

Homeland Security Department to surveil social media accounts of immigrants, lawful residents for “antisemitic” activity

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In an attack on the free speech rights of the entire working class in the US and internationally, on Wednesday the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that as part of its visa application process it would begin screening and logging social media accounts and flagging what it deemed “antisemitic” activity. Those found advocating for Palestinian equality, accountability for US-backed Israeli war crimes, or an end to the Zionist state are at risk of being denied entry to the US.

The press release stated that US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) “will begin considering aliens’ antisemitic activity on social media and the physical harassment of Jewish individuals as grounds for denying immigration benefit requests.”

In line with the previous administration of Democrat Joe Biden, which falsely conflated opposition to the genocide in Gaza with hatred of Jewish people, Trump’s DHS is using the same lie to stifle the democratic rights of not only immigrants but lawful permanent residents as well. The press release notes that this policy “will immediately affect aliens applying for lawful permanent resident status, foreign students and aliens affiliated with educational institutions linked to antisemitic activity.”

Paving the way to not only deport but to imprison and possibly assassinate alleged “terrorist” sympathizers, the DHS wrote that it will:

enforce all relevant immigration laws to the maximum degree, to protect the homeland from extremists and terrorist aliens, including those who support antisemitic terrorism, violent antisemitic ideologies and antisemitic terrorist organizations such as Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, or Ansar Allah, aka: “the Houthis.”

Underscoring the anti-democratic character of the policy, DHS Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Tricia McLaughlin wrote:

Sec. Noem has made it clear that anyone who thinks they can come to America and hide behind the First Amendment to advocate for anti-Semitic violence and terrorism—think again. You are not welcome here.

The agency said it will:

consider social media content that indicates an alien endorsing, espousing, promoting, or supporting antisemitic terrorism, antisemitic terrorist organizations, or other antisemitic activity as a negative factor in any USCIS discretionary analysis when adjudicating immigration benefit requests.

While people who evince support for organizations and groups that are currently engaged in armed resistance against US imperialism and the genocide in Gaza have been targeted, no neo-Nazi or right-wing organizations that actually practice and promote antisemitism were listed.

This latest attack on democratic rights was met by the Democratic Party with the same indifference it has displayed during the first three months of the Trump administration. As of this writing, not a single leading Democrat, including Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (New York) and Rashida Tlaib (Michigan) or Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders has issued a statement condemning the policy.

The latest policy follows the ongoing kidnapping and detention of international students, who have spoken out

against the genocide in Gaza, such as Columbia's Mahmoud Khalil and Tufts University's Rumeysa Ozturk, both of whom remain imprisoned in immigration detention centers for their pro-Palestinian thought crimes.

On Monday, US District Judge William K. Sessions III denied a request by Ozturk's lawyers to have her released, citing questions over jurisdiction. After Ozturk was kidnapped outside her apartment in Somerville, Massachusetts, on March 25, immigration Gestapo whisked her over 1,300 miles away to Louisiana, without her inhaler. Ozturk's lawyers have claimed in court filings that their client has suffered at least three asthma attacks since being abducted.

Far from standing up for students' democratic rights, universities have bent over backwards to accommodate Trump's dictatorial scheme to transform the major colleges into bastions of fascist thought and propaganda. This prostration has not prevented the Trump administration from vindictively withholding federal funding.

On Tuesday, the Trump administration confirmed it had frozen more than \$1 billion in funding for Cornell and \$790 million for Northwestern. Both schools are among more than 60 currently facing "civil rights" investigations by the Department of Education over alleged "antisemitism"—that is, anti-genocide protests that were not sufficiently suppressed.

Revealing the close connections between many universities and the US war machine, Cornell confirmed that it received 75 stop-work orders in connection with grants from the Department of Defense. The university's statement noted that the grants funded research that is "profoundly significant to American defense, cybersecurity and health."

The blocking of funds to Northwestern comes less than two weeks after the Big Ten university released a report on its efforts to block students from organizing and supporting anti-genocide protests on campus. The report noted that the university had updated its "demonstration policy" to prohibit "overnight demonstrations" and to discipline students for "refusing to remove or adjust a mask or face covering if requested to do so by an authorized University official for identification purposes."

The university also announced mandatory "antisemitism training" for "students, faculty and staff," which uses the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism. The IHRA definition equates opposition to Zionism and Israel with antisemitism and deems it "antisemitic" to compare any of the innumerable crimes of Israel to those of the Nazis.

Additionally, Northwestern announced ominously that it had hired:

additional police who, together with our existing officers, are empowered by the state to arrest people who trespass or otherwise violate the law. We also have enhanced our private security force and our relationships with outside law enforcement agencies.

These and many other capitulations to the Trump administration did not prevent the university from having its funding frozen. Similarly, on Wednesday *Science* reported that the Trump administration was "killing" \$400 million in federal grants to Columbia University. Last month, even after it capitulated to Trump's demands and expelled or suspended dozens of students, the university saw \$250 million in biomedical research grants blocked by Trump.

Emboldened by the complicity of the Democrats and universities in their deportation operations and attacks on democratic rights, Trump administration officials are openly flouting court orders and due process. *Axios* reported that during an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) event on Wednesday, DHS Secretary Kristi Noem told agents that the more than 200 people sent to a maximum security El Salvadoran gulag without a trial "should stay there for the rest of their lives."

Speaking to the outlet, Trump's "Border czar" Tom Homan said:

I've talked to the highest level at ICE and they've reassured me several times: Everyone that was removed under the Alien Enemies Act was a gang member and a terrorist.

A CBS "60 Minutes" report that aired this past Sunday found that 75 percent, or 179 of the 238 Venezuelan men kidnapped and currently imprisoned in El Salvador, had no criminal record. Among those currently imprisoned is Andry Hernandez Romero, a 31-year-old makeup artist and gay man. According to his lawyer, Lindsay Toczylowski, Romero loves theater, has never been affiliated with a gang and legally applied for asylum in the United States last year.



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