

# Feds terrorize Chicago neighborhoods: Legal immigrants kidnapped, apartments ransacked, children zip-tied

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This week federal agents carried out a number of raids on homes and shelters in Chicago, kidnapping those suspected of being immigrants, and traumatizing neighborhoods with armed hostile actions, including dropping onto city blocks from helicopters, using flashbang grenades and chainsaws to enter apartment buildings, and treating everyone as a criminal, including children.

On Tuesday night after 10:00 p.m. in the South Shore neighborhood, dozens of federal agents descended upon an apartment building supposedly in search of gang members. Thirty-seven people were arrested, as agents sawed through fences, blew doors down, and pulled families with small children in various states of undress out of their homes, zip-tied them and held them in trucks.

Apartment homes were ransacked, and people pulled outside and handcuffed regardless of immigration status. Young and old were held outside for about five hours. Warrant information was demanded of everyone.

Residents speaking to the local ABC affiliate reported events that are not only grossly unconstitutional but would be classified crimes under the Geneva Protocols governing treatment of civilians in a war zone.

One African American resident explained she was pulled out onto the street in her nightgown, asked her name, date of birth and whether she had any warrants for her arrest. She was handcuffed and not released until 3:00 a.m. "They just treated us like we were nothing."

She said she was told anyone with a warrant would be arrested, regardless of immigration status.

Another woman said, "They were terrified, the kids were crying. Honestly I was out there crying. They had the kids zip-tied to each other! I said, 'Where is the morality?'

"Where is the human?!"

She said with disgust that in response to demands that agents untie the children, one laughed and said, "F\*ck them kids."

An older resident said, "They had a 15-inch chainsaw with a round blade and they were cutting the fencing. We're under siege. We're being invaded by our own military."

On Wednesday morning, Bright Star shelter, home to more than 250 in the center of the city, was raided by about 30 federal agents who chased down and arrested four men standing outside.

Bright Star Pastor Chris Harris Sr. live-streamed the kidnappings on Facebook. He recorded a statement denouncing the raid. "Some had legal papers and were literally snatched from the streets. ... When we handed a masked agent the legal documents, he took them, shoved our resident into an unmarked vehicle and sped off."

## **"Progressive" Democratic leaders complicit in attacks on immigrants**

The response of Illinois Governor JB Pritzker to these gross violations of democratic rights has been to intentionally understate the scale of the kidnappings, which now number in the high hundreds, and the violence against innocent residents that is being carried out all over the state.

Pritzker tweeted on Thursday: "ICE is running around Chicago harassing people for not being white. Just a year

ago, that was illegal in the United States and now it's commonplace. That's not making America great again."

Hundreds of responses to this message on X demanded the governor take some action to stop the raids and hold the Gestapo forces accountable.

The Democratic Party leadership nationally is playing down the ignominious collapse of American democracy into authoritarian rule, because they fear a mass movement against the oligarchy backing Trump far more than they fear fascist thugs.

As the WSWS wrote earlier this week, "Given the extraordinary, criminal and unconstitutional actions of the Trump administration, the basic question is how to remove him from power. When the Democrats impeached Trump in 2019, it was not for his fascistic threats but over a delay in sending weapons to Ukraine. Today, there are not even suggestions of impeachment from the Democratic Party over actions that make the Watergate crisis, which resulted in Richard Nixon's removal from the presidency in 1974, appear like child's play. This is itself an act of complicity in Trump's dictatorship."

Mayor of Chicago Brandon Johnson, former Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) lobbyist who enjoys the backing of the Democratic Socialists of America, has actively contributed to poisoning the political atmosphere with anti-immigrant sentiments.

The overwhelming number of recent arrivals to Chicago from Latin America, more than 50,000 people, were bussed into the city from the border state of Texas by its fascist Governor Greg Abbott beginning in mid-2022. Many arrived from Venezuela and are now being targeted by the same forces that cruelly shipped them from the border into cities like Chicago and New York.

Having been dropped off in or near the city with nothing but the clothes they had on, migrant families were treated poorly by local officials, housed in unsanitary decommissioned warehouses and parks district athletic facilities with inadequate food and medical attention. The Johnson administration proposed a "winterized" concentration camp to be erected on contaminated land, until public outcry kiboshed the plan.

Echoing Trump and the far right's xenophobic lies about crime threats from immigrants, Johnson justified migrant sequestration from residents and subsequent maltreatment: "If we do not create an infrastructure where we're able to support, and quite frankly, contain these individuals who have experienced a great deal of harm, individuals who are desperate—if we do not provide support for these individuals and these families, that type

of desperation will lead to chaos."

Over the same period, asylum seekers escaping the war in Ukraine were quietly integrated into the city and surrounding suburbs, putting the lie to Johnson's bigoted claims that asylum seekers from Latin America need to be "contained" in camps guarded by private police and treated as dangerous because they have faced hardship and trauma.

Nothing could more sharply contrast with the outrage felt in working class neighborhoods across the US and worldwide at the violations of democratic rights taking place at the behest of the American oligarchy and overseen by the Trump administration.

The critical question is the independent mobilization of the working class, independent of and opposed to the Democratic Party. Organization is needed, as the Socialist Equality Party has called for in its recent statement:

The building of a new form of organization that can unify the working class and mobilize its vast industrial and economic power against the Trump regime. This new form of organization proposed by the Socialist Equality Party consists of rank-and-file committees. They must be established in every factory, workplace, school and neighborhood to organize resistance to Trump's dictatorship. These committees must become centers of resistance, uniting all sections of the working class and student youth against Trump's fascist government, the complicity of the Democrats, and the broader assault on democratic rights and living standards.

The creation of rank-and-file committees is indispensable to break the stranglehold of the old organizations and create new centers of coordinated social power for the defense of democratic rights, and for socialism against dictatorship, war and capitalist exploitation.



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