



Human Rights Committee

TOPIC B:

Human Rights Violations in the US Border

Undersecretary:

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INTRODUCTION

The U.S.-Mexico border has always been a contentious place, with strong political views on both sides of the border, as well as an ever constant influx of people to the north. In recent years, however, stricter immigration policies from the US, greater secrecy over the practices and dealings going on at the border, along with higher than normal numbers of people hoping to make the cross. Many cases of human rights abuses have been reported by people who attempted to cross, both legal and illegally. Disturbing accounts of mistreatment, in what some report as a systematic problem, have raised the concern of the international community. It would seem, as Amnesty International puts it, that these policies seek not only to deny people asylum, but to deter people seeking asylum as well (AMNESTY, 2018).

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

During 2017 and 2018, the ex-president of the United States, Donald Trump, implemented new immigration policies; these have affected many people and violated human rights. It is believed that the goal was to fully dismantle the US asylum system, or make it as hard as possible to those applying. Some of the new policies and implementations are to no longer allow the entrance of asylum seekers in the US-Mexico border, illegally separating families, and detention of asylum seekers without parole. (AMNESTY, 2018).

Mexico and the United States worked together in 2019 to solve the challenges of the irregular migration. Mexico increased the enforcement to stop the influx of migrants, and supported the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) of the US. This means that Mexico accepted thousands of migrants to stay on Mexican side of the border while they waited for their immigration court hearings. From June 2019 to May 2020, Mexico apprehended 145,682 migrants. Both countries know that by developing economic growth in the south of Mexico, they can also increase prosperity and security in Central America. To achieve this, Mexico and the U.S. put in motion the Comprehensive Development Plan. As part of the plan, Mexico is working together with other nations in Central America (U.S. Department of state, 2020). It is still unclear, however, whether the scope of this plan comprehensively improves the conditions in these regions, or if it is an attempt to stop migrants' travel through Mexico.

Years ago, most migrants that tried to cross the border were mainly Mexican. Today, that has changed, and migrants who seek asylum in the United States are mostly from Central American countries like Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Many of them are fleeing from gang recruitment, abusive spouses, and corrupt police. Before, immigrants tried to enter the U.S through the mountains, but now they know that the best way is by an asylum claim. In 2017, there were over 120,000 claims.

In 2018, trying to stop all the families from entering, the United States deported the parents, leaving the children in their country alone; this was later also known as the zero-tolerance policy. Shortly after that, pictures and videos became public and showed the deplorable conditions the children were living in. They slept in cages and cried for their parents, all while in many cases they were being denied access to medical care. In June of that same year, the American Civil Liberties

Union (ACLU) filed a suit for this. As a response, a U.S. judge ordered for migrant children to be reunited with their parents within a month. Thousands of families were together again. The U.S. had launched a pilot program of the zero-tolerance policy in 2017. From the 1,030 separated children in that year, only 485 are now with their parents. The current pandemic has made the possibility of finding the parents slimmer (BBC, 2020).

The international human rights state that “no human being can be ‘illegal’ or outside the protection of the law [...] discrimination and abuse based on immigration status are violations of human rights, U.S. government policies continue to sanction human rights violations against migrants and immigrants” (ACLU, 2020). It is expected that with the new elected president, Joe Biden, several policies Trump implemented, can be reversed. Nevertheless, some of the implementations the ex-president made, cannot be reversed that easily. Although president Biden manages to remove some of the implemented policies, the change will not happen immediately (VOA News, 2020).

UNITED NATIONS INTERVENTION

The UN stated that migrant children should stay with their parents. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet said, “As a pediatrician, but also as a mother and a former head of State, I am deeply shocked that children are forced to sleep on the floor in overcrowded facilities, without access to adequate healthcare or food, and with poor sanitation conditions”. She also stated that detaining migrant children can be cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; it is prohibited under the international law. Besides, it is still unknown what the lasting effects this severe trauma will have on the children. She did highlight that if there needed to be a deprivation of liberty, it should be the last resort, and the people had to be under conditions that met the international human rights standards (UN News, 2019).



POINTS TO CONSIDER

- The international refugee laws.
- The Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP).
- The countries involved in the Comprehensive Development Plan and the effects it has on every nation involved.
- The United States has a new president since January 20, 2021.
- The process to file an asylum.

QUESTIONNAIRE

- A. What is my country's position?
- B. What are my country's policies?
- C. What can my country do to solve this issue?
- D. Which countries can my delegation work with?
- E. What are three possible solutions?
- F. What has been done to solve the problem?

USEFUL LINKS

- UN rights chief slams 'unconscionable' US border policy of separating migrant children from parents | UN News. (2018, June 18). Retrieved from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/06/1012382>
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