

# I WELCOME



## HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION ACTION TOOLKIT FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS

### USA: MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY CHILDREN SEPARATED FROM THEIR FAMILIES AND DETAINED BY THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

June 2018

#### 1. ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This HRE action toolkit has been developed by Amnesty International in response to the US immigration policy of detaining and separating asylum-seeking families and the growing international outrage. Children around the world will have been exposed to images of distressed and anguished children held in unimaginable conditions at the US border. Many will have questions and concerns and may feel real anger or helplessness at the situation.

This resource is designed to support teachers to help children in schools to better understand what is happening and why it has caused such outrage worldwide, through informed discussion and structured activities.

**We are launching a global action asking children and teenagers across the world to send messages of solidarity to the children who have been separated from their families in the USA.**

**This action provides an opportunity for children and teenagers to channel feelings of anger or helplessness in a positive way by taking meaningful action in response to the situation.**

## 2. SOLIDARITY ACTION

### **Solidarity message from children to the children in the USA who have been separated from their parents.**

Encourage students to write to the children separated from their families and detained expressing the solidarity they feel towards them. What kind of message might strengthen them? What might they want to hear at this difficult time?

- Write a letter or share a drawing to let them know that children around the world are with them and hope that they meet with their parents soon.
- Design a protest poster to show how human rights are being violated by US immigration policy and **what should be done to change this.**

Please post any letters and posters to Instagram, Facebook, and/or Twitter with the hashtag #KeepFamiliesTogether or share the content by email with [refugees@aiusa.org](mailto:refugees@aiusa.org). Amnesty International USA will create a social stream that pulls all posts with powerful content into a social wall.

#### **Timeframe:**

This is a critical moment as international outrage and pressure grows. Major protests are planned within the USA on June 30 in Washington DC and six other major cities across the country, and, on the same day, action is being taken around the world to put pressure on the US administration to end this cruel policy and reunify children and parents. Posting it before 30<sup>th</sup> would be great but if this is not possible you can still share your messages later.

Amnesty International USA will print messages to deliver to detained and separated children and to the officials working to keep families apart or put families in detention. They will also share these messages with protesters across the country **on June 30, so the sooner you share posters and messages, the more likely you will see your messages included in protests on the 30th.**

## 3. ACTIVITIES WITH STUDENTS TO PREPARE THEM FOR THE ACTION

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students are able to

- explain why separating and detaining families as they seek asylum is a violation of human rights and of US human rights obligations;
- are inspired and prepared to take action by sending solidarity messages to children detained in the USA.

## ACTIVITIES

### Part 1) Introduction: People on the move

By the end of 2015, 65.3 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide (including refugees and internally displaced people) as a result of conflict, persecution, generalized violence and human rights violations. The number of refugees was 21.3 million, of which 16.1 million were under UNHCR's mandate.

By the end of 2016, this number had reached 22.5 million, with 17.2 million under UNHCR's mandate. Available data shows that over half of the more than 25 million refugees in 2017 was under the age of 18.

By the end of 2017, the number of refugees had reached 24.5 million, 19.9 million of which fall under UNHCR's mandate.

In 2017 children below 18 years of age made up 52% of the refugee population. 173,800 were unaccompanied children and separated children according to UNHCR.

In the United States of America, the trend of increasing asylum claims from people originating from the North of Central America (NCA) also continued. As in the previous year, applicants from the NCA made up 43 per cent of all claims, and the number of claims increased by 44 per cent, reaching levels not seen since the 1980s. Salvadorans made up the largest nationality of applicants with 49,500 claims, almost doubling the 33,600 submitted in 2016. Guatemalans and Hondurans were the next largest groups with 35,300 and 28,800 claims in 2017, respectively. Claims from Venezuelans increased by 63 per cent to 29,900, reflecting the challenging conditions in the country. Other nationalities from which there were more than 5,000 claims in 2017 were Mexico (26,100), China (17,400), Haiti (8,600), and India (7,400). Altogether claims were received from nationals of 168 countries.

(Source: UNHCR (2018), Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2017.

<http://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2017/>)

People move for multiple and interrelated reasons and under different circumstances. A refugee is typically leaving because of war, extreme violence, persecution, or fear for their life. Refugees (see 4. Background "Helpful terms") will have explored many possibilities before deciding to leave their homes. Remember, most people would prefer to stay in their countries, close to their families, support systems, language and culture. However, when someone is denied safe, humane and decent options to survive, or their life is at risk, they leave their country to ask for asylum.

**Link the different groups of people on the pictures on the worksheet below to the regions of the world and discuss the reasons why the people in the pictures had to flee from their countries.**

Picture 1) People crossing the Mexican border

Picture 2) Rohingya people fleeing to Bangladesh

Picture 3) Somali people in refugee camp in Kenya

Picture 4) Syrian people near the coast of Greece

Worksheet  
Part 1) Introduction: People on the move

Picture 1



©Sergio Ortiz Borbolla/Amnesty

Picture 2



©Andrew Stanbridge / Amnesty International

Picture 3



©Michael Christopher Brown/Magnum Photos

Picture 4



©Amnesty International

## **Part 2) Imagine you had new neighbors who had fled violence in their home country...**

If you were introducing a family to your neighborhood for the first time after they escaped, what three things would you do to help them feel welcome? Write down the three things on a paper.

