

‘Should Send Chills Down the Spine of Anyone with a Conscience’: Trump Reportedly Considered Detaining Kids at Guantanamo

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Global Research, April 25, 2019

[Common Dreams](#) 24 April 2019

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

The Trump administration earlier this year [reportedly considered](#) detaining migrant children at Guantánamo Bay, the [17-year-old U.S. prison](#) in Cuba that human rights advocates have condemned as a horrific stain on American history.

“The idea of incarcerating children at Guantánamo should send chills down the spine of anyone with a conscience,” **Sen. Jeff Merkley** (D-Ore.) [tweeted](#) Tuesday. “This is what happens when our president is so racist that he sees migrant children as an ‘invasion’ and not vulnerable children to be protected.”

The Trump administration’s proposal was first [reported](#) by the *New York Times*, which explained that Guantánamo “has a dormitory facility that has been used in the past to hold asylum-seekers.”

Officials with the Department of Homeland Security “examined” the plan earlier this year, the *Times* reported.

According to the *Times*:

While there were no ‘immediate’ plans to house migrant children at Guantánamo Bay, the Defense Department is attempting to identify military bases that might be used for that purpose, a department spokesman, Tom Crosson, said on Monday...

Meanwhile, authorities are struggling to identify new locations where migrants can be held in detention. The military awarded a \$23 million contract in February to build a ‘contingency mass migration complex’ at Guantánamo, a plan that would expand the existing facility to house 13,000 migrants and 5,000 support staff in tents. That project appears intended primarily to accommodate a crush of migrants that might accompany a new crisis in the Caribbean, though it could theoretically be used to house Central Americans.

Physicians for Human Rights, an advocacy group that has long called for the closure of Guantánamo, called the Trump administration’s proposal “beyond appalling.”

Beyond appalling: “In one initiative examined earlier this year, Department of Homeland Security officials looked at housing [#migrant](#) [#children](#) at [#Guantánamo](#) Bay, Cuba, which has a dormitory facility that has been used in

the past to hold asylum seekers." <https://t.co/9qfPh77vYg>

— Physicians for Human Rights (@P4HR) [April 23, 2019](#)

The human rights group Amnesty International also [denounced the reported plan](#) on Twitter.

“Kids should not be in detention, period. And even considering putting them Guantánamo Bay is inhumane,” the organization said Tuesday. “Detaining asylum-seekers is a choice, and it’s a harmful and irresponsible one. The Trump administration’s mass detentions must come to an end.”

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