

Trump intensifies immigration Gestapo terror in Chicago

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Mass deportation efforts labeled Operation Midway Blitz have continued in Chicago since September with no end in sight. Homeland Security officials will offer no information on the whereabouts of the more than 3,000 people who have been kidnapped from the metro area in the two months of the “blitz.”

For those still being held in the area, conditions are horrific. Attorneys for some of the hundreds of detainees held in a processing facility in suburban Broadview, Illinois, say their clients are being held under conditions that violate the most basic human rights. The Broadview facility is not a detention center and does not have adequate sleeping or sanitary facilities. Detainees are being held in quarters so close they cannot even lie down on the floor, as there are no beds. They are being denied food, clean water and medical care. These conditions, which amount to a form of torture, are aimed at compelling detainees to sign self-deportation orders.

No politicians, medical staff or clergy have been permitted to enter the facility. Last Wednesday, a federal judge ordered Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to improve conditions in the facility after a group of detainees sued. Calling their treatment “unnecessarily cruel,” Judge Gettleman said, “People shouldn’t be sleeping next to overflowing toilets. They should not be sleeping on top of each other.” He ordered that the facility be cleaned and detainees be given bottled water.

Last week, Judge Sara Ellis of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois ruled “for complete relief to plaintiffs” in a suit brought by media organizations against Kristi Noem, who heads the Department of Homeland Security for the Trump administration.

In the course of the assault on the city, Customs and Border Protection chief Gregory Bovino has appeared in multiple videos physically assaulting, tackling and tossing teargas canisters at demonstrators and journalists.

In depositions ordered by Ellis, Bovino testified that he was not aware of a single incident of excessive force used by federal agents. However, he admitted lying about being hit with a rock before throwing tear gas canisters and assaulting demonstrators and journalists.

In comments lasting more than an hour, Ellis said federal agents, including Bovino, repeatedly lied about threats posed by protesters and about their own actions. She detailed how federal agents “indiscriminately” tackled, tear gassed and beat residents, as well as firing on them with pepper balls and aiming weapons at them.

In addition to routinely ramming cars, throwing people to the ground and breaking windows, agents were videoed in late October mocking

residents who opposed kidnappings and throwing tear gas canisters at them, while shouting, “Have fun!” and “Hey, throw another just for fun!”

“I find the government’s evidence to be simply not credible,” Ellis said. “The use of force shocks the conscience. This conduct shows no sign of stopping.”

“Describing rapid response networks and neighborhood moms as professional agitators shows just how out of touch these agents are, and how extreme their views are,” Ellis said. She was referring to the growing networks of residents involved in neighborhood alert and family support efforts. Spontaneous demonstrations as well as coordinated defense actions take place all over the city multiple times a day in an attempt to stop the state violence that is only intensifying.

Ellis issued a broad injunction on federal operations, blocking assaults on journalists, and clergy and residents exercising their right to dissent, including inappropriate orders to disperse. The injunction states that use of force by federal agents is permitted only when “objectively necessary to stop an immediate threat of the person causing serious bodily injury or death to another person.” Two warnings also must be made before force can be used, she ruled. This has been appealed by the Trump administration, which in any case flouts court rulings.

Earlier this year, another judge at the US District Court, April Perry, stated that federal officials’ assertions about facing violence were “simply unreliable.” This was in a separate case against Trump’s deployment of 700 National Guard troops to Chicago.

Citywide as well as in the suburbs, CBP and ICE thugs, among other federal agents, using unmarked trucks and vans drive up to workers. Armed, masked men with no identification or warrants leap out to wrestle workers to the ground on their job sites, in retail stores and on parking lots, throwing them into vehicles and taking them to detention centers.

Diana Patricia Santillana Galeano, a teacher and legal resident from Colombia, was violently kidnapped last week after being followed from her home by Trump Gestapo, who attacked her at 7 a.m. in the doorway of the Spanish-language immersion nursery school where she works. She was disappeared without a warrant, according to her attorneys. The night of her disappearance, hundreds of residents gathered in a park in the North Center neighborhood to demand her return and the departure of ICE from the city.

