

The Inhumanity of U.S. Immigration Policies Exposed Again in a Single Image

Statement of the Network of Intellectuals, Artists and Social Movements in
Defense of Humanity

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“The displacement from south to north is inevitable; fences, walls and deportations will not curtail it: they will come in millions. They come looking for what we stole from them. There is no return for them because they come from a famine of centuries and they come tracking the smell of the everyday food...” Jose Saramago, Nobel Prize in Literature 1998

The photograph of a migrant mother and her diapered and shoeless infants running in fear from teargas fired by the US border patrol — supported by 5000 US troops with shoot-to-kill orders — is not going to disappear easily from the collective memory. Even the mainstream media cannot spin it away. This image captures the inhumanity of the situation; it is becoming viral and travelling around the world. It is one of those iconic, indelible images like the Vietnamese girl running covered in napalm after an aerial attack incinerated her village in 1972.



They are both running from US terror and its continuum of a policy of war. Hundreds of thousands of people from Central America — facing unimaginable dangerous obstacles — have fled their homes and communities to reach the North where the profit-mad system of exploitation and violent repression that created their condition in the first place also despises them. They have no place else to go.

Ironically the tear gas attack at the border took place on the last day of the Thanksgiving holiday when many in the US were enjoying and sharing time with family members.

Compliant U.S. corporate and government support of Central America elites and political despots have created unlivable conditions that force people to flee their homes and countries.

No matter how much impoverished Central American asylum seekers have been characterized as dangerous criminals and disposables in the rants of the xenophobic president and ignored by the congress of the rich for the rich, we will not allow the truth of that image to be erased from our minds. It is a mirror of the inhumanity that festers in the government buildings in Washington and the stock peddling floors of Wall Street. And fair-minded U.S. citizens must act to create and enforce a just, humane immigration policy.

The Network of Intellectuals, Artists and Social Movements in Defense of Humanity demands the U.S. government respect the human rights of Central American immigrants and grant asylum to those who request it. We also demand the demilitarization of the border with Mexico and the cessation of violence against innocent people whose only crime is to flee conditions of poverty in search of a better life for themselves and their families.

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