

# Trump signs declaration making Memphis, Tennessee next target for military, federal police occupation

Jacob Crosse  
15 September 2025

On Monday, President Donald Trump signed a proclamation targeting Memphis, Tennessee, one of the largest majority-black cities in the United States, as the next city to be occupied by federal police forces and National Guard elements. Trump signed the proclamation creating the “Memphis Safe Task Force” in the Oval Office surrounded by top cabinet officials, including Attorney General Pam Bondi and Homeland Security adviser Stephen Miller, as well as Tennessee Republicans, including Governor Bill Lee and senators Bill Hagerty and Marsha Blackburn.

As in Los Angeles and Washington D.C., the surging of troops and police into Tennessee’s second largest city has nothing to do with “fighting crime” or promoting public safety. Instead, it is aimed at normalizing the deployment of armed soldiers in public spaces, suppressing protests and strikes and intimidating the working class, particularly immigrants being targeted as part of the ongoing “mass deportation” operation.

In the wake of the assassination of fascist Charlie Kirk, the surging of federal police and troops is also aimed at intimidating left-wing protesters while providing fascist elements, including neo-Nazis, protection to launch violent attacks on supposed “antifa” and “left-wing extremists.”

Declaring war on the “enemy within,” that is, workers and youth opposed to a government of, by and for the oligarchy, the Trump order calls for “hypervigilant policing, aggressive prosecution, complex investigations, financial enforcement, and large-scale saturation of besieged neighborhoods with law enforcement personnel.”

The proclamation orders the “Secretary of War” to “request that the Governor of Tennessee, under section 502 of title 32, United States Code, make available National Guard units of Tennessee to support public safety and law enforcement operations in Memphis, in such numbers and for such duration as the Governor may deem necessary and appropriate to assist with the activities of the Task Force.”

In addition to “federal immigration law,” police and troops are commanded to coordinate with the “Memphis Police Department” on “strict enforcement of applicable quality-of-life, nuisance, and public-safety laws, including those laws prohibiting assault, battery, larceny, graffiti and other vandalism, unpermitted disturbances and demonstrations, noise, trespassing, public intoxication, drug possession, sale, vagrancy and use, and traffic violations...”

In the Oval Office Monday, Trump said the occupation of Memphis would “replicate” the D.C. occupation and include “National Guard as well as the FBI, ATF, DEA, ICE, Homeland Security Investigations and the U.S. Marshals.”

Threatening not only to keep troops in D.C. indefinitely but also to re-declare a phony “emergency” and reassert control over the Metropolitan Police Department, Trump added, “we are going to keep it that way, it’s our nation’s capital. We are going to keep it that way or we are going to federalize it if I have to.”

Repeating comments made to him by Union Pacific CEO Jim Vena, Trump recalled why he chose Memphis as the next target:

I was with a great businessman, a man who is involved in all cities through his business and I say who do you think should be next after Memphis and he said, “Sir, you’ve got to save Chicago.” We are going to wait a little while. But he said you got to save Chicago. You can’t let it go. And this is a very prominent man that everybody knows.

Underscoring that he is acting as a representative of the financial oligarchy, on behalf of their shared class interests, Trump claimed:

Another man in Memphis, was saying ... he’s on the board of Fed Ex [the logistics firm headquartered in Memphis], and his hotel is about a block away and he said, “When I walk there, I said, you know I don’t want to do this again. I never want to do it again. And they won’t let me walk there.” They take him in armored vehicles, they take the board members of Fed Ex in armored vehicles, like a block away to the hotel. This shouldn’t be the United States...

After he signed the proclamation, Trump held court and had each of his advisers, fellow Republicans and fascists, declare their loyalty to him and his ongoing presidential coup. In his comments, Trump’s top domestic policy adviser Stephen Miller defended the Proud Boys, Oath Keepers and other militia elements temporarily prosecuted following the January 6 coup, while promising to use the entire weight of the federal government to go after Trump’s left-wing political enemies.

Miller said the “power of federal law enforcement that was used the last four years to harass and attack conservatives, to harass and attack Christians, to go after law-abiding families” will now be used to “get all the criminals ... all the domestic terrorists off our streets...”

