

Rejoinder from Mijente to Palantir's response

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Time and time again, Palantir has lied and misled the public about its support for immigration enforcement, particularly its ongoing work for the anti-immigrant crackdown being perpetrated across the country by President Trump and this White House. Their latest response is part of a long pattern of factual inaccuracies and distortions that come from the company as speeches, interviews, press statements, and op-eds. It's a disappointing move, but wholly expected.

Palantir's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Contract Is a Distinction Without a Difference

Let's begin with Palantir's attempt to silo its work by focusing on Homeland Security Investigations, the division of Immigration and Customs Enforcement with which Palantir has two active contracts. Throughout, Palantir attempts to divorce HSI from its parent agency in a bid to distance it from the worst immigrant enforcement atrocities committed under the Trump administration. The company writes that it "may serve an important function with respect to one component agency of ICE" like HSI, but that its contracts with HSI do not "imply that our software in any way attaches to...the institution as a whole." Further, Palantir claims that workplace raids "constitute a limited portion of HSI's total responsibilities."

This is outrageously misleading, attempting to minimize the importance of HSI's deportation raids in a way unsubstantiated by reality. HSI agents spearhead workplace raids throughout the country — a critical component of President Trump's immigration crackdown that has [quadrupled](#) under his administration. These raids involve the arrest and detention of thousands of people; last year alone, 2,048 people were arrested in workplace raids, a dramatic increase from some 500 the year before. HSI's own director has [said](#) that the increase in arrests from workplace raids indicates his agency's increased focus on immigration enforcement.

As part of its increased focus on such raids, HSI conducted the largest single-state raid in the country's history last August when it arrested 687 people in Mississippi in one day. President Trump [vigorously defended](#) the operation, saying the separation of children during the operation was a deterrent and that the public could expect to see similar workplace raids "for a long time," underscoring the administration's commitment to increasing such raids.

Laughably, Palantir pushes back against this characterization and takes issue with the term "raids," writing that HSI does not prefer the term and that they are "the culmination of months and often years of investigative efforts." But we have seen these raids. They have been widely described in the press. Agents storm into offices, guns drawn, tackling people to the floor and shackling those without papers before bussing them off to detention. If these are not raids, the word has no meaning, regardless of Palantir's sensibilities.

Further, Palantir claims such raids are "directed foremost at disrupting the criminal acts of worksite fraud, exploitative labor practices, and the like." That view is completely unhinged, the product of an imagination that sees criminals in those making [\\$9.50 an hour](#) inspecting chicken wings. This defense is so risible in fact that even a former director of ICE [criticized](#) the HSI's practices for targeting people "who are just showing up for work and are probably victims of exploitation."

Those arrested by HSI agents in these raids are often detained for indefinite periods of time, languishing in detention centers run by the Enforcement and Removal Operations division of ICE with conditions that, as we note, have regularly been found to violate human rights. HSI's raids, therefore, feed into ERO's detention practices by providing a steady supply of people to be warehoused and subject to abuse. Palantir, in its defense, seeks to separate itself from detention center abuses by stating it "plays no role in supporting detention facilities management within any

federal departments or agencies.” This is besides the point. Palantir’s software funnels people into immigrant detention by enabling arrests through workplace raids. Whether it directly manages these facilities or not is immaterial.

Further, as Palantir knows very well, the company’s software is widely available to anyone within ICE, making their distinction between HSI and ERO even more laughable. The government itself makes this painfully clear in [public documents](#) related to Palantir’s software, writing that agents throughout ICE can “use” and “query” Palantir’s tools. The document states this several times, ensuring there’s no confusion about Palantir’s wide availability within ICE.

This is not an isolated attempt by Palantir to obfuscate the record. In 2018, it sent a [statement](#) to the New York Times emphasizing its work for HSI rather than ERO in an attempt to distance itself from detentions and deportations. As recently as this December, the company’s government product lead lied to a reporter in an [onstage interview](#), saying that HSI is not responsible for workplace raids.

Family Separation Is Immoral, Regardless of Its Name

Palantir, in an attempt to defend its role in family separations, completely sidesteps the question by relying on an incomprehensible semantic argument, writing that “‘zero tolerance’ and ‘family separation’ are specific terms that refer to Border Patrol associated operations” and that “the straightforward fact is that these are actions carried out by agencies with whom Palantir does not work.”

This is incoherent, tying “family separation” to the specific “zero tolerance” policy carried out by Customs and Border Patrol in 2018 when the term is regularly used to refer to any immigration enforcement that results in children being separated from their parents — actions like workplace raids. It’s actually a mystery that Palantir mentions zero tolerance at all: We do not mention the policy once and have never tied any of CBP’s actions with Palantir.

What is incontrovertible is that Palantir’s software was used in operations that targeted the family members of children who crossed the border alone and that, in enabling such operations, the company played a role in the continued separation of such families. It’s understandable Palantir would be squeamish about such wording, but the meaning of family separation is clear to all, regardless of which agency carries it out.

U.S. Immigration Enforcement Involves Human Rights Abuses

Perhaps Palantir’s loftiest claim is its first, that it’s a “flawed premise” that “any immigration enforcement...is inherently at odds with or in violation of human rights interests” and that the grounds of the argument should take our current immigration enforcement paradigm as “a complex policy issue deserving of much more nuanced and careful consideration.”

We reject this wholesale. Immigration enforcement as practiced by the United States today involves the routine violation of human rights. It involves the arrest and detention of hundreds of thousands of people, subjecting them to trauma, suicidal feelings, sexual assault, poor medical care, family separation, and a litany of other suffering. These acts are not incidental to any particular president or agency — they are a fundamental part of how immigration enforcement is carried out in this country, and to suggest that ICE can have these functions reformed is ahistoric and naive.

The current administration is rabidly anti-immigrant and has faced sharp criticism for its cruelty. To underscore the point, human rights violations have been widely reported. Yet, Palantir’s posture in the face of atrocities has been to dismiss “as deeply problematic” claims that make “the very act of enforcing current US law” synonymous with human rights abuses. The public has borne witness to

the ways in which the U.S. government has violated globally-held principles of human dignity. There is no relation between what is lawful and what is moral when it comes to human rights.

The fact is Palantir makes no attempt to counter any specific claims we have made regarding their work. The entirety of their defense rests on a call for greater “nuance” and “discussion,” meaningless concepts for a company that has routinely misled or lied to the public in a bid to muddy the waters. If Palantir wanted a real discussion, it would engage meaningfully with our specific claims and moral arguments. If it wanted to clear its name, it would refute specific facts.

But it can't, because the facts that we and others have presented through research is irrefutable: Palantir's work is integral to ICE's operations and, insofar as those operations routinely involve the violation of human rights, therefore implicated in immoral and possibly illegal acts.