

# *Protests across the U.S. force Trump to sign Executive Order on separation of families*

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Washington, June 21 (RHC)-- Outrage and protests across the United States and around the world forced U.S. President Donald Trump to take measures to try to resolve the issue of family separations on its southern border. Many protests said the policy of taking young children from their parents was in violation of international human rights law.

Trump signed an executive order on Wednesday to halt family separations of those arrested coming across the border with Mexico. The move comes after days of news coverage featuring young children held in metal cages inside detention facilities near the U.S.-Mexico border.

On Tuesday, Republican and Democratic governors of eight states -- Maryland, Massachusetts, Virginia, Rhode Island, Colorado, New York, North Carolina and Connecticut -- said they would either withhold or recall their National Guard troops from the border, in protest of the practice of separating children.

Earlier, the Associated Press reported that babies and toddlers are being detained in at least three so-called baby jails in South Texas -- in Brownsville, Raymondville and Combes -- with a fourth "baby jail" slated to open soon in Houston. The government calls them "tender age shelters," with many of the

children are under one years old.

Many observers accused Donald Trump of holding the refugee children hostage to pass funding for his border wall. Earlier this week, Trump indicated he will stop the family separation practice in exchange for \$25 billion for Trump's border wall, a crackdown on asylum seekers and a reduction on visas to the United States.

Meanwhile, more than 600 members of the United Methodist Church filed a formal complaint against fellow church member Attorney General Jeff Sessions, accusing him of child abuse, immorality and racial discrimination for the Trump administration's practice of separating immigrant children from their families. Sessions was also heckled while receiving a lifetime achievement award by the National Sheriffs' Association in New Orleans by protesters who shouted: "Stop taking kids!"

Five protesters were arrested protesting outside the National Sheriffs' Association convention, while inside Attorney General Sessions hailed the sheriffs' association's "Anglo-American" heritage.

And hundreds of protesters gathered in cities across the country on Tuesday -- including in San Francisco, New York City, Philadelphia, El Paso, Texas; Washington, D.C. and Portland, Oregon -- to denounce the practice of separating immigrant children from their parents.

Mental health professionals also continued to denounce the practice. Kathryn Hampton with Physicians for Human Rights said: "The negative impact on functioning of children can even continue into adulthood. It can impact their academic achievement. It can have a long-term impact on their ability to have normal attachment to family members and loved ones. And the psychological quality of life is devastated."

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