

# ICE arrests 212 immigrants, raids 122 businesses in Los Angeles area

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Last week, federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents conducted raids across the Los Angeles metropolitan area in Southern California, arresting 212 people and serving notices of inspection to 122 businesses. The raids were carried out in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.

Jennaya Dunlap, affiliated with the Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice (IC4IJ), told the *Los Angeles Daily News* that numerous phone calls were placed to her organization last week reporting arrests across San Bernardino and Riverside counties. One of those calls pertained to Fermin Garcia, a father of three US citizens living in Riverside. Garcia was arrested last Sunday and is already in the process of being deported, despite potentially having US citizenship rights through his father.

On its Facebook page, IC4IJ posted: “ICE decided to deport Fermin Garcia today, despite the phone calls of support and his possible claim to citizenship. They did not allow his family to see him or even to leave money or belongings to take with him.”

Atrocities such as this have become daily occurrences under the Trump administration, which has conspired with the Democratic Party to deepen the decades-long, bipartisan assault on immigrants. While the ICE raids were taking place last week, the Senate failed to pass multiple right-wing, bipartisan proposals for “immigration reform.”

Since President Donald Trump canceled the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program last September, the Democrats have sought to cover up their complicity in the assault on immigrants by posturing as defenders of the minority of undocumented immigrants who potentially qualified for the limited amnesty program enacted by executive

order during the Obama administration. They comprise some 1.8 million out of an estimated total undocumented population of 11 million.

The Democratic-backed proposals for “protecting” DACA recipients are in essence reactionary, mandating a 10- to 12-year path to citizenship, a guarantee that could be rescinded at any time. During this extended time period, DACA recipients would be barred from receiving any social benefits and could face immediate deportation for the slightest criminal infraction.

Furthermore, the primary bill supported by the Democrats included measures to increase border militarization and boost funding for ICE’s internal deportation apparatus by \$25 billion. If a similar bill were to pass, it would facilitate and institutionalize ICE’s policies of mass roundups, incarceration in detention centers and deportations. The Democratic-backed proposals would substantially increase the number of ICE and Border Patrol agents, forcing tens of thousands of workers fleeing poverty and repression bound up with US imperialist intervention to make the perilous trek across the desert, resulting in thousands more deaths.

Last month, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, representing the supposed left wing of the Democratic Party, summed up the attitude of the party when he declared: “I don’t think there’s anybody who disagrees that we need strong border security. If the president wants to work with us to make sure we have strong border security, let’s do that.”

In its self-serving press release on the raids in Los Angeles, ICE claimed that 195 of those arrested “were either convicted criminals, had been issued a final order of removal and failed to depart the United States, or had been previously removed from the United States and returned illegally.”

ICE further claimed, “More than 55 percent had prior felony convictions for serious or violent offenses, such as child sex crimes, weapons charges and assault, or had past convictions for significant or multiple misdemeanors.”

Whether or not any crimes have been committed by those detained, the primary purpose of the immigration raids is to create an atmosphere of intense anxiety and fear across immigrant communities, and to whip up xenophobic sentiments within Trump’s far-right base of support.

The dragnet operation in Southern California follows a similar audit of 77 businesses in cities across Northern California that took place two weeks ago, which themselves were believed to be the largest localized workplace raids since the election of Trump. Last week, there were reports that ICE similarly raided farms in the agricultural Central Valley region of the state, demanding documentation of all workers.

The raids represent the actualization of threats against the state by the fascistic ICE deputy director, Thomas Homan, in response to the passage last year of “sanctuary state” legislation, which went into effect at the start of the new year. The two bills—“The California Values Act (SB54) and the “Immigrant Worker Protection Act” (AB450)—place limited restrictions on the ability of state police and other state employees to coordinate with ICE in the arrest of immigrants. They also require employers to notify their employees within three days in the event that ICE conducts an inspection of their business.

Speaking to Fox News on January 1, Homan declared, “California better hold on tight. They’re about to see a lot more special agents, a lot more deportation officers in the state of California. If the politicians of California don’t want to protect their communities, then ICE will.” He called for the arrest of officials supporting “sanctuary city” policies, declaring, “We’ve got to start charging some of these politicians with crimes.”

ICE’s press release on the latest raids in Los Angeles quotes Homan blaming sanctuary city policies for the invasive character of the immigration raids: “Because sanctuary jurisdictions like Los Angeles prevent ICE from arresting criminal aliens in the secure confines of a jail, our officers are forced to conduct at-large arrests in the community, putting officers, the general public

and the aliens at greater risk and increasing the incidents of collateral arrests.”

In response to the latest raids, Democratic Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti expressed disagreement over tactics, declaring, “The administration should focus on people who have committed serious crimes or pose a threat to national security, rather than on separating hard-working families.”



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