

Trump launches ICE raids in Chicago, as Supreme Court tramples on Fourth Amendment protections

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On Monday, September 8, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) formally announced the start of “Operation Midway Blitz,” targeting the city of Chicago.

DHS declared that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents would fan out across the city and suburbs, targeting workplaces, neighborhoods, and transit hubs in what it called a campaign against “criminal illegal aliens.” In reality, as seen in California, Washington D.C., Georgia and Iowa, the kidnappings are overwhelmingly targeting workers and longtime residents.

The official DHS press release spelled out the fascistic character of the operation, repeating Trump’s usual litany of lies calling immigrants criminals who should be deprived of any democratic rights:

For years, Governor Pritzker and his fellow sanctuary politicians released Tren de Aragua gang members, rapists, kidnappers, and drug traffickers on Chicago’s streets—putting American lives at risk and making Chicago a magnet for criminals.

The announcement comes after Trump targeted the city over the weekend on social media. After issuing an executive order renaming the Department of Defense the Department of War on Friday, the next day Trump shared an A.I.-generated image of himself as Lt. Col. Bill Kilgore from the film *Apocalypse Now* with title changed to “Chipocalypse Now” and the quote, “I love the smell of deportations in the morning.”

As of this writing it does not appear that any National Guard elements have been deployed in the city yet. On Monday, Trump again threatened to send troops, saying, “We’d love to go into Chicago and straighten it out.”

In a statement Monday, the city of Evanston, located just north of Chicago and home to Northwestern University, revealed that it was “informed of the likelihood that federal immigration agents will be present in our community in the coming days.”

Also Monday, Trump amplified Great Replacement rhetoric on his social media account. In one repost he shared an image that read, “Mass migration is a weapon of mass destruction.” The original poster, @iamyeyouareno, is a prominent neo-Nazi account on X. Elon Musk, the fascist owner of the platform, regularly engages with and promotes the account.

The same day that DHS announced its Chicago operation, the US Supreme Court handed down a 6–3 ruling on its “shadow docket.” The ruling granted the Trump administration’s emergency petition in *Noem v. Perdomo*, staying a July 11 temporary restraining order that barred ICE from using ethnicity, language, workplace or job type as justification for seizing people to investigate their immigration status.

The Trump stooges in command of the Supreme Court did not even bother to explain their reasoning. Brett Kavanaugh issued a concurring opinion, not joined by any other justice, that reads more like a Trump press release than a legal analysis.

Kavanaugh’s “Let-me-see-your-papers-please” concurrence paints a fantasy portrait of the ICE operations:

The Government sometimes makes brief investigative stops to check the immigration status of those who gather in locations where people are hired for day jobs; who work or appear to work in jobs such as construction, landscaping, agriculture, or car washes that often do not require paperwork and are therefore attractive to illegal immigrants; and who do not speak much if any English. If the officers learn that the individual they stopped is a U. S. citizen or otherwise lawfully in the United States, they promptly let the individual go. If the individual is illegally in the United States, the officers may arrest the individual and initiate the process for removal.

In practice, the Court is allowing the Trump administration to violate the Fourth Amendment, which protects against

unreasonable searches and seizures, without even rendering a written opinion, until such time as the underlying case makes its way through layers of appeals to reach the Supreme Court. Throughout this period, which could take years, ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents are authorized to stop, interrogate and detain individuals based on the mere “appearance” of being Latino, speaking Spanish (or some other language) or being present at certain workplaces.

The number of those affected is staggering. In Los Angeles County alone, where the case originated, almost half of the 10,000,000 population identifies as Hispanic or Latino and over 37 percent speak a language other than English at home. Tens of thousands labor at jobs singled out by ICE—including construction, landscaping, agriculture, recycling centers, tow yards, car washes. Others, sometimes while looking for work or commuting by public transportation, have been arrested at Home Depots, bus stops and even churches, schools and parks.

These are not “targeted operations” against specific individuals known to be in violation of immigration laws, but mass round-ups without any evidence or “probable cause” to justify them. Roving packs of masked, heavily armed agents carry out actions to terrorize workers. Entire sections of the working class—immigrant and native-born alike—are rendered suspects, deprived of their basic constitutional rights to be free from unreasonable seizure and subject to kidnapping by armed agents of the state.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor’s dissent spelled out the dystopian implications in stark terms:

The Government, and now the concurrence, has all but declared that all Latinos, U.S. citizens or not, who work low wage jobs are fair game to be seized at any time, taken away from work, and held until they provide proof of their legal status to the agents’ satisfaction.

She continued:

Immigration agents are not conducting “brief stops for questioning.” They are seizing people using firearms, physical violence, and warehouse detentions. ... United States citizens are also being seized, taken from their jobs, and prevented from working to support themselves and their families.

Sotomayor concluded:

Countless people in the Los Angeles area have been grabbed, thrown to the ground, and handcuffed simply because of their looks, their accents, and the fact they make a living by doing manual labor. Today, the Court needlessly subjects countless more to these exact same indignities.

As the evidence in the trial court demonstrated, individuals have been threatened at gunpoint, slammed against walls or to the ground and zip-tied before any questioning. Trump denies those seized are entitled to due process to contest their removal and claims unrestrained power to imprison them in the United States or abroad.

Rather than mobilize against the raids and the Court’s ruling, Democratic leaders countered with assurances that municipal policing can handle “public safety.” In a *New York Times* op-ed Monday, Democratic Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson urged Trump not to send in the National Guard while boasting of “effective and law-abiding policing,” including robbery task forces, concentration of resources “on the 35 most violent beats,” and a revamped detectives bureau.

As Trump threatens military occupation and floods cities with ICE thugs, the Democrats respond with a pledge to maintain “order” through expanded policing.

The events of September 8 make plain that democratic rights cannot be defended through any capitalist institution, including the courts and the Democratic Party. As the fascist felon in the White House consolidates dictatorial methods, with the backing of his hand-picked and corrupt Supreme Court, the Democrats collaborate by preserving and legitimizing the same repressive apparatus under the banner of “credible” policing.



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