

Trump Justice Department charges US Representative LaMonica McIver with assaulting federal officers

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Following the same May 9 incident during which the mayor of Newark, New Jersey, Democrat Ras Baraka, was arrested by federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agents, one of the three members of the US House of Representatives from New Jersey who accompanied Baraka, LaMonica McIver, has been charged by the US Department of Justice for allegedly assaulting federal officers during the ensuing fracas.

DHS officials, following the lead of President Donald Trump, have accused the three Democratic Representatives of “storming” into the facility, an obvious lie not supported by the evidence. Demonstrators surrounded Baraka when federal agents came to arrest him after he had already walked out of the gated area into public space.

The Democratic congresspeople sought to accompany the mayor on an inspection tour of the newly re-opened Delaney Hall immigrant detention facility. Baraka, who has stated that he was initially allowed to enter the facility unimpeded, was charged with trespass. He was subsequently released from custody and the charge dismissed.

Earlier this month, the mayor and the three congresspersons were attempting to conduct an inspection of the DHS immigrant detention facility in Newark. The Delaney Hall facility is projected to hold 1,000 immigrants. According to Baraka, the building is now imprisoning immigrants without the proper permits from the city.

The conversion of Delaney Hall into an ICE detention facility is part of a 15-year \$1 billion contract with the GEO Group to operate this facility. This is part of the overall plan to greatly expand the available space for implementing Trump’s aim to detain and deport hundreds of thousands of immigrants. Its location near Newark

airport makes it especially suitable for the efficient removal of masses of detainees from the country.

The cost of these and other expansions of the Department of Homeland Security are part of the major increase in DHS funding of about \$8 billion in the annual federal budget now being debated in Congress. The proposed DHS budget would include \$45 billion for “adult alien detention capacity and family residential centers.”

The three representatives who attempted to tour the facility, 80-year-old Bonnie Watson Coleman, Rob Menendez and McIver, are legally entitled to conduct inspections of DHS-owned or contracted facilities. This, however, did not prevent DHS spokeswoman Tricia McLaughlin from suggesting that the three representatives might face criminal charges for allegedly assaulting uniformed federal agents while they were arresting Baraka.

There is extensive video recording and eyewitness testimony of the incident by a crowd of demonstrators who were protesting nearby. The pushing and shoving confrontation between the demonstrators and the masked and heavily armed federal agents was clearly preceded and provoked by the arrest of Baraka. A video posted on X (formerly Twitter) shows McIver protecting herself while trying to make her way through the crowd while demonstrators are being manhandled by ICE and other federal agents.

The state’s top federal prosecutor, Alina Habba, a Trump appointee and former lawyer for Trump, charged Congresswoman McIver with “assaulting, impeding and interfering with law enforcement.”

In response, McIver stated, “ICE agents created an unnecessary and unsafe confrontation when they chose to arrest Mayor Baraka. The charges against me are purely

political—they mischaracterize and distort my actions, and are meant to criminalize and deter legislative oversight.”

In a statement dripping with hypocrisy from someone acting on behalf of a president who defies the law with impunity, Habba pushed back, saying, “No one is above the law—politicians or otherwise. It is the job of this office to uphold justice impartially, regardless of who you are. Now we will let the justice system work.”

Compounding the transparent fabrication of the incident by federal authorities, charges against Baraka have been dismissed “for the sake of moving forward,” according to Habba.

The unjustified arrest of Mayor Baraka, after he had voluntarily exited the fenced area, was clearly staged as a provocation and to create an incident that could be employed to advance Trump’s drive to intimidate all opposition to his dictatorial agenda by all means, including physical brutality.

In a hearing held Wednesday concerning the dropped charges against Baraka, federal magistrate judge Andre Espinosa admonished federal prosecutors for bringing the charge in the first place.

“The hasty arrest of Newark Mayor Ras Baraka, followed swiftly by the dismissal of these trespassing charges a mere 13 days later, suggests a worrying misstep by your office,” Espinosa said, as reported by the *New Jersey Globe*.

Republicans in Congress, including Speaker Mike Johnson, have called for the three congresspeople to be subject to discipline, such as removal from committee posts. During his visit to Capitol Hill on Tuesday, Trump said of McIver, “That woman was out of control. She was shoving federal agents. ... the days of that crap are over in this country. We’re gonna have law and order.”

Congressional Democrats have responded that the charges against McIver are “morally bankrupt,” “spectacularly inappropriate,” and without “any basis in law or fact.” All true, but these are the same Democrats who for years under previous administrations have supported building up the mass deportation police apparatus.

During his presidency, President Barack Obama deservedly earned the moniker “Deporter-in-Chief” for his role in overseeing the deportations of over 3 million people, the highest of any US president. In 2015, Obama bestowed on Tom Homan (Trump’s “Border Czar”) the Presidential Rank Award for Distinguished Service for his work in overseeing these deportations as a high-level ICE official.

In his one term, Biden continued many of the same anti-immigrant policies as Trump, including the use of “Title 42”—a public health policy used to expel immigrants, including asylum seekers, without providing them a hearing. In her brief presidential campaign, Kamala Harris repeatedly promised to continue building the US-Mexico border wall and tried to sell herself as the more effective “law and order” deporter compared to the erratic Trump. This paved the way for the Trump administration’s escalation of the existing witch hunt against immigrants.

The arrest of the Newark mayor and the indictment of Representative McIver are part of the Trump administration’s aim to subdue even the token opposition to his establishment of a presidential dictatorship. It follows on the heels of the FBI’s arrest of Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Hannah Dugan for allegedly shielding an immigrant who was facing charges in her court from arrest by ICE agents.

Toothless protests and congressional “inspections” will do nothing to stop the massive expansion of the American Gestapo’s capacity for imprisonment and deportation of millions, not only of immigrants but of “home grown” opponents of dictatorial rule, in the words of Trump himself.

Trump and his supporters will not stop short of totally neutering what remains of the separation of powers between the three branches of the federal government, thereby erasing the last vestiges of bourgeois democracy. The Democrats represent the same class interests as the Republicans, and have shown themselves incapable and unwilling to defend democratic rights.

The working class must take action to put an end to the fascist menace by building a revolutionary socialist movement to break the power of the capitalist oligarchy and establish a society based on meeting the needs of the many rather than the perverse desires of a tiny minority.



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