

ICE agents raid immigrant kitchen staff after dining at Ann Arbor, Michigan restaurant

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26 May 2017

On Wednesday, May 24, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents arrested three men working at Sava's restaurant in Ann Arbor, Michigan, a university town in suburban Detroit. The agents purportedly went to the restaurant to arrest a man who turned out not to be working at the time. After having breakfast, the agents raided the kitchen, found three men of Hispanic origin, and arrested all three.

The three workers were taken to ICE offices in Detroit about an hour away and were detained until family members could submit documentation of their legal resident status. All were later released from ICE custody.

This type of Gestapo behavior is a sign of the deeply reactionary character of the ruling class's policy toward immigrant workers. By targeting workers who have legal status and who should have no reason to fear legal arrest and deportation, the fascistic types who populate ICE and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) are intentionally trying to spread fear among millions of immigrants across the country.

The wife of one of the arrested men, Nicki Sanchez, told local news website *Mlive* that her husband was "terrified" by the incident.

"They just slapped some handcuffs on him," said Sanchez. "Not only is that offensive, he was embarrassed in front of the whole restaurant. Why didn't they ask him before they detained him?"

Bree Stillwell, Marketing Director of Savco Hospitality, told media the incident created "another high anxiety situation in our community."

She said that immigrant workers face the fear [that] even though they are living by the rules, those rules won't apply tomorrow."

As the news of the arrests spread in social media, many people gathered at the restaurant to protest the

ICE raid.

According to data from ICE, arrests of immigrants increased 38 percent during the first three months of 2017 over the same period last year.

The number of people arrested between January and March 2017 was a shocking 41,000 individuals. More than 10,000 of these were classified as "noncriminal immigrants," up 150 percent from last year. The spike in arrests takes place at a time when the number of undocumented workers entering the US is at a record low.

Other large raids have taken place in the Detroit area recently. In March, ICE agents detained more than 50 people in a raid on an alleged cockfighting ring. More than 140 officers from various agencies participated. New policies issued by the Department of Homeland security call on officers to detain all people during immigration raids, regardless of whether or not they are suspected of immigration violations or of participating in illegal activities.

The Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights reported last week that ICE agents arrested several individuals in Ann Arbor on separate occasions. On May 16, ICE arrested four men after following them into the parking lot of a restaurant. The next day, police detained another man near Miller and Main Street in Ann Arbor.

Reports of ICE raids nationwide are continuous. Federal agents recently arrested 188 people in Los Angeles as part of a dragnet targeting alleged "criminal aliens, illegal re-entrants and immigrant fugitives." Those arrested included nationals of 11 different countries.

Frank Sharry, executive director of America's Voice Education Fund told the *Los Angeles Times* that the majority of people targeted couldn't be considered

“serious criminals.”

“These guys spin, distort, exaggerate, and dissemble almost as much as the president they work for,” Sharry said. “The false claims are aimed at providing cover for an agenda that calls for the deportation of millions. Instead of targeting serious criminals, they are targeting every immigrant they can get their hands on and calling all of them criminals.”

According to an ICE report, the number of noncriminal immigrants arrested has more than doubled, going from 4,200 in 2016 to 10,800 in 2017. Just six percent of those arrested were charged with violent crimes. Indeed, many of those picked up are held for the most minor of offenses. Reports show that immigrants are *less* likely to commit crimes than US citizens.

Some undocumented workers have been arrested while dropping their children off at school or even while applying for a “green card,” or permanent resident status.

Quite a few social media groups and a “rapid response team” have been set up by organizations opposed to the brutal attacks on immigrants begun by the Obama Administration that have been further escalated and made more visible by Trump. Several Facebook postings over the last two weeks read as follows:

- “ICE agents are out here in unmarked vehicles arresting immigrants and people trying to help them. I just saw 3 elderly people pulled from their houses.”
- “BE CAREFUL TODAY. ICE (immigration) is going through Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor in unmarked cars following people to their houses and stopping in at restaurants. They have already taken people and a loved one.”
- Yesterday (May 16) at around 8:00 AM: four men were arrested in the Red Robin parking lot near State and Eisenhower after being followed by law enforcement. Caller says vests said “ICE.”
- Today (May 17th) at around 9:15 one man was detained by law enforcement in an unmarked car at 308 Main Street, near Miller and Main.

While opposition to the arrests and detentions is deeply felt within the American population, it does not find political expression within the framework of official politics. Representatives of both the Democrats and the Republicans by and large support these

deportations.

Moreover, although the Trump Administration’s policies on deportation represent a qualitative deepening of the attacks on immigrants, these policies are the culmination of the eight years of record deportations under Obama, who deported 2.5 million men, women and children, the most by any president in US history.



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