

Touting opening of Florida concentration camp, Trump threatens to denaturalize and deport US citizens

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On Tuesday, President Donald Trump traveled to a remote airport in the Florida Everglades to promote the opening of a concentration camp. He was joined there by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem and Deputy White House Advisor Stephen Miller.

The concentration camp sits atop a concrete airport pad, isolated in the swamplands of the Florida Everglades. Trump claimed the tents are air-conditioned, but the extreme heat and humidity of the Florida summer make humane conditions virtually impossible, particularly if generators fail or fuel supplies run out. If a hurricane were to strike the area, the tents would offer no meaningful protection. The result could be catastrophic, with an unknown number of potential deaths.

The facility is an abandoned airport previously known as the Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport, located in Ochopee, Florida. Construction began in 1968 within the Big Cypress National Preserve but was halted in 1970 following widespread opposition from environmentalists and the cancellation of the Boeing 2707, a proposed American supersonic passenger jet that was expected to operate from the site.

In what Trump and his fascist supporters are calling “Alligator Alcatraz,” some 5,000 people are expected to be herded into the hastily constructed facility in remote South Florida. Governor DeSantis announced that transfers would begin on July 2.

Before departing the White House on Tuesday morning to tour and promote the opening of the detention center, Trump was asked whether the camp would serve as “a model going forward.” He replied:

It can be, you don’t always have land so beautiful and so secure. You have a lot of bodyguards and a lot of cops that are in the form of alligators so you don’t have to pay them so much. But I wouldn’t want to

run through the Everglades for long. We’ll keep people where they are supposed to be. This is a very important thing.

As part of a far-right media blitz aimed at normalizing the construction of remote concentration camps for immigrants and political opponents of the US government, the Republican Party is now selling merchandise to promote the Florida camp—complete with hats emblazoned with alligators. It’s the American fascist equivalent of the Nazis selling beer koozies or ashtrays to commemorate Auschwitz.

In promoting the opening of the camp last week, the official Department of Homeland Security account posted an AI-generated image of an alligator wearing an ICE hat. On Tuesday, fascist streamer Benny Johnson appeared at the facility wearing his own piece of war-crime kitsch.

Today and in the week leading up to the opening of the concentration camp, Fox News hosts openly celebrated the prospect of immigrants and detainees being mauled or eaten by alligators. Last week, fascist Fox host Jesse Watters declared his support for “putting American prisoners in a swamp surrounded by gators,” adding, “You keep hearing about all these escape attempts. I mean, what’s more of a deterrent than getting eaten by an alligator?”

At a press conference held after touring the facility, Trump threatened to send US citizens to the camp. “But we also have a lot of bad people that have been here for a long time. ... They are not new to our country, they are old to our country. Many of them were born in our country. I think we ought to get them the hell out of here too. You want to know the truth. So maybe that will be the next job we work on together.”

At the same press conference Trump was asked by a fascist reporter to respond to “communist Zohran Mamdani” and the New York state assemblyman’s pledge during his nomination speech to defy ICE and prevent its agents from

operating in New York City.

Trump responded:

Well, then we'll have to arrest him. Look, we don't need a communist in this country, but if we have one, I'm going to be watching over him carefully on behalf of the nation. We send him money, we send him all the things he needs to run a government...

Taking up Republican Tennessee Representative Andy Ogles' call for the Department of Justice to denaturalize and deport Mamdani over his political affiliations, Trump added:

We are going to be watching that very carefully, and a lot of people are saying he is here illegally. You know, we're going to look at everything, and ideally he's going to turn out to be much less than a communist. But right now, he's a communist. That's not a socialist.

In a statement posted on social media, Mamdani said Trump's remarks "don't just represent an attack on our democracy but an attempt to send a message to every New Yorker who refuses to hide in the shadows: if you speak up, they will come for you. We will not accept this intimidation."

Mamdani, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America and the Democratic Party, concluded his statement with a futile appeal to "remember in November," calling on "voters" to "reject it in November."

This comes under conditions in which Trump—who less than five years ago launched a violent coup attempt to overturn the results of the 2020 election—is now being granted legal authority to construct a presidential dictatorship. Trump himself acknowledged the bankruptcy of such electoral appeals, boasting that the Supreme Court had granted him a "great court victory on Friday that allows us to do what we have to do."

At the same press conference—filled with "Great Replacement" talking points and the routine demonization of immigrants as "packs of animals" and "monsters"—Trump declared that he would like to see more concentration camps "in many states."

Making clear that these camps are not temporary measures but the foundation of a vast police-state apparatus, Trump added, "At some point they might morph into, uh, a system

where you are going to keep it for a long time. It's not that far away from jails that take years to build."

Prior to touring the camp with Trump, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis announced that the state would be interning an additional 2,000 immigrants and detainees at Camp Blanding, a National Guard base and training center. "I think this is a model, and we need other states to step up," he said.

DeSantis added that "we are offering up our National Guard and other folks in Florida to be deputized to be immigration judges." Turning to Trump, he noted, "We are working with the Department of Justice for the approvals," to which Trump replied, "Yup, yup."

DeSantis continued, "And then you will have—I will have—a National Guard judge advocate here. Someone has a notice to appear, Biden would tell them to come back in three years and appear. Now you will be able to appear in like a day or two. So they are not going to be detained, hopefully, for all that long."

There have been near-daily protests at the entrance to the facility since construction began last week. On Tuesday, over 100 people lined the road leading to the site, holding hand-made signs in defense of immigrants and denouncing Trump and DeSantis. Some called for the pair to be imprisoned. One protester held a cardboard sign that read: "Save the Glade. No Immigrant Camps. No Alligator Alcatraz. No Concentration Camps."

A PBS News/NPR/Marist poll released Tuesday showed Trump's support on immigration collapsing, with only 43 percent approving and 52 percent disapproving. The poll, conducted June 23–25, found that two-thirds of Americans agree with the statement that "openness" to people from all over the world is "essential" to the country—including 85 percent of Democrats and 68 percent of independents. A majority, 54 percent, said they "believe the actions of ICE have gone too far."

Trump's 43 percent approval rating on immigration matches his overall job approval, which has remained underwater since at least the 100-day mark in April.

At the same time, only 27 percent of Americans say they approve of congressional Democrats, down from 39 percent in February 2024. A majority—58 percent—disapprove. Congressional Republicans fare only slightly better, with a 36 percent approval rating, propped up by 73 percent support among self-identified Republicans.



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