

## Asylum seeking, forced migrants crisis in U.S. jails Pathological, brutal & repetitive human inequality & injustice at play

By Grahame Russell, Rights Action, June 22, 2019

[View in browser: <https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/asylum-seeking-forced-migrants-crisis-in-us-jails>]

The New York Times, CBC and other media outlets are reporting on sickness and filth, trauma and death in overcrowded, punitive asylum-seeker jails in the U.S. They are not reporting on how the U.S. & Canadian governments, businesses & the 'international community' help create & perpetuate the conditions that force a majority of these asylum seekers to flee Honduras & Guatemala.

As movingly reported by the New York Times, many asylum seekers are jailed in horrific conditions.

*"A chaotic scene of sickness and filth is unfolding in an overcrowded border station in Clint, Tex., where hundreds of young people who have recently crossed the border are being held, according to lawyers who visited the facility this week. Some of the children have been there for nearly a month.*

*"Children as young as 7 and 8, many of them wearing clothes caked with snot and tears, are caring for infants they've just met, the lawyers said. Toddlers without diapers are relieving themselves in their pants. Teenage mothers are wearing clothes stained with breast milk.*

*"Most of the young detainees have not been able to shower or wash their clothes since they arrived at the facility, those who visited said. They have no access to toothbrushes, toothpaste or soap.*

*"There is a stench," said Elora Mukherjee, director of the Immigrants' Rights Clinic at Columbia Law School, one of the lawyers who visited the facility. "The overwhelming majority of children have not bathed since they crossed the border."*

- NYT: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/21/us/migrant-children-border-soap.html>
- CBC: [https://www.cbc.ca/amp/1.5185329?fbclid=IwAR1fEcbJllpZqVDuOSHNNvMy9\\_Wk41rfwfHmMQv6OPtp4NU\\_Gs60IRCIFC4](https://www.cbc.ca/amp/1.5185329?fbclid=IwAR1fEcbJllpZqVDuOSHNNvMy9_Wk41rfwfHmMQv6OPtp4NU_Gs60IRCIFC4)



Photo @ BBC, March 27, 2019

Urgent supports – proper food, medical support, hygiene, clothing, bedding, healthy activities and, above all, family reunion – are immediately needed. Urgent political and legal reforms are needed as to how the U.S. government is abusively treating asylum seekers.

Yet even as this horrible situation plays itself out, the NYT, CBC and other media outlets still are not reporting on how the U.S. and Canadian governments maintain full political, economic and military relations with the anti-democratic, corrupt and repressive governments of Honduras and Guatemala responsible for the violent, corrupt, repressive conditions that force 10s of 1000s of their own people to flee into exile, very year.

There is no reporting on how global companies and investors – in the sectors of mining and hydro-electric dams, production of African palm, bananas and sugarcane, tourism and garment factory sweatshops – profitably do business with these U.S. and Canadian-backed regimes, using violence and corruption to exploit workers, communities and the environment, helping create the very conditions that force people to flee.

## *Mediterranean Blue*

Naomi Shihab Nye - 1952-

If you are a child of a refugee, you do not  
sleep easily when they are crossing the sea  
on small rafts and you know they can't swim.  
My father couldn't swim either. He swam through  
sorrow, though, and made it to the other side  
on a ship, pitching his old clothes overboard  
at landing, then tried to be happy, make a new life.  
But something inside him was always paddling home,  
clinging to anything that floated —a story, a food, or face.  
They are the bravest people on earth right now,  
don't dare look down on them. Each mind a universe  
swirling as many details as yours, as much love  
for a humble place. Now the shirt is torn,  
the sea too wide for comfort, and nowhere  
to receive a letter for a very long time.

And if we can reach out a hand, we better.

The message is shed a tear for the abused asylum seekers, demand humanitarian relief and even legal remedy for their plight, but do not criticize why and how the U.S., Canada, our businesses and the 'international community' help create and perpetuate the underlying political, military and economic causes of why they are forced from home and country in the first place.

At play here, pathological, brutal and repetitive human inequality and injustice.

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### **Rights Action**

Since 1995, Rights Action funds community human rights, environment and territory defense projects in Guatemala and Honduras; funds victims of repression, human rights violations, health harms and natural disasters; and works to hold accountable the U.S. and Canadian governments, companies and investors, international actors (World Bank, etc.) that cause, contribute to and profit from repression and human rights violations, environmental harms and forced evictions, corruption and impunity.

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