

Trump administration officials threaten to expand militarized immigration raids

Detainees and legislators report inhumane conditions at Florida concentration camp in Everglades

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Two weeks after President Donald Trump touted the opening of an immigration concentration camp located in the middle of the South Florida Everglades, numerous reports have emerged detailing the inhumane conditions nearly 1,000 people trapped in the facility are currently enduring.

The concentration camp, dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz" by Trump and his fascist allies, was hastily constructed on a rarely used airport in the Big Cypress Swamp. In hailing the opening of the concentration camp earlier this month, Trump threatened to fill it up not only with undocumented immigrants but also American citizens. "I think we ought to get them the hell out of here too," he said. "You want to know the truth. So maybe that will be the next job."

While the Trump administration has repeatedly claimed that the fascist mass deportation operation is targeting "illegal aliens" and the "worst of the worst," the *Miami Herald* reported over the weekend that "hundreds of immigrants with no criminal charges" are being held at the Florida concentration camp.

Records obtained by the *Herald* indicate "more than 250 people" being held at the camp have "only immigration violations but not criminal convictions or pending charges in the United States." The data showed people from roughly 40 countries, ranging in ages from 18 to 73, are currently being held on the site. One person in the camp is listed as being from the United States.

On July 9, CBS reported that inmates inside the facility said they were being denied access to water, medicine, food and lawyers. Leamsy Isquierdo (La Figura), a Cuban reggaeton artist currently in the facility, told CBS in a telephone interview last week, "There's no water to take a bath, it's been four days since I've taken a bath."

He said the food was disgusting and insufficient. "They only brought a meal once a day and it had maggots. They never take off the lights for 24 hours. The mosquitoes are as big as elephants." During the same phone call, another man at the facility told CBS reporters, "They're not respecting our human rights. We're human beings; we're not dogs. We're like rats in an experiment."

The same man added he didn't know why this was happening, "if it's a form of torture. A lot of us have our residency documents, and we don't understand why we're here."

On Saturday some Florida Democratic lawmakers attempted to tour the facility. Representative Debbie Wasserman-Schultz said conditions "inside this internment camp ... were really appalling."

While the facility is being run by the state, Wasserman-Schultz said they are taking directives from federal officials at Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). She said people in the camp were "essentially packed into cages" and that there were "32 detainees per cage."

For 32 people there are three tiny toilets connected to a sink. Wasserman-Schultz explained, "They get their drinking water and they brush their teeth where they poop, in the same unit."

For meals she explained that the portions and quality for detainees and employees was much different. Employees had large sausages and pieces of chicken while detainees were fed "small gray turkey and cheese sandwiches and an apple and chips."

She said 900 men were currently being held in the facility, which was sweltering and infested with bugs, including in the "new" portions of the camp. While Trump and immigration officials claim the camp is air conditioned, Wasserman-Schulz said a thermostat she brought with her showed many places inside the facility were at 83 degrees Fahrenheit (28.3 degrees Celsius) or hotter.

The congressional delegation, which included Reps. Darren Soto, Maxwell Frost and Jared Moskowitz, was not allowed to meet individually with detainees. Frost said he heard people in the cages yelling for help and that one person trapped said he was an American citizen.

Moskowitz, who along with Wasserman-Schultz is one of the foremost supporters of the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza, was asked if he agreed with other lawmakers' characterizations of the facility as a "modern-day concentration camp."

Moskowitz replied, “It’s as bad as it can be, but it’s not a concentration camp, and people should not use Holocaust references to describe what is going on behind us.”

Part of the reason the camp has filled up so quickly is because the Florida State Patrol has begun coordinating with US Customs and Border Patrol, including running virtually every traffic stop through CPB and ICE databases to find targets for deportation. Last week, reporters with the right-wing *Washington Examiner* did a ride-along with Florida state troopers. One of the troopers admitted they had transferred 400 people to the facility following traffic stops.

Appearing on “Meet the Press” Sunday, DHS Secretary Kristi Noem defended conditions inside detention centers, including the Florida concentration camp. “I’ve been there and seen these rooms that they are in. I wouldn’t call them jail cells. I would call them a facility where they are held, and they are secure facilities.”

Trump’s fascist “border czar” Tom Homan also made multiple media and public appearances over the weekend to defend the mass deportation operation and threaten its expansion. Questioned on the inhumane conditions at the state-run concentration camp in the Florida Everglades in an interview with CNN’s Dana Bash on “State of the Union” Sunday, Homan admitted he had not been to the facility, yet he felt confident in casting doubt on the testimony of those who have been held there for over a week.

“I have not been there yet and I doubt a lot of that is factual. ... From day one, I’ve been doing this job since 1984 detainees complain about the conditions of detention.”

Over the weekend the *New York Times* published an analysis on the \$170 billion boost the immigration Gestapo will receive in the “One Big, Beautiful Bill.” The *Times* found that the annual budget of ICE will more than triple, from \$8 billion to \$28 billion, “making it the highest-funded law enforcement agency in the federal government.”

Part of the funds taken from Medicaid users and children in low-income families receiving food aid will be used to recruit up to 10,000 more immigration agents to carry out regular militarized raids in major cities, such as Los Angeles, New York City and Chicago. If 10,000 agents were added to the immigration Gestapo, it would bring the total number to 16,000.

In a recent episode of the *Fran Spielman Show*, David Axelrod, former senior adviser to President Barack Obama and longtime Democratic Party consultant, confirmed that the Trump administration is planning Los Angeles-style military-police raids in Chicago. In preparation for similar operations against workers and immigrants in the US, last week in Los Angeles hundreds of soldiers, police and immigration agents across multiple agencies conducted a militarized sweep and occupation of MacArthur Park, sending children and other park-goers fleeing.

Andrea Flores, an immigration lawyer who was the Director of Border Management on the National Security Council (NSC) at the beginning of Biden’s term, told the *Times* the billions now allocated were the “missing piece” for the Trump administration to

carry out mass deportations.

“What this signals is a new level of funding for immigration enforcement nationally that likely changes it forever even if Democrats come into power,” Flores added, admitting that even if Democrats were re-elected, the mass deportation apparatus is here to stay.

Homan told the *Times* that with the new funding, “You’re going to see more agents on the street.” The new bill also provides \$45 billion to increase detention space to 100,000 by the end of the year. Before the passage of the bill, ICE was appropriated enough funds to hold 41,000 people. As of last month some 58,000 people are currently detained in a network of mostly for-profit concentration camps. ICE claimed to have over 41,000 people in its custody while over 16,000 were being held by Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

Appearing at a fascist Turning Point USA event in Tampa, Florida, on Saturday, Homan also threatened that raids were also coming to Portland and Seattle. Homan complained about “the hate” being received by the immigration Gestapo, noting that some members of Congress have “compared them to Nazis.”

“The game is over, I’m tired of this shit,” he howled. “We are on a mission to make this country safe again.”

Previewing US military operations in northern Mexico in the near future, Homan noted that Trump had designated certain Mexican cartels “terrorist organizations.” Homan added that having designated the cartels “terrorist organizations,” Trump “will wipe these cartels off the face of the earth.”

Homan ended his speech admitting that he’s “tired of the death threats” he claims that he and ICE officers have been receiving, but that he would continue to lead “the largest deportation operation this country has ever seen.”



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