



A Union of Professionals

June 20, 2018

Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Human Rights Council Branch-Complaint Procedure Unit
OHCHR-Palais Wilson
United Nations Office at Geneva
CH-1211 Geneva 10
SWITZERLAND

Email: CP@ohchr.org

Dear High Commissioner Al Hussein:

Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

–Universal Declaration of Human Rights

We are filing this complaint to the United Nations Human Rights Council in a plea for justice for the children and families subject to torture and gross violations of human rights as the result of the “zero tolerance” policy promulgated and promoted by President Donald Trump and Attorney General Jeff Sessions. This policy is intentionally separating children from their parents who are seeking asylum and protection from civil war, intolerance and social upheaval.

The trauma caused by family separation is heinous under any circumstances, particularly in a civil society centered on family values. It is intolerable and unlawful to separate families who have sacrificed everything to escape the toxic circumstances of their home countries.

The right of asylum is fundamental among human rights principles and is well-established in U.S. and international law. The Trump administration’s blanket policy of zero tolerance is far from a legitimate attempt to resolve important migration issues before us; rather it reveals the administration’s cruelty and its lack of decency and respect for humanity. When the administration tweets “if you are seeking asylum for your family, there is no reason to break the law,” it reveals a cynicism that is both craven and immoral.

The administration’s refusal to grant asylum to refugees violates the letter and the spirit of numerous U.N. treaties and protocols that establish the international community’s human rights norms and standards, including the Right to Family, the U.N.’s Convention Against Torture, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the U.N.’s Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders.

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

AFT Teachers
AFT PSRP
AFT Higher Education
AFT Public Employees
AFT Nurses and Health
Professionals

555 New Jersey Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
202-879-4400
www.aft.org

Randi Weingarten
PRESIDENT

Loretta Johnson
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Mary Cathryn Ricker
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

VICE PRESIDENTS

J. Philippe Abraham
Shelvy Y. Abrams
Mary J. Armstrong
Barbara Bowen
Christine Campbell
Zeph Capo
Alex Caputo-Pearl
Donald Carlisto
Larry J. Carter Jr.
Kathy A. Chavez
Melissa Cropper
Evelyn DeJesus
Aida Diaz Rivera
Jolene T. DiBrango
Marietta A. English
Eric Feaver
Francis J. Flynn
David Gray
David Hecker
Jan Hochadel
Fedrick C. Ingram
Jerry T. Jordan
Ted Kirsch
Frederick E. Kowal
Karen GJ Lewis
Louis Malfaro
Joanne M. McCall
John McDonald
Martin Messner
Daniel J. Montgomery
Michael Mulgrew
Ruby J. Newbold
Candice Owley
Andrew Pallotta
Joshua Pechthalt
Paul Pecorale
David J. Quolke
Stephen Rooney
Denise Specht
Wayne Spence
Tim Stoelb
Ann Twomey
Adam Urbanski



Al-Hussein/page 2

In filing this complaint, we call upon the UNHRC to help ensure that migrant families who have been separated have equal and effective access to justice. We ask the council, in the name of the international community, to condemn this policy of separating families and call for its immediate revocation.

We were gratified to see your statement against the zero tolerance policy. Your swift condemnation has been welcome, but at this moment actions are more important than words. That is what has moved us to file this complaint. We know that your actions, and the council's eventual judgement, will be validated by the thousands of concerned citizens who joined us in submitting this complaint.

Sincerely,



Randi Weingarten
President, American Federation of Teachers

RW:bsc opeiu#2, afl-cio

Enclosure