



When did seeking asylum in America become a crime?

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A lot of attention has been focused in recent weeks on the plight of young children from Central America being separated from their parents when they cross the U.S. border seeking asylum as they flee drug gangs, violence and threats of murder in their home countries. Succumbing to mounting pressure from the press, clergy and even some Republicans, President Donald Trump signed an executive order June 20 seeming to back away from his previous hard line on asylum-seekers that saw thousands of tearful children ripped from their parents' arms as their parents were labeled "criminals" for seeking asylum and a better life for their children.

Challenges still remain. Nothing has happened to address the problem of reuniting children and parents already separated by Trump's "zero-tolerance" policy.

Are the hastily assembled tent cities and detention centers, still shielded from oversight and inspection by Congress and the press, destined to become gulags for the parents and children fleeing violence in their home countries to seek asylum in America? Is this really what America stands for and what we have become? Perhaps the real motivation is that Trump seems determined to force Congress to pony up \$25 billion for his wall, since it has become clear to everyone that Mexico isn't going to pay for it, and he's willing to hold children and their parents hostage to do so.

What has been happening on our southern border, separating parents and innocent children seeking asylum, needs to be called out for what it is: kidnapping and child abuse, directed against the most vulnerable in violation of our Constitution, the United Nations Charter and the most common tenet of the worlds' religions — to treat others as you would want to be treated.

Trump still wants to persuade us that we're facing an invasion of rapists, murders and hardened criminals seeking to cross an "unprotected border."

The photos of women and young children crying as they're being separated from their parents don't bolster Trump's case, so he's trying to blame Democrats for this humanitarian crisis that he created.

Like many of the president's assertions, his claims about immigrants and crime aren't supported by those pesky things known as facts. Immigration across the U.S.–Mexico border, despite some recent increases, has declined dramatically since 2000, as the above graph by FactCheck.org illustrates.

In reviewing the available data on crimes committed by immigrants, the conservative CATO Institute concluded: “The data we do have suggests that they are actually much less crime-prone than native-born Americans.” The study’s author, Alex Nowrasteh, concludes: “Restrictionists want the public to believe that undocumented immigrants are criminals in order to justify harsh enforcement policies and crackdowns. But before America goes down this draconian path, it is vital that it gets the facts straight.”

Seventy-four nations admit more refugees as a proportion of their population than does the United States. Lebanon has admitted 249 times more refugees as a proportion of their population than the U.S. Germany’s rate of refugee admissions is four times that of the United States, and despite Trump’s claims that Germany is experiencing a crime wave that he has attributed to a liberal immigration policy, Germany’s crime rate in 2018 is at a 26-year low.

It is being falsely asserted contrary to U.S. Code § 1158 that asylum seekers must enter the U.S. at a designated port of arrival and that failure to do so may result in arrest. Presumably this was the basis for the Trump administration’s arrest of parents who are crossing the border with their children at other than a designated port of arrival.

So the question needs to be asked. When did seeking asylum in America become a crime? And why is Trump spreading lies about immigrants and Democrats and enacting a zero-tolerance policy that separated frightened children from their parents? This is nothing less than state-sponsored terrorism and it cannot be allowed to stand.

In issuing an executive order to reverse his policy of separating children and parents seeking asylum, it appears that President Trump could see the writing on the wall. Thanks go to the thousands of constituents, clergy, parents and grandparents who raised their voices in protest against this outrage.