
U.N. RIGHTS CHIEF ATTACKS EU AND US OVER MIGRANTS AND DREAMERS

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GENEVA (Reuters) □ The U.N. human rights chief said on Wednesday he was shocked at repressive policies being pursued in the United States and Europe, especially the increasingly harsh treatment of migrants.

In an annual report to the U.N. Human Rights Council, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Raad al-Hussein also took democracies to task for failing to respect basic rights.

In the United States, I am shocked by reports that many migrants intercepted at the southern borders, including children, are detained in abusive conditions □ such as freezing temperatures □ and that some young children are being detained separately from their families, he said.

Detentions and deportations of long-standing and law-abiding migrants have sharply increased, tearing families apart and creating enormous hardship.

The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump had also ended the Central American Minors Refugee and Parole Programme, which offered adolescents and children a lifeline to safety, and ended Temporary Protected Status for hundreds of thousands of people.

I deplore the continuing uncertainty about beneficiaries of the DACA programme, Zeid said, referring to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, which protects roughly 700,000 Dreamers □ mostly young Hispanics – from deportation and lets them work.

The protections are due to start phasing out in March under Trumps move to end DACA, but Congress so far has failed to pass legislation to address the fate of the Dreamers.

Zeid also expressed concern about U.S. proposals that could drastically reduce social protections, particularly for poorer Americans.

In many European Union (EU) countries the trend towards racism, xenophobia and incitement to hatred was now dominating the political landscape, as shown in Italys recent election campaign, he said.

I am deeply concerned about the current overriding focus of EU States on preventing migrants from reaching Europe, and rushing to deport many who do, Zeid added.

By pushing migrants back from its borders, the EU risked subcontracting their protection to states such as Libya, where they faced a real risk of torture, sexual violence and other serious violations, he said.

He attacked Austrias planned crackdown on Muslim schools and mosques and expulsions of irregular migrants, and Hungarys plans to restrict non-profits that sought to help migrants.

He decried discrimination against the Roma minority in the Czech Republic and its programme of surgically castrating sex offenders.

I am disturbed * by the extraordinary recent legislation which could lead to up to three years imprisonment for those who refer to the Nazi concentration camps in Poland as Polish, Zeid told the Council.

(Reporting by Tom Miles; editing by Stephanie Nebehay and William Maclean)

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