
U.S.: Children's Crying and the Power of Collective Anger

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The immigration policies of the current U.S. government frequently provoke criticism and condemnation, but collective anger at these practices reached a new level when thousands of children became its most visible victims.

Reports of the increasing separation of families in the U.S. southern border began weeks ago, as a result of the implementation of the 'zero tolerance' policy announced by Attorney General Jeff Sessions in April, which came into force the following month.

The policy, aimed at prosecuting those who illegally entered U.S., had a collateral damage that caused great indignation: while parents waited to face criminal charges, their children were taken from their side and sent to centers with other kids.

Data released in recent days indicate that there are more than 2,300 infants separated from their parents as a result of the Donald Trump administration's measure.

Meanwhile, On June 18, condemnations increased as a result of a recording released by ProPublica News Agency, in which the desperate crying of ten Central American children separated from their parents one day from last week's heard, according to the media.

Immoral, shameful, cruel or heartrending were some of the adjectives used by Democratic and Republican legislators, immigrant rights groups, religious leaders, pediatricians, officials of previous administrations and users in social networks to qualify this practice.

The four former first ladies of the country who still live -Rosalynn Carter, Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush and Michelle Obama- were among the voices of condemnation, which even the current President's wife, Melania Trump, joined.

We need a country where all the laws are followed, but also where leaders rule with the heart, expressed the

current first lady in a statement, seen by several sources as an unusual positioning somehow opposed to his husband's position.

While Melania called to govern with the heart, the Republican ruler used the strategy of blaming Democrats for the separation of families, due to what he considers obstructionism in approval of new immigration laws by the blue partymembers.

What is happening is 'very sad,' but it is Democrats' fault, said the head of State noting that if the members of the opposing force sat down to negotiate, 'instead of obstructing', they could quickly do something about it.

However, the media and other sources maintained that Trump falsely blamed Democrats for his government's decision to criminally accuse every adult immigrant.

Under Barack Obama's administration (2009-2017), families were only referred to the immigration courts for deportation proceedings or for asylum applications to be heard, and they were released with supervision, CNN recently recalled.

The Washington Post said the situation had become a moral test for Trump and his mandate and that, despite his insistence on blaming Democrats, he had the power to immediately order the border agents to stop separating families.

UNDER PRESURE, TRUMP SUSPENDS FAMILY SEPARATION

The truthfulness of The Post and other media's statements was confirmed on June 20, when pressured by the increasing demands coming from several groups and places, Trump signed an executive order to put an end to family separation.

The anger expressed by so many voices seems to have forced the head of the White House not to wait for the action of Congress, which he intended to make responsible in the matter, especially five months to the mid-term elections of November to come.

The immigration issue must have an important weightfor those elections, in which Republicans will try to maintain control of the two legislative chambers.

When signing the document in the Oval Office, the Republican leader told the media his government'sdecision to continue with the 'zero tolerance' policy that gave rise to the situation.

The only change of his decree isthat the parents awaiting trial will be able to stay with their children, instead of being taken to different facilities, as it was happening until now.

The order states that although the administration will 'strictly' enforce immigration laws, it's also part of its policy to respectfamily unit, including the detention of family members in a united manner when appropriate and consistent with the law and available resources.

However, since the head of State signed the text, alarms about its content have appeared, and the controversy on the matter seems far from over.

One of the widely debated issues is that the order does not apply to families already separated, but to those that will arrive in the future; therefore, the 2,300 children who are currently heldin custody by the Health Department will not meet immediately with their parents.

The executive decree also pointed out that the Department of Homeland Security will be in charge of the new families during the period required for their process in court, which can last for months or even years, although Trump decided to give priority to cases with children.

This decision conflicts with the legal agreement known as Flores, of 1997, which prohibits the government from keeping children in detention for more than 20 days, even with their families.

That's why the document states that the U.S. Attorney General must quickly submit an application to the Central

District Court of California to modify that ruling so that it allows the authorities to retain foreign families while proceeding with prosecutions.

Given the content and conditions of the new order, immigrant rights advocacy groups are expected to take legal action.

Leaders of some entities have already spoken about it, such as the director of Movimiento Puente in Phoenix, Arizona, Francisca Porchas, who said in a press conference that what Trump approved 'is not family reunification, it is family imprisonment.'

According to Cesar Espinosa, executive director of Immigrant Families and Students in the Struggle, based in Houston, Texas, they oppose the order because many children will be still detained while the text is only used as a political trick to appear more 'compassionate.'
