

Texas agents told to push immigrant children back into Rio Grande, according to trooper

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21 July 2023

According to an email from a Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) trooper, officers working for Governor Gregg Abbott's fascistic border security initiative have been ordered to push migrants—including children and nursing babies—back into the Rio Grande to force them back across the US-Mexico border. Additionally, troopers have been told to withhold water from asylum seekers, even in the oppressive summer heat.

The July 3 email, first reported by the *Houston Chronicle*, details several previously unreported incidents that occurred in Eagle Pass, where Abbott ordered the deployment of a 1,000 foot floating barrier with razor wire attachments.

The email, which the trooper originally sent to a superior, sheds light on the cruelty migrants have been subjected to in recent weeks. In addition to floating obstacles, Texas has set traps of barrels wrapped in barbed wire in parts of the river with high water and low visibility. Consequently, the risk of drowning or injury has increased greatly since migrants are forced to attempt crossings in deeper stretches of the Rio Grande.

The trooper described a tragic incident involving a mother and two children. On July 1, federal Border Patrol agents spotted a young woman with two children struggling to cross into Texas when all three went under the turbulent water for at least one minute. A DPS boat was able to rescue the mother and one of her children. They were given medical attention before being transferred to EMS but were later declared deceased at the hospital. The second child was never found.

Other egregious incidents include a pregnant woman who was found caught in the wire, doubled over in pain. Once agents were able to rescue her, they

discovered the woman was having a miscarriage. A four-year-old girl collapsed from heat exhaustion after she navigated through the razor wire only to be turned back by Texas National Guard soldiers. A teenage boy broke his leg trying to find his way through unruly waters and an uneven section of the river bed. He had to be carried by his father.

"I believe we have stepped over a line into the inhumane," the trooper said in the email.

The trooper, who works as a medic, called for a series of safety improvements, including removing the wire-wrapped barrels and revoking the directive on withholding water.

Travis Considine, a DPS spokesperson, said in an email that the Office of the Inspector General, which investigates claims of misconduct by state employees, "is investigating the allegations made in the email in question."

"There is not a directive or policy that instructs Troopers to withhold water from migrants or push them back into the river," Considine added.

Such statements should not be taken at face value. The state of Texas and other border states have only escalated their war against immigrants since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These harrowing tales are a direct consequence of Abbott's Operation Lone Star initiative. Since 2021, Abbott has massively expanded his efforts to physically bar asylum seekers from entering the country. When he announced the deployment of the floating barrier at a press conference, Abbott boasted that the buoys would be able to prevent migrants from even reaching the Texas border.

Col. Steve McCraw, head of the Texas Department of Safety, presented the barrier as a "proactive" way to stymie crossings. McCraw explained that the barriers

are four feet high, equipped with weights and netting, and are designed to rotate to make them impossible to scale. Additionally, Texas DPS and the Texas National Guard installed miles of razor wire around frequented crossing points.

The first 1,000 feet of the buoy barrier were installed earlier this month at a cost of \$1 million. There are plans to expand the buoy system despite complaints from local citizens, federal authorities, and the Mexican government. Additionally, National Guardsmen from 11 other states will assist Texas officers at the Texas border.

A pecan farmer in Eagle Pass told the *Houston Chronicle* that state agents refused to take down razor wire on his farmland, despite his multiple requests. Hugo Urbina, the farmer, explained that many people, including a pregnant teenager, have been injured by the wire Texas installed against his wishes. Under a 2021 disaster declaration signed by the governor, Abbott gave the state the authority to use private property without permission as part of Operation Lone Star.

It must be stated that the atrocities at the border are not merely a product of Abbott's fascistic government but a conscious policy of American capitalism. Despite the protestations from the Democratic Party, the policies at the US-Mexico border bear the fingerprints of both factions of the ruling elite.

Indeed, only months into the Biden presidency, Vice President Kamala Harris went on a tour throughout Latin America, telling potential asylum seekers "do not come" and that they were unwelcome. The Biden administration maintained Trump-era measures to block millions of asylum seekers, including using Title 42 as long as it could to block immigrants on the grounds of combating the pandemic, even as all measures enacted to counter COVID-19 were dispensed with.

The Biden administration's policies have clearly emboldened Abbott and others on the far right.

The criminal mistreatment of asylum seekers, whether on American soil or along the shores of the Mediterranean, are a consequence of capitalism and the nation-state system. Money and weapons for war flow freely to and fro at the behest of the capitalists, but poor workers seeking opportunities or an escape from violence are viciously deterred and repelled. The end of such inhumane acts can only be achieved through the

abolition of the capitalist system.



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