

USA: oversight report on migrant family separations proves 'cruelty was the point'



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Call for prosecution of government officials and contractors

Responding to a report from the US Department of Justice's Inspector General Michael E Horowitz showing that the department - and in particular then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions - was a driving force behind the "zero tolerance" separation policy that intentionally and cruelly separated families at the US-Mexican border, Denise Bell, Amnesty International USA's researcher for refugee and migrant rights, said:

"This is a damning condemnation of the Trump administration's inhumane family separation policy. "This report reinforces what we already knew: the cruelty was the point and the government ripped families apart intentionally to keep families from seeking safety here. "This utter disregard for people's lives caused irreparable harm. The cruelty of the Trump administration ceases to shock, while the human cost remains vast and families continue to live with the destruction. "The report makes clear that accountability for these actions is all the more pressing. A criminal investigation is a critical and necessary step to ensure such wrongs are never repeated. There must be, where there is sufficient evidence, prosecution of all government officials, personnel, and contractors who are responsible for the abuses committed during this shameful period of our history - no matter their current or former level of office."

Amnesty is calling on the incoming Biden administration to find and reunify families, while deported parents who were

separated from their children must be paroled into the United States. Amnesty is also calling on the government to provide monetary compensation and access to medical, legal, mental health and other social services as needed.

“The new administration must act quickly and urgently to repair this harm as much as possible. While families may never be made fully whole again, the US government has an obligation to help these families and provide redress, including pathways to lawful status for affected families.”

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