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USA

A Reign of Anti-Immigrant Terror

- IV Online magazine - 2026 - IVP620 - September 2026 -



Publication date: Sunday 27 September 2026

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IN AUSTIN, TEXAS an ICE agent shoots a food delivery driver after he was rammed and pulled over by an unmarked van. Wilber Rafael Garces Perez, from Venezuela, entered the United States legally and is seeking asylum. He is now in ICE detention with his serious gunshot wounds inadequately treated. [1]

In Springfield, Ohio the Haitian community is living in terror and trauma as members are picked up for deportation – some having built lives in the United States for decades – after the Trump regime peremptorily revoked their Temporary Protected Status.

Around the country, at least 166 immigrants have been deported to [“third party” countries](#) where they have no connections, such as the Central African Republic where they’re held in prison hotels and beaten and tortured if they speak out. Here is a [report from Uganda](#) about eight immigrants who were deported to a country they don’t know.

These are only snapshots of the daily atrocities of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Border Patrol, despite outrage and protest in our communities.

State of the Crackdown

ICE has never been able to meet the racist psychopath’s Stephen Miller’s national objective of arresting 3000 immigrants a day. After a year and a half of trying one tactic and then another, the daily quota was lowered to 2000, which is vicious enough.

Various media have covered the growing number of people who have been arrested, most recently 43,000 in June, 49,000 in July and almost 51,000 in August. This amounts to fewer than 1650 a day, but nonetheless represents [a growth in arrests](#), much of it due to cooperation by local police. However it still doesn’t match “deporter in chief” Obama’s level of arrests and deportations.

It is much more politically costly to target people who have lived in the country for years than deport those at the borders. Here they built families who love and support them, they have community members and co-workers who value them.

In essentially sealing borders and preventing asylum applications, the Trump administration has developed various plans to pick up, detain and deport immigrants. While it claims it is getting rid of the “worst of the worst,” story after story reveals ordinary people with dreams and hopes.

Where do ICE and Border Patrol find those who seemingly lack status? They are found at airports arriving or departing with their families; they are pulled over as they are on their way to work; they are reporting to ICE offices or courts for their routine immigration appointments.

Most have distant asylum hearing dates, and some are green card holders targeted by an administration that has decided their ideas don’t align with Trump’s.

This last category includes the publicized cases of Mahmoud Khalil — a 31-year-old Palestinian born in a refugee camp in Syria and getting a Master's Degree at Columbia University — and 53-year-old Salah Sarsour, president of the Islamic Society of Milwaukee, community leader, father and grandfather, who was born in the West Bank.

Then there is the category of Temporary Protected Status (TPS), for those whose country is facing a war, civil unrest or an environmental disaster. About 350,000 Haitians gained that status in 2010, when an earthquake destroyed much of its capital Port-au-Prince and beyond.

The poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti suffered from two U.S.-backed coups 30 years ago and has been unable to regain its stability. Because of gang violence no flights arrive in Port-au-Prince because gangs control the runway — yet the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled Trump has the right to remove TPS status, and Trump eagerly did so.

The Court majority disregarded Trump's blatant racist comments about the country he described as a "shithole" and absurdly accused Haitians living and working in Springfield, Ohio (along with vice president Vance) of eating dogs and cats.

Stripped of their TPS, Haitians have lost their jobs and 161 were deported in shackles back to Haiti in August. While humanitarian groups scramble to help the first batch, Trump's gang projects deporting 250 Haitians each week.

With those who only had TPS status no longer able to work, this is already causing critical staffing shortages in the care industry. Others, who have pending asylum cases, have been called into Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for interviews and [fitted with electric monitors](#).

What's New?

Even though more immigrants were deported under the Obama administration's two terms, the Trump administration has developed a whole set of new immigration rules or novel interpretation of immigration law. The rhetoric of the second Trump era does not mask its inherent cruelty.

It shut down its borders, blocks asylum seekers from being able to apply, fires immigration judges who rule favorably, and once people are arrested, throws them into detention centers rather than release them until their hearing.

Even when forced to back off from scaling an apartment building from helicopters or flooding cities with masked goon squads, ICE agents have employed other terrorizing tactics. They have designed a media campaign to encourage immigrants to self-deport rather than being snatched up without warning and separated from their children.

This administration has developed the strategy of holding the immigrants it arrests in detention centers, with a goal of space for 100,000 immigrants. These for-profit facilities are usually operated by corporations who already specialize in prison systems, especially the GEO Group and CoreCivic.

According to Operation Immigration, 245 detention centers and county jails across the United States currently hold almost 66,000 people at a cost of \$3.2 billion a year. The average stay is roughly two months. Since 2025, 56 have died in one of the centers.

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Under former DHS Secretary Kristi Noem, ICE launched its “Detention Reengineering Initiative,” purchasing 11 warehouses at extravagant prices to house immigrants. But warehousing immigrants isn’t as simple as storing boxes.

Communities mobilized to keep the facilities shut by demanding various hearings and certificates of compliance. They pointed out that the warehouses did not have the water and sewage facilities required, and some were in floodplains. Within months the plan was scraped and seven, purchased for \$700 million, are up for sale or turned over to the government.

Yet having created the largest detention system in the world, the DHS is now frantically soliciting contracts from corporations who would be responsible for building from the ground up one-stop facilities where immigrants would be held, tried and then deported. [Project Salt Box](#) has obtained records and analyzed this streamlined operation.

From the beginning those housed at these detention centers have protested the horrendous conditions of inedible meals, lack of access to family or lawyers, the non-existence of health care and mistreatment by guards.

The poor conditions not only maximize the profit margin but also function to terrorize the incarcerated immigrant and their families. Some immigrants reported that guards told them they had the power to get out of the place by agreeing to self-deport. Several centers have seen sustained food and work strikes while ICE and the center staff maintain that everything is fine.

Reporters have tracked down immigrants who have been deported. Some self-deported back to their country of origin because with their special health needs they thought they might die in detention. But those deported to countries where they know no one are given a couple of months to figure out where to go. They are stranded.

This is an ongoing crime against humanity, only slowed down by popular resistance. That’s why 15 activists in Minneapolis, including trade unionists, are facing “conspiracy” charges after the mass mobilization that drove “Operation Metro Surge” out of that city.

Source [Against the Current](#).

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[1] Photo: Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is opening an immigrant detention center, Big Horn Facility, on the plains of northeastern Colorado. It will be operated by the pro-profit GEO Group. Photo: Jim West.