

California Senator Alex Padilla violently assaulted by federal agents during Kristi Noem press conference

Jacob Crosse
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During a press conference at the FBI's Los Angeles headquarters on Thursday, California Senator Alex Padilla, a Democrat, was violently assaulted by federal agents after attempting to question Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Kristi Noem.

Padilla, a duly elected US senator born and raised in Southern California, was manhandled by federal agents, forced to his knees, and shoved face-first onto the floor before being handcuffed—for the “crime” of interrupting during Noem’s press conference.

Padilla attempted to question Noem as she delivered fascistic remarks defending the ongoing mass deportations and military occupation of Los Angeles. The senator explained that he had been in the building receiving a briefing from US Northern Command’s General Gregory Guillot, who has operational command over Joint Task Force 51 (JTF-51), currently led by Major General Scott Sherman.

Under the banner of Joint Task Force 51, some 4,700 National Guard troops and Marines have been deployed or are en route to the Los Angeles area. At least 2,800 are currently engaged in “security operations,” with an estimated 500 National Guard soldiers directly embedded in ICE kidnapping squads targeting the community.

Padilla stated that after receiving his briefing from General Guillot, he learned that Noem was holding a press conference just a few doors down. During her remarks, Noem praised Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the FBI, and “the Army, the Marines, the National Guard, our soldiers ... who have shown up here to help make sure that we have security.”

Justifying the domestic use of military force, Noem falsely declared that the US armed forces “not only protect our country around the world, but they’re doing it

every single day here, uh, in the United States of America too.”

Noem threatened that the ongoing militarized occupation, masked immigration raids, and the usurpation of state and local authority in California and Los Angeles County by the Trump administration would be replicated in other states and cities across the country. She said,

They are setting an example for what is happening across the country in other cities and putting together a model and a blueprint for how we can continue to work to make every single community great again and safe again—for our kids and for our grandkids far into the future...

Turning to the Democrats—who have bent over backwards to accommodate and protect the immigration Gestapo as they disappear workers and students from schools, car washes, churches and hospitals—Noem threatened to “liberate” the state from its elected officials, Governor Gavin Newsom and Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass.

Noem said:

The Department of Homeland Security and the officers and the agencies and the departments and the military people that [are] working on this operation will continue to sustain and increase our operations in this city. We are not going away. We are staying here to liberate the city from the uh socialist and the um burdensome leadership that this governor and that this mayor have placed on

this country.

Shortly after Noem's statement, Senator Padilla attempted to speak. As he began to address the room, he was violently shoved and dragged out of the press conference by federal agents. Before being forced out, Padilla managed to say:

"I am Senator Alex Padilla, and I have questions for the Secretary—because the fact of the matter is, a half a dozen violent criminals that you..."

At this point, Padilla was pushed entirely out of the room and into the hallway, where several FBI agents in body armor were waiting. Although Padilla had his hands raised and was no longer speaking, the agents continued to manhandle him—shoving him forcefully and slamming him onto the floor.

While Padilla was on his knees, FBI agents flanked him on either side, each holding one of his arms. An agent standing in front of him ordered the senator to "put his hands behind his back"—a command he was physically incapable of complying with. Immediately afterward, the agent on Padilla's right applied pressure to his shoulder while yanking his wrist, violently forcing the senator face-first onto the floor.

While lying face-down on the ground, Padilla stated, "If you let my hands go, I can put them behind my back."

Despite not having broken any law, video footage shows the senator being placed in handcuffs. A member of Padilla's staff, who was filming the arrest, is confronted at the end of the video by a DHS agent who blocks the remainder of the detainment and declares, "No recording on the premises."

The detention of Senator Padilla is only the latest example of political repression carried out by the fascistic Trump administration, aimed at silencing and criminalizing all opposition to the policies of the emerging dictatorship. It follows the indictment of New Jersey Representative LaMonica McIver, a Democrat who was conducting oversight at an immigration detention facility when DHS agents illegally detained Newark Mayor Ras Baraka outside the gates. McIver now faces up to 17 years in prison on bogus charges of assaulting, resisting and impeding federal officers.

Earlier in April, Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Hannah Dugan was arrested by the FBI and charged with a felony. Dugan is accused of instructing an undocumented man to exit her courtroom through a set of private doors, allowing him to briefly evade detention by

the immigration Gestapo.

The violent assault on a sitting US senator by government agents in a public setting is unprecedented in American history. Padilla—like every other person in the United States—has the right to free speech. He clearly identified himself and stated that he wished to ask a question at a press conference attended by multiple local and national media outlets. For this, he was tackled, thrown to the ground and handcuffed.

In a thread on X, *World Socialist Web Site* International Editorial Board Chairman David North explained:

An assault on a US Senator is a federal crime. This attack, in the presence of and clearly authorized by Kristi Noem (Homeland Security secretary), is further evidence on an ongoing and increasingly violent presidential coup d'état.

There are tearful expressions of dismay and outrage by the Democrats, but absolutely no calls for mass popular action to defend democratic rights, oppose the coup, and force Trump's removal for High Crimes and Misdemeanors, i.e., conspiring to establish a dictatorship.

North wrote:

Opposition must be organized in the plants, in workplaces and schools. Preparations must be made for a General Strike, in which working class mobilizes and takes the leadership of all progressive forces in society in defense of constitutionally guaranteed democratic rights.



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