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USA

Trump Intensified Racist Attack on Immigrants—and the Resistance

- IV Online magazine - 2025 - IVP611 - December 2025 -

Publication date: Monday 8 December 2025

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President Donald Trump has intensified his attack on immigrants, particularly immigrants of color, with outbursts of racist language and a barrage of new regulations. But the resistance is also growing.

Since the violent armed attack by an Afghan immigrant on two National Guard members in Washington, D.C. on November 26 that killed one and severely wounded the other, Trump has dramatically restricted immigration, threatened to revoke the status of legal immigrants, and called for Immigration and Customs Enforcement to carry out intensified arrests and deportations. These measures, driven by his racist attitudes and political strategy, are overturning historic American immigration policies and the country's political culture.

Trump has declared a "permanent pause" on immigration from "Third World Countries." He also ordered a halt to asylum decisions and said every would-be asylee will be vetted to the "maximum degree possible." He also stated that all Biden era grants of asylum will be reexamined. He has stopped all immigration requests and visas from Afghans. He has ordered "full scale, rigorous reexamination" of all green cards issued to people from 19 "countries of concern," among those Afghanistan, Cuba, Haiti, Iran, and Somalia. Green cards are documents that grant permanent residency, the right to live and work indefinitely, and apply for U.S. citizenship. He has also called for the "denaturalization" (stripping of U.S. citizenship) and rapid deportation of people deemed to be security risks or those who are "non-compatible with Western civilization."

All of this halts much of U.S. immigration and represents not only a legal reversal of U.S. immigration politics but also a profound transformation of U.S. political culture that for decades generally welcomed immigrants and saw immigration as a foundation of American society. The words from the poem "The New Colossus" by poet Emma Lazarus that are inscribed on the Statue of Liberty—"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."—have now effectively been erased by Trump.

At the same time, Trump unleashed a racist tirade against Somali immigrants in Minnesota. Fleeing civil war, Somalis began immigration to the area in the 1990s and there are now about 100,000 living there. Trump called them "garbage,...they "contributed nothing." He specifically mentioned Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, a Somali immigrant, saying she was garbage. "I don't want them in the country," he said. ICE then sent 100 federal agents to Minneapolis-St. Paul area to round up and deport immigrants. The irony is that 90 percent of Somalis there are native-born or naturalized U.S. citizens, while hundreds hold other forms of legal status.

Meanwhile, Trump continues to send ICE agents to cities and states governed by Democrats: Los Angeles, Chicago, New Orleans, Charlotte, and Washington, D.C. and most recently Minneapolis and St. Paul. Everywhere ICE agents appear, local residents organize to support immigrants and to resist ICE.

In New York City recently when about 50 ICE agents arrived at a parking facility in Chinatown, locals made a few phone calls and soon 200 people arrived to block the building and prevent them from leaving to make arrests. Los Angeles and Chicago have well developed local networks that organize the resistance. Matthew Hunter, a longtime LA activist says, "But we need to build permanent structures of struggle to outlast this." And they are. He and others have built a "rapid response network" to respond to ICE raids in L.A. In Chicago, activists have distributed 120,000 loud, shrill whistles, accompanied by a pamphlet explaining how to use the whistles to alert neighbors to ICE raids.

Trump is pushing down on us, but everywhere we are pushing back.

7 December 2025

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