Look at what your friends would want to do for kids and their families and discuss.

## **Part 3) USA: Children separated from their parents and detained Discuss the situation in the US (– see background “explain the situation”)**

### **Discussion questions**

1. How does the universal declaration of human rights and the children’s rights convention relate to what is happening in the USA? Choose two articles and discuss them (- see background “human rights”).
2. How do you think the children felt when they were separated from their parents?
3. What should be done now to help and protect these children? And by whom?

## **Part 4) Make a difference – take action**

### **Join in the Amnesty International Global School Action! – see point 2. Solidarity Action**

- Write a letter or share a drawing to let them know that children around the world are with them and hope that they meet with their parents soon.
- Design a protest poster to show how human rights are being violated by US immigration policy and **what should be done to change this**.

### **Part 5) Follow up activities**

- Choose one of the articles from the UDHR listed below. Draw two pictures – one showing the right being enjoyed and another showing the right being violated.
- If you were President of the USA, what would you do now? Write a new immigration policy for the US, describing how you would change things for families seeking safety and protect their human rights.
- Research public figures with refugee backgrounds who have made a home in the USA. What kind of work do they do? Create a profile for them, including key facts about their life and achievements.

## 4. BACKGROUND

### EXPLAIN THE SITUATION

The Trump Administration has been forcibly separating families seeking safety in the U.S. Many of these families are fleeing persecution and horrific violence in their home countries and are coming to the US seeking safety.

Instead of being able to ask for asylum with dignity and security, they are treated cruelly. Children have been forcibly taken from their parents at the border and put into government-run shelters, often hundreds of miles away from their parents as documented by Amnesty International researchers on a recent mission along the U.S.-Mexico border. The trauma caused by splitting up families amounts to torture.

President Trump signed an executive order on June 20th that he claims would end family separation. Don't be fooled, his order does nothing to reunite the over 2,000 children who have been forcibly separated from their parents, doesn't end the policy of family separation, and doesn't stop the policy of prosecuting families seeking safety.

The Administration's response is to detain families in prolonged detention instead. That isn't the answer either. Families shouldn't be detained or separated.

Detaining families who are fleeing violence is wrong and unlawful. Families seeking safety deserve compassion, not prison. They should enjoy protection under US and international law, but instead are being treated like criminals.

The policy of separating parents from their children was designed to discourage people from fleeing to the US. It's a consequence of the Administration's "zero-tolerance" policy to criminally prosecute adults for irregularly entering the U.S., imprisoning them and holding them in prolonged immigration detention.

The action for schools in this toolkit will send a strong message of humanity to the Trump administration and the thousands of children separated from their families.

### HUMAN RIGHTS

#### How is this US policy violating Human Rights and Children's Rights?

It violates one of the most important articles in the Children's Rights Convention which came into force in 1990.

(196 countries are parties to the treaty, including every member of the United Nations except the United States).

**Article 3: In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration.**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, set out the fundamental rights of all people which should be universally protected. However, many of these rights are being violated by the current US policy.

Source: simplified version of the UDHR, published by Amnesty International UK. For the full text of the UDHR, go to: <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>

**Article 5: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**

Nobody has the right to hurt us or to torture us.

**Article 9: No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile**

Nobody has the right to put us in prison without a good reason, to keep us there, or to send us away from our country unjustly.

**Article 14: Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution**

If someone hurts us, we have the right to go to another country and ask it to protect us.

**Article 25: Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being**

We all have the right to enough food, clothing, housing and healthcare for ourselves and our families. We should be given help if we are out of work or cannot earn a living for any reasons we cannot help.

**Article 26: Everyone has the right to education**

We all have the right to go to school and everyone should go to school.

**Article 30: No governments, groups or individuals should destroy any of these rights or freedoms**

No society and no human being in any part of the world should act in such a way as to destroy our rights.

## HELPFUL TERMS IN THIS CONTEXT

**Asylum-seeker:** An asylum seeker is someone who has left their country in search of international protection but has yet to be recognized as a refugee.

**Human rights:** are the basic freedoms and protections that belong to every single one of us. They are based on principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect – regardless of age, nationality, gender, race, beliefs and personal orientations. Your rights are about being treated fairly and treating others fairly, and having the ability to make choices about your own life. These basic human rights are universal – they belong to all of us; everybody in the world. They are inalienable – they cannot be taken away from us. And they are indivisible and interdependent – they are all of equal importance and are interrelated. Since the atrocities committed during World War II, international human rights instruments, beginning with the Universal Declaration of Human



Rights, have provided a solid framework for national, regional and international legislation designed to improve lives around the world. Human rights can be seen as laws for governments. They create obligations for governments or state officials to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of those within their jurisdiction and abroad.

