

A federal immigrant detention facility in El Paso, Texas is so unsanitary and overcrowded that migrants held by the Trump administration were forced to wear “soiled clothing for days or weeks” at a time and stand on toilets to find breathing space in their cells.

That’s according to a not-yet-released report by the Department of Homeland Security’s inspector general, which was [obtained exclusively](#) by *CNN* on Friday.

According to *CNN*, the inspector general visited the El Paso Del Norte Processing Center unannounced earlier this month and found that the Border Patrol facility—which has a maximum capacity of 125 people—was holding around 750 migrants on May 7 and 900 on May 8.

The report—which observers described as “[absolutely appalling](#)” and “[horrific](#)”—also detailed overcrowding in the detention center’s individual cells.

CNN, citing logs from the inspector general, reported that a “cell with a maximum capacity of 12 held 76 detainees, another with a maximum capacity of eight held 41, and another with a maximum capacity of 35 held 155.”

“We also observed detainees standing on toilets in the cells to make room and gain breathing space, thus limiting access to the toilets,” states the report.

When Trump administration officials were notified of the watchdog’s findings, they appeared to place blame on the immigrants themselves.

“The current situation on the border represents an acute and worsening crisis. Our immigration is not equipped to accommodate a migration pattern like the one we are experiencing now,” DHS said in a written response to the inspector general obtained by *CNN*. “The speed with which illegal migrants are transiting through Mexico to reach our southern border is frustrating our best efforts to

respond quickly.”

This is outrageous on at least two levels: 1) The treatment of human beings by the US govt is absolutely appalling. 2) When caught, DHS officials had the gall to blame the problem on the migrants (@adamserwer's "the cruelty is the point" comes to mind) <https://t.co/9kQFqkKvzS>

— Gady Epstein (@gadyepstein) [May 31, 2019](#)

RAICES, the largest immigration legal services non-profit in Texas, expressed outrage at CNN's report on the inspector general's findings.

“This is insane. Not only can they not move, they can't breathe, they can't eat, they can't do anything like this,” RAICES tweeted. “Children have died and will continue to die if this is not stopped now.”

Children have died and will continue to die if this is not stopped NOW.

This kind of treatment and detainment is completely and utterly INHUMANE and we will not stand by as it happens.

— RAICES (@RAICESTEXAS) [May 31, 2019](#)

Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), in a tweet responding to the watchdog's findings, called for the resignation of every Trump administration official “involved in this horrific, cruel, and inhumane policy.”

Every single person involved in this horrific, cruel, and inhumane policy needs to resign. The administration's continued treatment of immigrants is beyond barbaric - and shows exactly how racist and xenophobic Trump is. <https://t.co/Trw4qn5Suc>

— Rep. Barbara Lee (@RepBarbaraLee) [May 31, 2019](#)

“The administration's continued treatment of immigrants is beyond barbaric,” said Lee, “and shows exactly how racist and xenophobic Trump is.”

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