

DeSantis pledges 1,000 Florida National Guard troops in support of Texas Gov. Abbott's anti-migrant campaign

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On Thursday, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis announced that he would authorize the deployment of up to 1,000 Florida National Guard soldiers to Texas. The move was in support of Donald Trump's election campaign and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's war on immigrants and usurpation of federal authority over the US/Mexico border.

Flanked by dozens of Florida state troopers, DeSantis called for the states to "band together." He promoted the Republican Party's propaganda line that the flow of refugees across the southern border constitutes a foreign "invasion," and pledged to "stop the invasion once and for all."

DeSantis said the goal of the deployment was to help "Texas fortify the border, add barriers, and wire." He also revealed that for the first time, Florida's recently created civilian military force, the Florida State Guard, would be deployed outside the state, going to Texas to reinforce Abbott's border mission.

Last week, in a 5-4 decision, the US Supreme Court ruled that federal Customs and Border Protection agents could remove concertina wire installed by the Texas National Guard along the Rio Grande River in order to gain access to the river and process migrants seeking to cross into the US. The Biden Justice Department had filed an emergency appeal to the Supreme Court to lift an injunction against US border agents taking down razor wire that had been imposed by a Texas state court and upheld by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Abbott had ordered barbed wire strung and buoys placed in the Rio Grande in defiance of federal immigration authorities. This was in line with his mobilization of the Texas National Guard to seize control of the border and block the US Border Patrol from gaining access.

In making his announcement on deploying Florida National Guard soldiers to Texas, DeSantis is joining virtually the entire Republican Party in thumbing his nose at the Supreme Court decision and challenging the authority of the Biden administration. The predominant political narrative of the GOP is that Biden and the Democrats are refusing to enforce immigration laws in order to abet an "invasion" of future Democratic voters.

Following the Supreme Court decision last week, Trump

implored governors on his social media account to "deploy their guards" to Texas.

"We encourage all willing States to deploy their guards to Texas to prevent the entry of illegals, and to them remove back across the Border," Trump wrote. Trump promised that on "Day One" of his second term he would work "hand in hand with Governor Abbott and other Border States to Stop the Invasion, Seal the Border, and Rapidly Begin the Largest Domestic Deportation Operation in History. Those Biden has let in should not get comfortable because they will be going home."

In a letter released Friday, 24 out of 25 Republican members of Texas' US House delegation encouraged Abbott to "hold the line against the Biden Administration and continue to do everything you can to protect our Southern Border." They thanked Abbott for his "resolve" and pledged to stand with him "against this illegal alien invasion enabled by cartels and the Biden Administration."

Far from an invading army, the vast majority of migrants coming to the US are leaving everything behind in the hopes of achieving the "American dream." Unable to make a decent living in their home countries, or facing the threat of gang violence and political persecution, many have no choice but to make the perilous and dangerous journey, often from countries that have been devastated by US-backed coups, sanctions or military occupation.

Thursday's announcement by DeSantis is just the latest in a series of troop deployments Republican governors have authorized in the last year in furtherance of Abbott's anti-immigrant Operation Lone Star. Last week, Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin's office confirmed to *Newsweek* that the state had already deployed 100 National Guard troops in support of Lone Star. A spokesperson for North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum confirmed to *Newsweek* that "125 soldiers from the 817th Engineer Company" were currently deployed to the border.

Several other governors have dispatched troops to Texas since Abbott initiated Operation Lone Star in 2021. Last summer, Govs. Sarah Huckabee Sanders (Arkansas) and Kristi

Noem (South Dakota) deployed 80 and 50 National Guard soldiers to the Texas-Mexico border, respectively. Sixty-one soldiers from the Nebraska National Guard were also deployed last year to the border.

DeSantis' announcement came one day after Republicans on the House Homeland Security Committee voted to advance articles of impeachment against Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas. Despite the fact that under Mayorkas the DHS has deported and incarcerated immigrants at similar rates to those under Trump, Republicans have accused the secretary, the son of a Cuban Jew, and President Joe Biden of purposely planning an "invasion" of "illegal aliens" to "replace" native-born Americans.

Far from defending the democratic rights of immigrants or pushing back on this neo-Nazi "invasion" narrative, the Biden administration is doing everything in its power to appease its "Republican colleagues" in the hopes of securing the necessary votes to pass a \$110 billion national security supplemental package that includes, most importantly for the Biden White House, over \$61 billion in military aid to Ukraine for the war against Russia. The bill also includes \$14 billion for Israel, currently engaged in genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, as well as billions for Taiwan to prepare for war with China and \$14 billion to hire more US border police and expand the surveillance state.

The Republicans have balked at providing funding for Ukraine unless it is paired with billions more for the border police and the virtual abolition of the right to claim asylum in the United States. More than willing to throw millions of immigrants and their families under the bus in order to secure money for war, the Biden White House, along with senators from both parties, has agreed to a border deal that would provide "extraordinary tools for President Trump," Republican Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina said earlier this week.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-New York) told reporters on Thursday that the text of the border bill would likely be released this weekend and a vote in the Senate scheduled for next week. However, it is increasingly unlikely that the bill will become law, as House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Trump sycophant, signaled he would not bring it up for a vote in the House after Trump came out against the measure last week.

Many of Trump's Republican allies have lent their support to a far-right "Take Your Border Back" convoy. The convoy is composed of the same human dust that participated in the January 6, 2021, coup and the aborted "People's Convoy" against COVID-19 mitigation measures in the spring of 2022.

Participants in the convoy, which as of this writing include a few hundred fascists, Christian nationalists, Republican politicians and militia elements, held a rally on Thursday in Dripping Springs, Texas, about 220 miles east of the contested border town of Eagle Pass.

Speakers at the rally included several current and former

Republican officials such as former Alaska governor and John McCain's vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin, Texas State Rep. Carrie Isaac, and Chris Burr, a board member of the Republican Party of Texas. Several aspiring Republican politicians also spoke at the rally, including Victor Avila, a candidate for Texas' 23rd District and former Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent.

Devin Burghart, executive director of Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights, reported that during his speech, Avila revealed he had been endorsed by Ret. Gen. Michael Flynn, one of Trump's top co-conspirators in the failed coup. Avila promised, if elected, to "start removing people," adding that "it's gonna be very difficult to get at 35 million illegals, but it's gonna be one at a time, one at a time."

Another ally in Trump's coup plot and underling of Flynn, Ivan Raiklin, also spoke at the rally. Raiklin was the source of the "Pence card" memorandum that argued that then-Vice President Mike Pence had the authority to unilaterally reject electoral college votes from states Trump lost. Burghart reported that in his speech Raiklin ranted about "rooting out domestic enemies" and crushing "commies."

One of the last speakers, Michael Yon, delivered an outright antisemitic screed that was virtually identical to the statements issued by gunman Robert Bowers prior to the Tree of Life Synagogue massacre. In his speech, Yon, a former Green Beret who was outside the Capitol building on January 6, claimed that a "main funder" of illegal immigration "is actually HIAS... The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. Jewish. Right?"

On Gab, the preferred social media network of neo-Nazis and white supremacists, Yon posted that Secretary Mayorkas "was a HIAS board member ... before he came to higher position in US Government invasion operations. Mayorkas is himself a migrant and a traitor. Much as Hitler was."



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