Human rights are not luxuries that can be met only when practicalities allow.

**International human rights law:** International human rights law includes civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights (ESCRs), as well as international humanitarian law which governs war and armed conflict. International human rights law applies both in peacetime and during armed conflict. These laws are legally binding on states, their armed forces and other agents and establish the right of victims of serious human rights violations to seek remedy, including justice, truth and reparations. States also have international obligations under what is known as customary international law, that is, obligations that arise from established state practice and are accepted as law. These obligations are binding on states even if they have not ratified the relevant international treaties.

**Migrant:** A migrant is someone who moves around within their own country, or from one country to another, usually voluntarily, while others are forced to leave because of economic hardship or other problems. People can migrate 'regularly' (with legal permission to work and live in a country), or 'irregularly' (without permission from the country they wish to live and work in).

**Non-Refoulement:** The principle of non-refoulement is the cornerstone of international refugee law, enshrined in customary international law and codified in different international treaties, including the UN Refugee Convention (Article 33) and the UN Convention against Torture (Article 3).

Under international human rights law, all states are prohibited from sending anyone, without exception, to a country or territories where they would be at risk of serious human rights violations. This includes transferring someone to a place where they are at risk of onward transfer to a third country where they will subsequently be at risk. States are also not allowed to carry out refoulement in an indirect way, such as by reducing or totally cutting off the aid that refugees receive; using indefinite detention; refusing to process asylum claims; and/or otherwise making life so difficult that the individuals feel compelled to leave the country, even if it means returning to a situation they fear.

**Refugee:** A refugee is someone who cannot return to their country because they are at risk of serious human rights abuses there, or because of who they are or what they believe in. They are forced to flee their country and seek international protection because their own government cannot or will not protect them.

**Resettlement:** is the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another state that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent settlement. UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, is mandated by its Statute and the UN General Assembly Resolutions to undertake resettlement as one of its three durable solutions.

**Responsibility-sharing for refugees:** The principle, reflected in the UN Refugee Convention, that effective protection for refugees requires international cooperation. The principle is based on international obligations to protect refugees and find safe and durable solutions for them.

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):** The UDHR was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948.

The Declaration is the primary UN document establishing human rights standards and norms. All member states have agreed to uphold the UDHR. Although the declaration was intended to be nonbinding, over time its various provisions have become so respected by states that it can be described as customary international law.

**Xenophobia:** Xenophobia describes attitudes, prejudices and behavior that reject, exclude and often vilify individuals based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity.

**Zero-tolerance policy:** In April 2018, Trump introduced a “zero-tolerance” policy of criminally prosecuting every adult who irregularly crosses the US border. Adults were sent to jail and held in prolonged immigration detention. That meant that children could not stay with the adults while their asylum requests or removal orders were processed. As a result, this policy has also led to a practice of separating families.

## FURTHER INFORMATION/ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Amnesty International Human Rights Education:**

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/human-rights-education/>

**Amnesty Human Rights Academy:** <https://academy.amnesty.org/learn>

High quality online courses for free in English, Spanish, Arabic and French.

Amnesty **online course on Refugee Rights** in collaboration with edX:

<https://www.edx.org/course/human-rights-the-rights-of-refugees-0>

**Respect my rights, Respect my dignity.** Module 4: Refugees' and migrants' rights are human rights: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act30/8218/2018/en/>

**“My name is not refugee”- teachers’ guide**

My name is not refugee is an award-winning picture book written and illustrated by English author Kate Milner. The book follows the journey of a little boy with his mother from their home in an unspecified war-torn country to a safe third country. Amnesty has permission from the copywriter to use a guide that they specifically developed for teachers to explain to children in classrooms what being a refugee means.

[http://www.bucketlistbooks.co.uk/uploads/8/3/6/3/83638416/mninr\\_teachers\\_low.pdf](http://www.bucketlistbooks.co.uk/uploads/8/3/6/3/83638416/mninr_teachers_low.pdf)

## ABOUT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 7 million people who take injustice personally. We are campaigning for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all.

We investigate and expose the facts, whenever and wherever abuses happen. We lobby governments as well as other powerful groups such as companies, making sure they keep their promises and respect international law. By telling the powerful stories of the people we work with, we mobilize millions of supporters around the world to campaign for change and to stand in the defense of activists on the frontline. We support people to claim their rights through education and training.

Our work protects and empowers people – from abolishing the death penalty to advancing sexual and reproductive rights, and from combating discrimination to defending refugees' and migrants' rights. We help to bring torturers to justice. Change oppressive laws... And free people who have been jailed just for voicing their opinion. We speak out for anyone and everyone whose freedom or dignity are under threat.

Amnesty International's ['I Welcome'](#) campaign, launched in 2016, calls on all governments to do more to ensure refugees are protected and able to enjoy their human rights.

The aim of the campaign is to encourage global responsibility sharing, and to ensure that governments provide refugees with access to safe and legal routes. This includes through the expansion of alternative pathways such as community sponsorship programs led by ordinary people, which governments can and must do more to support.

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