

# Trump seeks “long-term” military-police control of Washington D.C.

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13 August 2025

Encouraged by the absence of any significant opposition from the Democratic Party to his military-police takeover of Washington D.C., President Donald Trump said Wednesday that he would ask Congress to give him “long-term” control of the police force in the US capital.

He added that he expected Democratic-led city governments to change their criminal justice laws. This could include rescinding restrictions on cash bail, treating juveniles as adults in court, and authorizing police to take a more aggressive role in relation to criminal suspects. US police already kill more than 1,000 civilians a year, far more than any other major capitalist country.

Trump made his comments at the end of a visit to the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts venue, where he announced he was taking full control of the center’s fall awards program, including selecting the honorees and acting as the “host” for the televised ceremony.

“We’re going to need a crime bill that we’re going to be putting in, and it’s going to pertain initially to D.C.,” he said. “We’re going to use it as a very positive example, and we’re going to be asking for extensions on that, long-term extensions, because you can’t have 30 days.”

He was referring to the 30-day limit on presidential control of the D.C. police, set by the 1973 D.C. Home Rule Act. A long-term extension would require legislation, which could be blocked in the Senate by the Democrats. Trump seemed confident of a full capitulation by the Democrats, however, as he said he would propose the bill “very quickly.”

Trump then added ominously that there were other options, claiming, “If it’s a national emergency, we can do it without Congress.” He continued, “I don’t want to call a national emergency,” adding, “If I have to, I

will.”

He did not make it clear whether he was referring to the Insurrection Act of 1807, which Trump threatened to use in 2020 against the mass protests over the police murder of George Floyd, and which was discussed during the first weeks of his second term in relation to protests against federal immigration raids.

The actual deployment of police and military forces in the District of Columbia has steadily escalated since Trump’s announcement on Monday morning. Officials claimed that more than 1,450 District and federal police participated in patrols on Tuesday, with only 30 National Guard troops out of the 800 who have been called up. This was nearly double the 850 police sent out on Monday after Trump’s announcement of the federal takeover.

The White House claimed that 19 teams of officers from federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI, have been deployed in the District to “promote public safety and arrest violent offenders.” The federal agents are armed, while the National Guard troops will not be initially, since their tasks will be to “protect federal assets, provide a safe environment for law enforcement officers to make arrests, and deter violent crime with a visible law enforcement presence.”

The pretext of a “crime wave” in Washington D.C. is a brazen lie, concocted by the White House to justify putting the US capital effectively under military-police rule. Attorney General Pam Bondi is in overall charge of the police, with a subordinate, Drug Enforcement Agency Director Terry Cole, acting as the day-to-day commander. Secretary of the Army Daniel Driscoll will direct the operations of the National Guard.

According to a White House official who spoke to the press, the National Guard will have a much larger

presence on the streets Wednesday night and operations will be conducted around the clock, 24/7, rather than focused on night-time presence only, as on the first two days.

Trump's decision to invoke a provision of the Home Rule Act allowing him to take temporary control over the Washington police has put the entire US political system—Congress, the courts and media—to the test. Without exception, there has been no resistance to the coup-like assertion of presidential authority, beyond a few rhetorical criticisms of the authoritarian character of the action.

D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser, a Democrat, called Trump's action "unsettling and unprecedented," and later called it "authoritarian," but she met with Attorney General Bondi and acknowledged that the federal government now controlled the D.C. police. Bowser called the meeting on Tuesday "productive" and pledged that the city would work with the Trump administration to "make Washington, D.C. safe again."

Several Washington-area Democratic congressmen criticized the takeover as unnecessary, given the absence of any real "crime wave," but none suggested that Trump was taking the next step in a worked-out plan to establish a presidential dictatorship.

The media response has similarly been muted, with the crisis in the District downplayed by Wednesday reporting in major newspapers and the television networks. The *New York Times*, the chief media organ aligned with the Democratic Party, did not even publish an editorial commenting on Trump's seizing control of the US capital, while the *Washington Post* criticized it only from the standpoint that it would not be sufficient to stop crime.

Trump's actions in the District, whether they end in 30 days or continue indefinitely, are setting a dangerous precedent. He has already threatened similar measures in cities like Chicago and New York. He is also testing out the machinery of repression that would be required either for a direct seizure of dictatorial power, or the suppression of mass resistance in major cities to his immigration raids or other provocations.

In that regard, testimony in a federal district court in California is revealing. The case involves the challenge by the state of California to Trump's order federalizing the National Guard and deploying 4,000 California National Guard troops into Los Angeles to back up

violent immigration roundups.

Testifying Tuesday, Maj. Gen. Scott Sherman, who commanded the National Guard troops, revealed that he had been rebuked by a top Customs and Border Patrol official when he questioned the planned joint federal-state sweep of MacArthur Park, in a heavily immigrant neighborhood of Los Angeles. After Sherman objected to sending heavily armored military vehicles through the park, the CBP official, Gregory Covino, questioned his "loyalty" to the United States.



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