

Nearly 500 workers rounded up in massive immigration raid at Hyundai plant in Georgia

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On Thursday, multiple federal agencies, including Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)—a division of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)—the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), carried out a massive immigration raid on the Hyundai Motor Group Metaplant America campus in Ellabell, Georgia.

According to HSI, the fascistic raid resulted in the kidnapping of 475 workers. In a press conference Friday, Steven Schrank, the special agent in charge of HSI in Georgia, said it was the largest single-site raid in the agency's history.

Schrank claimed the workers had either entered the US illegally, overstayed their visas, or were violating their visas by working. He stated that most of those arrested were from Korea and that they had already been transported to an ICE concentration camp in Folkston, Georgia.

The \$7.6 billion complex is located in the town of Ellabell, outside Savannah, Georgia. Its 2,900-acre campus includes an electric vehicle plant and a still-under-construction lithium battery cell manufacturing facility, the latter of which was the specific "Target Premises" in a warrant unsealed Friday.

Notably, the warrant only listed four "target persons" to be searched, none of whom appear to be Korean. However, it also granted federal agents authority to seize "all records" on the premises related to employment and identity, a sweeping authorization that was used as the pretext for the mass detention of nearly 500 workers.

The factory is a joint venture between Hyundai Motor and LG Energy Solution. After receiving a \$2 billion handout from the Georgia state government, Hyundai pledged to employ 8,500 workers at the facility by

2031. According to company and US government officials, many of the detained workers were employed by subcontractors.

Thursday's raid is the latest in a series of mass workplace roundups earlier this year, including raids at meatpacking plants in Iowa, a student housing construction site in Florida, and multiple ICE operations outside Home Depot locations in Los Angeles County. These large-scale workplace raids give the lie to Trump's claims that immigration police operations are directed towards "criminals" and "murderers."

As of August 24, ICE reported 61,225 individuals in their custody, the vast majority, 43,021 (70.3 percent) with no criminal convictions. Of the 30 percent with criminal convictions, the majority are nonviolent or minor offenses such as traffic violations.

Following the mass police operation, Yvonne Brooks, president of the Georgia AFL-CIO, issued a perfunctory statement declaring the raid "politically motivated" and adding:

Arresting and detaining workers, who are exploited every day and risk their lives every day on the job, creates an atmosphere of fear that terrorizes workers and their families and increases the workload burden on their coworkers.

Brooks' remarks are revealing. Far from calling for any action to defend the hundreds of workers rounded up, she reduces the attack to the inconvenience of "increased workload burden" for those left behind. Such statements underscore the true function of the

union apparatus: to tamp down workers' outrage, limit their response to passive complaints and maintain the bureaucrats' political alliance with the Democratic Party.

In the face of mass roundups and deportations, the unions categorically refuse to call for strike action or organize any genuine resistance.

Will Lehman, a Mack Trucks worker and socialist who ran for UAW president in 2022, issued the following statement in response to the Georgia Hyundai raid:

I denounce this barbaric raid and demand the immediate release of all the workers who have been rounded up by the immigration gestapo. This is not only an attack on immigrant workers, it is an attack on the entire working class. If the government can use flimsy warrants naming four people to justify flex-cuffing nearly 500, then it will use the same methods against citizen workers who resist attacks on their jobs, living standards, and democratic rights. We have already seen this year how the Trump administration stripped union protections from nearly a million federal workers—what is happening to immigrants today will be used against all of us tomorrow.

The nationalist trade union bureaucracies, including the AFL-CIO and UAW, have not called for a single strike to defend immigrant workers, jobs, or basic democratic rights. They have once again proven themselves an arm of the corporations and the state. That is why workers must build new organizations—rank-and-file defense committees in every factory and job site. The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees fights to unite workers across all borders, languages, and nationalities in a common fight.

I call on all workers to come to the defense of our class brothers and sisters at seized in the Hyundai raid, demand their release, and mobilize in opposition to the escalating assault on immigrant workers throughout the country.

The Georgia Hyundai raid marks a new stage in the offensive against the working class. Flimsy warrants and anti-immigrant chauvinism are being used to justify mass roundups, detentions, and deportations.

The raid exposes the fraud of the trade union bureaucracies, who respond to the most brazen attacks with mealy-mouthed statements about "workload burdens" while refusing to call any strike action. Their role is not to defend workers, but to suppress the class struggle and preserve their own privileges by binding workers to the Democratic Party, which is just as committed as Trump to mass deportations, capitalism, and war.

Against this, the working class must advance its own independent perspective. The attack on immigrants is the spearhead of a broader assault on the entire working class.

The defense of immigrant workers is inseparable from the defense of democratic rights, jobs, and living standards for the entire working class. The answer lies not in the nationalist poison of the union apparatus, but in the unification of workers across all borders in a common struggle for socialism.



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