

ICE arrests nearly 600 immigrants in enforcement surge, targeting “uncooperative” local jurisdictions

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7 October 2019

According to recent news releases from the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE), a total of 597 immigrants were arrested during an “enforcement surge” across the United States spanning five days, from September 21 to 25. The press release noted that the surge arrests were part of nearly 1,300 ICE arrests made that week, meaning that 700 ICE arrests took place over and above the five-day operation.

The Trump administration’s coordinated attack on immigrants throughout 20 US states at the end of last month is the largest multi-state operation reported this year and is twice as large as the last five-day multi-state ICE operation in June, which arrested 299 immigrants across 12 states. Last month’s ICE roundup follows the ICE raids in August at multiple Mississippi poultry processing plants, which detained 680 workers.

The operation saw the arrest of 97 immigrants across the Midwest; 82 immigrants in New York City, the Hudson Valley, and Long Island in New York; 80 across New England; 57 in Virginia and Washington, DC; 54 in New Jersey; 46 in Michigan and Ohio; 49 in north Texas and Oklahoma; 45 in south and central Texas; 45 in Pennsylvania; and 42 in Colorado and Wyoming.

A majority of those arrested were from Mexico and Central America, but included immigrants from six continents. Among these were workers from Algeria, Brazil, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, India, Iraq, Israel, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Uganda, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom.

ICE branded the operation in its news releases as a

mass arrest of “criminal aliens,” boasting that a significant majority of those arrested were convicted criminals or had criminal charges pending. But since ICE includes in its list of crimes “illegal entry and illegal re-entry” into the US, this means that any person is classified as a criminal simply for crossing the US border without the appropriate papers.

It is noteworthy that ICE ended its news releases by issuing threats to local jurisdictions and areas which have declared themselves sanctuary cities, stating: “Local jurisdictions that choose to not cooperate with ICE are likely to see an increase in ICE enforcement activity.” This fascist-minded message to local authorities who do not actively cooperate with ICE by handing over any undocumented immigrants in custody is that ramped up attacks on local immigrant populations by the federal government will be blamed on any state or local entity that has given even verbal assurances of safety to immigrants.

Acting ICE director Matthew Albence held a White House press briefing the day after the “enforcement surge” concluded, to reinforce these statements that local jurisdictions that refuse to cooperate with ICE “are complicit in the crimes committed by aliens,” “betray their duty to protect public safety,” and “force ICE to be more visible” in these areas, concluding that “sanctuary policies threaten public safety.”

According to ICE statistics published in July, there have been 326,876 ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) arrests since the start of the 2017 fiscal year to March of this year. In comparison, under Obama, the “deporter-in-chief,” there were more than 1.8 million ICE ERO arrests during his two terms, with 322,093 arrests in 2011 alone.

US Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), a separate agency from ICE (both are agencies of the Department of Homeland Security), has made significantly more arrests than ICE. Since the start of the 2017 fiscal year, the CBP has made 1.5 million apprehensions.

Last month, the Trump administration continued its anti-democratic attacks on immigrants and refugees, lowering the cap on refugees seeking asylum in the US to 18,000—the lowest number since the current refugee program was established in 1980—and has banned asylum seekers from Central America.

The Democratic Party gave its support to Trump's anti-immigrant policies earlier this year by voting overwhelmingly to provide \$4.6 billion in funding to ICE and CBP. It has now completely excluded any mention of Trump's fascistic immigration policies from its impeachment inquiry.

The attacks by both factions of the ruling class on immigrants and refugees has come during an offensive of workers in North America, notably the strike by 48,000 GM workers. American autoworkers have received widespread international support, including from victimized GM workers in Silao, Mexico who refused to increase production during the strike.



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