

Biden issues Trump-style executive order eliminating right to asylum

Jacob Crosse
4 June 2024

In one of the most far-reaching attacks on immigrants and refugees in US history, President Joe Biden on Tuesday signed an executive order that effectively abolishes the right to claim asylum in the United States.

With a stroke of a pen, in contravention of national and international law established following the Holocaust, the new order blocks refugees from claiming asylum in the United States along the US-Mexico border and southern coasts unless and until there is a steep decline in efforts of migrants to enter the country.

Flanked by Department of Homeland Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and Democratic Governors Kathy Hochul (New York) and Michelle Lujan Grisham (New Mexico), as well as mayors, representatives and sheriffs from Texas, Biden declared:

I'm announcing actions to bar migrants who cross our southern border unlawfully from receiving asylum. Migrants will be restricted from receiving asylum at our southern border unless they seek it after entering through an established lawful process.

He added that the “ban will remain in place until the number of people trying to enter illegally is reduced to a level that our system can effectively manage.”

The order signed Tuesday allows the president to declare an “emergency” if daily “unauthorized crossings” reach 2,500. Senior administration officials confirmed to reporters that the order as currently constituted would take effect immediately, implementing de facto a quota system for the first time

since the Immigration Act of 1924, infamously praised by Hitler and the Nazis.

Biden signed his executive order 85 years to the day that the *MS St. Louis*, a passenger ship carrying 937 Jewish refugees, was blocked from the port of Miami by the Roosevelt administration under provisions included in the 1924 Act. After being refused asylum, the ship returned to Europe and hundreds of its passengers were subsequently murdered in the Holocaust.

Biden, who campaigned in 2020 on protecting immigrant and asylum rights, is now using the same presidential authority (Section 212 of the Immigration and Nationality Act) invoked by then-President Donald Trump to institute his “Muslim ban.” Far from being a “lesser evil,” Biden and the Democratic Party are implementing Trump’s fascistic anti-immigrant policies.

There is no question that Tuesday’s ruling will lead to further death and deprivation along the border. Biden’s order is part of a racist, xenophobic campaign by the American ruling class aimed at blocking workers and their families, in many cases fleeing countries devastated by US imperialist wars and economic sanctions, from seeking safety in the United States.

The attack on the right to asylum is part of a broader assault on the democratic rights of the working class as a whole. For the last two months, Biden has spearheaded a savage campaign of police attacks and mass arrests against students, faculty and campus workers demonstrating against the US/Israeli genocide in Gaza.

Joining with Republican fascists, Biden has smeared the campus protests, in which tens of thousands of Jewish students have participated, as “antisemitic”—all the while defending and arming the Israel Defense

Forces' campaign of mass murder, destruction of health care and enforced famine that has already killed some 45,000 Palestinians, mainly women and children.

Speaking from the White House Tuesday, Biden blamed House Republicans for forcing his hand on the border by not accepting a previously negotiated anti-immigrant package that was attached to a \$95 billion military supplemental request.

In seeking support for the global war bill, Biden had implored Trump to "join me" in backing the anti-immigrant bill. That bill included, in addition to billions of dollars for the border Gestapo, the anti-asylum provisions that Biden has now initiated by executive order.

Biden's claim to be defending democracy against Trump stands further exposed as a fraud. What drives Biden and the Democratic Party is the ruling class policy of global war, first and foremost the reckless escalation of the war against Russia, which threatens to trigger a nuclear Armageddon. Implementation of this policy of world war requires an all-out assault on the democratic and social rights of the working class within the United States.

In a statement issued following the signing of the order, Socialist Equality Party candidate for US president Joseph Kishore, declared that with this action:

The Biden administration confirms once again that the attack on immigrant workers is a policy supported by the Democrats as well as the Republicans. It exposes those, like Democratic Party Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who cited the impact of Trump's policies on immigrants to denounce socialist opposition to Biden as "privileged."

Kishore explained that it was not

desperate refugees who are responsible for the social crisis in the US, but the corporate and financial oligarchy, which plunders society's resources and hoards trillions of dollars in wealth—the product of the exploitation of workers all over the world.

In opposition to all the capitalist parties, Kishore called on the working class to "uphold the principle of open borders—the right of workers to live and work in whatever country they choose with full citizenship rights."

He said:

The ruling class does everything it can to divide workers—by nationality, ethnicity, race and every other category. It does this in an attempt to prevent us from understanding that our interests are the same.

The defense of democratic rights is inseparable from the fight against imperialist war and genocide. This struggle must be led by the working class united across all national borders to put an end to the root cause of war and fascism, the capitalist system.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact