



His Excellency Mr Julian Braithwaite
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
UK Mission to the UN and Other International Organisations in Geneva

by email

5 October 2018

Dear Ambassador

It is with a grave sense of disappointment and injustice that we write to you to highlight the human rights abuses of children and families seeking asylum in the United States, perpetrated by President Trump's administration.

Following the announcement of the 'zero tolerance' policy on unauthorised immigration announced by Attorney General Jeff Sessions in April 2018, the US has been systematically, and intentionally, separating children as young as five from their asylum-seeking parents. In the six weeks immediately following the introduction of the 'zero tolerance' policy alone, 2,000 children were taken away from their parents. Furthermore, over 450 parents have been deported without any knowledge of their children's whereabouts, leaving these children vulnerable and isolated. The damage to these children and their families will undoubtedly be both lasting and severe.

President Trump's administration has defended this illegal practice by suggesting it is the 'most effective' way to deter what is considered unauthorised migration. It bears reminding that many of these families are fleeing from the Northern Triangle of Central America, considered one of the most dangerous parts of the world. This makes the direct contradiction of their human rights even more shocking.

In response to uproar from the international community and an order from a federal judge to reunite families, President Trump's administration has made an attempt to replace family separation with indefinite incarceration. We trust you will agree that this is nothing short of inhumane.

While these grave violations of human rights would be of concern anywhere in the world, it is especially disconcerting given the reputation enjoyed by the United States. The 'American Dream' continues to be heralded as the gold standard of freedom. Prosperity, equality, and liberty are the very reasons that these families are trying to find refuge within America's borders. What they find instead is criminal prosecution, separation, and systematic disregard for their human rights.

As educators and unionists, we have built our careers on defending the rights and futures of children and colleagues both at home and abroad. We urge you to fulfill your commitments to these individuals and use the opportunity presented by the Human Rights Council in February 2019 to condemn the acts of President Trump's administration. We call on you as the UK's representative to the HRC to use your position to hold President Trump's administration to account and protect the rights and futures of these families.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary W. Boustead".

Dr Mary Boustead
Joint General Secretary
National Education Union

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Courtney".

Kevin Courtney
Joint General Secretary
National Education Union