

Soap and Toothbrushes

In June of 2019, a Trump official argued that detained children in border camps don't need soap, toothbrushes, or beds to be 'safe and sanitary.' In response to a tweet regarding these statements, American journalist Michael Scott Moore commented, "Somali pirates gave me toothpaste and soap." For those who don't know who Michael Scott Moore is, was abducted by Somali pirates in January 2012 while doing freelance writing on piracy. He was held for 977 days in captivity (amounting to 2.5 years) and was eventually released after the pirates received \$1.6 million.

A screenshot of a Twitter thread. The top tweet is from Michael Scott Moore (@Mich...) on June 22, 2019, stating "Somali pirates gave me toothpaste & soap." Below it is a video tweet from NowThis (@nowthisn...) on June 21, 2019, with the text "A Trump official tried to argue that detained children don't need soap, toothbrushes, or beds to be 'safe and sanitary' while in Border Patrol custody". The video shows a woman speaking at a podium with a play button overlay, 4:42 duration, and 22.2M views. Below the video are engagement icons for replies (2,857), retweets (152.4K), and likes (428.3K). The bottom tweet is from David Rohde (@RohdeD) on June 24, 2019, at 2:38 PM, stating "The Taliban gave me toothpaste & soap."

If that wasn't bad enough, David Rohde responded and said, "The Taliban gave me toothpaste & soap." He's also an American journalist who was captured by the Taliban in November 2008 and escaped 7 and a half months later.

I looked at the Global Impunity Index, which measures the degree to which a country exercises power without accountability, which becomes, in its starkest form, the commission of crimes without punishment. It ranks 163 countries, and narrowed down to developed countries (subjective definitions so cut me some slack). The US may be 118th overall, but 6th within developed nations. That means it's the 6th most impunitive country in the developed world.

So this is why it's so important that we talk about kindness because soap and toothpaste is such a bare minimum offering to those in custody/abducted. The Taliban and Somali pirates are objectively violent and engage in torture, and even they had the instinct to provide basic level care to their prisoners. We're in the land of opportunity and can't even provide children with basic essentials and beds? Abhorrent.

Country_Name	Impunity_score	Rank
Russia	3.14	27
United Arab Emirates	2.40	82
Panama	1.98	114
Israel	1.91	117
US	1.91	118
Argentina	1.84	120
Hungary	1.66	123
Chile	1.63	124
Greece	1.53	127
Romania	1.45	129
Costa Rica	1.41	131
Poland	1.41	132
Croatia	1.28	133
South Korea	1.22	134
Italy	1.20	135
Uruguay	1.17	136
Slovakia	1.17	137
Malta	1.14	138
Spain	1.14	139

France	1.12	140
Latvia	1.09	141
Canada	1.04	142
Lithuania	1.02	143
Portugal	1.02	144
Australia	1.00	145
Czechia	1.00	146
UK	0.97	147
Japan	0.97	148
Slovenia	0.96	149
Belgium	0.94	150
Estonia	0.86	151
Netherlands	0.83	152
Iceland	0.78	153
New Zealand	0.76	154
Luxembourg	0.76	155
Switzerland	0.66	156
Austria	0.66	157
Ireland	0.66	158
Germany	0.62	159
Norway	0.53	160
Sweden	0.43	161
Denmark	0.35	162
Finland	0.29	163
Bahamas	1.93	#N/A
Liechtenstein	0.51	#N/A

Country	Rank	Score
Afghanistan	1	4.25
Syria	2	4.16
Yemen	3	3.88
Myanmar	4	3.85
Central African Republic	5	3.77