Over the weekend, agents swarmed shopping centers, kidnapping workers from home improvement and warehouse grocery stores. In response to the spontaneous protests against the kidnappings that have coalesced in parking lots and on residential streets, the federal goons have thrown stun grenades and canisters of tear gas. They have also

sprayed Mace, a toxic irritant, from their vehicles. One family driving through a retail center parking lot with their infant daughter captured the moment on video when agents sprayed Mace into their car.

Businesses in neighborhoods on the southwest side, where many Spanish-speaking families live, are struggling due to the terror. People are not leaving home, going to work, going shopping or going to school.

In addition to the well publicized street-level interventions by the community, residents and businesses have also organized grocery and meal support and walk children to and from school so parents are not targeted. Thousands of meals have been delivered by restaurants working with residents.

Some residents are facing increasingly desperate conditions, sometimes sleeping rough, in cars, or on their job sites to avoid being picked up traveling to and from work. Homeless immigrants face extreme risk of being targeted while living in tents in parks. The Chicago Parks district, now overseen by Democratic Socialists of America member Carlos Ramirez Rosa, is permitting the Trump Gestapo to use Warren Park as a staging area. It has since become the site of protests.

An older Pilsen resident told the WSWs the Halloween holiday was “a complete ghost town.” He said:

I grew up in Pilsen, I’ve lived here my whole life. Every Halloween there were tons of kids with their parents trick or treating, and this year it was sad. It was a complete ghost town. Nobody came, because they’re too afraid of getting scooped up by ICE.

After patrolling the southwest side of the city on Thursday, ICE and Border Patrol agents returned to Little Village on Saturday morning, flaunting their violence and Bovino’s infamous theatrics. Bovino was seen on videos surrounded by masked and armed goons marching along a commercial avenue.

As police flooded the area, residents came onto their porches and into storefronts. One resident was standing outside a shop with a group of workers and customers watching Chicago police swarm Kedzie Avenue with hundreds of officers and scores of vehicles following CBP/ICE as they attacked the side streets.

Raising his voice over the wailing sirens and low-flying helicopters, the resident said:

It’s literally a terror campaign. I kind of expected this to happen eventually because they have been circling the area for weeks. Scouting the area with helicopters up until they can jump out on people.

Obviously, people are afraid, there’s a whole lot of anxiety. Business has been real slow. The majority of the area is of Hispanic descent, a lot of our customers are immigrants as well.

Of course, people are afraid to leave. We have been affected by this as well. It’s been slowing down business, with barely any walk-ins at this point. Our business thrives off walk-ins. We’re just not sure how it’s going to go. So we are familiar with the same problems facing the restaurants as well.

He added that “CPD (Chicago Police Department) is here trying to subdue the locals, who are getting real riled up from the ICE presence.”

Speaking with neighbors gathered on porches in Little Village, WSWs reporters asked what it has been like living through the raids and terror. One resident said:

It’s been sad. People are hiding. People don’t go out, people who have lived here for years, built the community, and now they can’t go out. I’ve never seen anything like this.

We heard the commotion, we just walked out. We’re just concerned, you know, the situation is really getting out of hand. Everybody’s scared, everybody’s worried. It doesn’t matter if you’re an immigrant or not now.

Speaking with demonstrators who mobilized rapidly into the neighborhood once word of ICE’s presence got out, one woman said, “As soon as we arrived, there was a wall of police pushing us back. They had huge guns out.”

She went on:

They got between us and ICE to protect the kidnapping and then arrested someone who looked like a minor. They also took someone who was with us. I’m not sure where they took him, we last saw him in a police car.

I can’t be sitting at home watching this. I came here by myself. I heard the whistles and came to help. I probably should have brought someone with me.

While Democrats in Chicago and Illinois are calling on residents to trust the courts and wait for legal remedies, the Trump administration has already made it clear that it will defy rulings that interfere with its operations. At the national level, the Democratic leadership is simply ignoring the unfolding assault on democratic rights.

New organizations of mass struggle are required. No illusions can remain in the Democratic Party when it comes to defending against fascist attacks on the working class.

The Socialist Equality Party calls for the building of a new form of organization, rank-and-file committees, in every workplace, neighborhood and school to unify the working class and mobilize its vast industrial and economic power against the Trump regime.



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