So whether you are antifa, whether you are a domestic terrorist, whether you are a violent gang member, or a drug trafficker, a Tren de Aragua killer, or anyone else that is threatening our people, President Trump is saying he's going to use *his* FBI, *his* DOD, *his* ATF, *his* DEA to wipe you out, to put you behind bars, to take you off the street or to apply whatever legal consequences are necessary [emphasis in original].

Asked by a fascist reporter if Trump planned on "designating antifa a domestic terrorist organization," Trump replied, "Well it's something I would do, yeah, if I have support from the people back here. ... I would do that 100 percent and others also by the way, antifa is terrible."

He added that there "are other groups. We have some pretty radical groups and they got away with murder. And also I've been speaking to the attorney general about bringing RICO against some of the people that you have been reading about that have been putting up millions and millions of dollars for agitation. These aren't protests, these are crimes what they are doing."

The fascist president made clear he supported the immigration Gestapo using deadly force whenever they felt necessary. He said:

Where they are throwing bricks at cars of the ICE and Border Patrol. ... They don't have to take that anymore. I let it be known, we will take responsibility, they don't have to take it. And they don't want to take it.

They were told by a past administration ... if someone throws a rock, do nothing, if somebody spits in your face, do nothing. And I say, when they spit, you hit. You do whatever you want. You do whatever the hell you want.

Trump repeatedly blamed the "radical left" for all political violence in the United States. When one reporter challenged him, he replied:

I didn't say it is on one side, but I say the radical left causes more tremendous violence and they seem to do it in a bigger way. But the radical left really is, caused a lot of problems for this country. I really think they hate our country.

Trump's drive towards dictatorship will find no opposition from the Democratic Party. Speaking at a news conference Friday after Trump first announced that Memphis would be the latest target, Democratic Mayor Paul Young made clear he would be Trump's willing partner in crime. "I want to make sure that as they come, that I have an opportunity to work with them to strategize on how they engage in this community," Young said.

National Democratic Party leaders remained silent on Trump's latest declaration. On his X account, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (Democrat-New York) said nothing about Trump's plans to send troops into Memphis, Chicago, St. Louis and New Orleans or Trump's threats to withhold federal funding from New York City if Democratic Socialists of America member Zohran Mamdani is elected

mayor. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (Democrat-New York) was also silent on both counts. Their silence implies consent to Trump's dictatorial ambitions.

In his comments after signing the declaration of the creation of the "Memphis Safe Task Force," Trump noted that his political attacks on Democratic mayors did not apply to the mayor of Washington D.C. "I don't want to say the mayor because she's better than most."

Facing pressure from residents outraged over her willingness to cooperate with Trump's occupation of D.C., Bowser announced that the MPD would no longer be cooperating with ICE kidnapping operations.

Posting on his social media account Monday morning, Trump threatened to reassert federal control of the police. He wrote that Bowser:

...informed the Federal Government that the Metropolitan Police Department will no longer cooperate with ICE in removing and relocating dangerous illegal aliens. If I allowed this to happen, CRIME would come roaring back. To the people and businesses of Washington, D.C., DON'T WORRY, I AM WITH YOU, AND WON'T ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN. I'll call a National Emergency, and Federalize, if necessary!!

Whether or not Trump declares an "emergency," Republicans are swiftly moving to establish police state rule, using the nation's capital as a testing lab for their draconian measures. The House of Representatives is taking up four bills this week centered on expanding the ability of police to conduct deadly chases, increasing prison sentences for minors and young people, and limiting the ability of D.C. residents to elect local judges.

One of the bills, the *Washington Post* reported, would allow prosecutors to try 14-year-old children as adults. Another would prevent judges from issuing so-called "lenient" sentences to anyone over 18. The third bill eliminates restrictions on police vehicle pursuits, while the fourth would eliminate the city's Judicial Nomination Commission, which provides the president a list of judge candidates for him to select. Restrictions on police pursuits were implemented following the murder of Karon Hylton-Brown during a 2020 police chase. Trump pardoned the officers involved in the killing earlier this year.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**