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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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By Niles Niemuth

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Trump announces operation to deport “millions” of immigrants from the US

US President Donald Trump announced in a tweet Monday night that Immigration and Customs and Enforcement is preparing to launch mass raids as soon as next week to round up and deport millions of undocumented immigrants.

“Next week ICE will begin the process of removing the millions of illegal aliens who have illicitly found their way into the United States,” Trump declared. “They will be removed as fast as they come in.” The announcement is an appeal to his fascistic base, coming just one day before he officially launched his reelection campaign at a rally in Orlando, Florida.

At the rally Tuesday night, Trump blamed “mass illegal migration,” “vicious gang members” and “sanctuary cities” for threatening the well-being of American citizens. “We are doing things that few others have even tried to do, and we are making progress like nobody would believe,” Trump declared. “We believe our country should be a sanctuary for law-abiding citizens, not criminal aliens.”



Special Response Team (SRT) within Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) participates in a training exercise utilizing an armored vehicle at Fort Benning in Georgia [Credit: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement]

Trump added that his election campaign was the bulwark against “radical socialism and the destruction of the American dream,” a theme that has become a permanent fixture of every speech from the president.

“It’s real and for the optics,” an anonymous Trump election campaign official told the *Los Angeles Times* Tuesday about the deportation threats. “There are over 1 million here with final deportation orders, and we hardly even pursue them.”

Also speaking anonymously to the *Los Angeles Times*, a Trump administration official confirmed that the massive assault would begin by targeting the more than one million immigrants who are subject to removal orders but have not been arrested by federal agents.

The deportation orders, the official complained bitterly, “were secured at great time and expense, and yet illegal aliens not only refuse to appear in court, they often obtain fraudulent identities, collect federal welfare and illegally work in the United States.”

Trump has repeatedly denounced immigrants as “invaders” and criminals in order to stoke up his far-right base and justify the detention of thousands of fathers, mothers and children.

The arrest and detention of millions of immigrants in a sprawling network of concentration camps would mark a significant escalation of Trump's war on immigrants. It would require effective martial law in every major city, sweeping up a significant portion of the working class in a domestic military-style mobilization without precedent in American history. Such an operation would dwarf the roundup and internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II.

Apparent reticence on the part of the heads of the Department of Homeland Security and ICE towards a plan to round up 10,000 parents and children in the ten largest cities in the country led to their ouster earlier this year. Trump explained at the time that he wanted to take a "tougher" direction in his ongoing crackdown on immigrants.

While three million people were deported under Barack Obama in the eight years between 2009 and 2016, the most in American history, there is no precedent for millions being deported in a single year. The largest number of deportations in a single year came in 2012, when more than 400,000 individuals were removed from the country.

According to the latest estimate, there are 10.5 million people living in the United States who are unauthorized immigrants, more than three percent of the country's total population. At least 7.6 million undocumented immigrants are employed, making up nearly five percent of the national workforce.

The mass detention of millions of undocumented immigrants would have a direct impact on millions more, including their children, many of whom are citizens, as well as coworkers. Cities with large undocumented immigrant communities, including New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas and Miami, would be particularly impacted.

Farming communities and meat processing centers in rural American, where undocumented workers are disproportionately employed, itinerantly following seasonal harvests, would also take a significant hit.

Trump gave no indication as to how these mass raids would take place, nor how they would be held prior to deportation. The US already operates the largest immigrant detention network in the world, with nearly 1,000 sites spread out across the country that are either owned or contracted for use by the federal government.

The existing network of immigrant concentration camps is already near its maximum capacity, with more than 52,000 individuals being held on any given night. The Pentagon announced last week that a detention center for 1,400 children will be operated at Fort Sill

Army Base in Lawton, Oklahoma, the site of a Japanese internment camp during the Second World War.

How many more concentration camps will be constructed to accommodate millions? How many more guards will be hired? Such details have so far been withheld by the Trump administration.

As Trump prepares an even wider domestic crackdown, the Mexican government has offered its services as his foreign enforcer, blocking migrants and asylum seekers from crossing its northern border into the United States and deporting thousands back to the impoverishment and violence which they fled in their home countries.

“Mexico, using their strong immigration laws, is doing a very good job of stopping people long before they get to our Southern Border,” Trump boasted in his tweet Monday, referring to the agreement with the government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), which includes the deployment of thousands of troops to harass and arrest asylum seekers from Central America.

“Guatemala is getting ready to sign a Safe-Third Agreement. The only ones who won’t do anything are the Democrats in Congress. They must vote to get rid of the loopholes, and fix asylum! If so, Border Crisis will end quickly!”

Far from blocking Trump’s attack on immigrants, the Democrats are complicit in the attack on immigrants, focusing the opposition to Trump on foreign policy, denouncing him as a stooge of Russian President Vladimir Putin. They have accepted Trump’s declaration of a state of emergency in order to use Pentagon funds to build a wall along the US-Mexico border and deploy thousands of active-duty soldiers inside the United States.

CNN reported Tuesday night that Senate Democrats had reached a deal with their Republican counterparts to funnel \$4.6 billion into the detention and deportation machine.

There is significant popular support for immigrants, with a recent Pew poll finding that 62 percent of Americans think that migrants strengthen the country. This sentiment can only be mobilized in a progressive direction in opposition to the entire political system, which means a break with the Democrats and the fight for socialism to unite the working class across artificial international boundaries.

Workers and young people must mobilize in defense of their brothers and sisters through strikes, sit-ins and mass protests to put a halt to Trump’s fascistic agenda. The tactics used

to attack undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers today will be used against the entire working class tomorrow.

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