

U.S. Border Patrol Continues Threatening the Rights and Livelihoods of Individuals

Commonly known for their illegal removal tactics and infringement on the rights of individuals, the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) continues to pursue President Trump's agenda in criminalizing migrants and treating them as less than human. These practices stem from a lack of oversight and inadequate training. More recently, the rhetoric of the Administration and others have inspired border agents to pursue illegal detention tactics and practices which are becoming more pervasive. ICE often eliminates an immigrant's right to a fair court hearing. The government will then quickly reach a judgment without considering individual circumstances, depriving them of their constitutional rights to due process and equal protection. Immigrants' Fourth Amendment protections are threatened as they are frequently subjected to unreasonable searches and seizures without a warrant. The practices of ICE not only threaten immigrants' constitutional rights, but it promotes racial, ethnic, and national origin-based discrimination.

Issues with border enforcement are nothing new, but the ways in which immigrants are being detained, threatened, and even tortured is inhumane and promotes a xenophobic rhetoric, which is already so prevalent in the United States. In the past eight months, six migrant children, detained by border authorities, are reported to have died. Most recently, news sources brought to light a 10-year-old girl from El Salvador who died in US custody last year. President Donald Trump has declared his commitment to halt illegal immigration at the border of US and Mexico. Conversely, the Democratic party has made demands for investigations into child deaths at the border and other unlawful practices of ICE. The tragic events striking the month of May only highlight these issues and the dire need for border control and enforcement reform.

Mark Morgan began his position as the new director of ICE on May 28, 2019 following President Donald Trump's announcement. Morgan was previously head of the Border Patrol and has vocalized his support for Trump's border wall, among other marginalizing policies. Morgan embodies the racist actions of ICE through his recommendation for family separation and the leadership he took to promote the Muslim ban.

ICE is not the only contributor of rights violations at the border; they are just one agency within a larger institution which continues to threaten the rights of individuals. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is beginning to consider DNA testing at the US southern border. This program would help to identify and prosecute those involved with human smuggling who pose as family members. This initiative came to light after many migrants have used fraudulent documents to create "fake" families. Although the intentions of the DNA testing are to protect migrant children, it only further promotes a rapidly spreading xenophobic rhetoric. It also is a violation of an individuals' privacy. This program takes peaceful asylum seekers and creates an image of violent criminals attempting to cross the border, only further promoting the Trump Administration's tactic of intimidation and harassment to stop the flow of asylum seekers.



The US border tragedies will only continue without real reform and proper training within ICE. The policies and agenda of the Administration continue to perpetuate negative stereotypes surrounding migrants from Mexico, leaving the power to violate their rights and livelihoods unchecked. We must denounce racist and xenophobic rhetoric from US leaders and individuals and support comprehensive reform and new leadership of our border enforcement.