

Immigration Gestapo descends on Charlotte, carrying out mass arrests and drawing protests

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On Saturday morning, heavily armed federal immigration agents, backed by a Black Hawk helicopter, began abduction operations in Charlotte, North Carolina, the 14th largest city in the United States and home to nearly 1 million people.

While it appears that most of the raids are centered in Charlotte, with roughly 155,000 residents born outside the US (more than 17 percent of the population), federal agents have also been spotted in suburbs and rural communities near the city.

On Saturday, after five hours of raids on restaurants, churches, Walmart and Home Depot parking lots, fascist Customs and Border Protection (CBP) commander Gregory Bovino claimed that immigration agents had arrested or detained 81 people. Without providing any evidence, Bovino said "many" of those arrested had "significant criminal and immigration history."

Several others were taken by immigration agents Sunday morning while shopping at grocery stores and using automatic teller machines.

In a thuggish video produced and distributed by the Department of Homeland Security on X, Bovino gave a speech to armed and masked agents following Saturday morning's raids, declaring, "This is our f___ing country... nobody tells us where to go, when to go, how to go in our f___ing country."

As was the case in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Diego and Washington D.C., the flooding of federal immigration agents into the city has provoked anger among large sections of the population, regardless of immigration status. Protests against the raids drew hundreds of people in Charlotte on Saturday and in Raleigh on Sunday. At the rally on Sunday, protesters held signs saying "defend the people" and "depose the rulers." Another said, "ICE melts under resistance."

At least two people who participated in a Sunday morning protest outside a Department of Homeland Security office in Charlotte were taken to an FBI office, according to attorney Xavier T. de Janon. Speaking to the *Charlotte Observer*, de

Janon said he did not know what, if any, charges his clients were facing. Later in the afternoon, de Janon found out that one of his clients was taken to Gaston County jail while another was dropped off at a public park.

In one of several videos showing local residents standing in defense of immigrants, Rheba, a local homeowner, confronted CBP thugs who were trying to kidnap Hispanic workers hanging Christmas lights for her.

Rheba explained, "We had two Hispanic workers decorating our Christmas tree" when Border Patrol agents, without presenting a warrant or even acknowledging her, "rolled up on the sidewalk here." She continued, "Two guys popped out fully armed with all their gear and they began speaking in Spanish."

Rheba said she pulled out her phone and began recording the agents and they left without saying a word to her. As the agents scurried away, Rheba summoned her courage and yelled, "Get the hell out of my yard you assholes!"

The workers thanked Rheba, saying "Bravo" before telling her they had to leave. Rheba replied, "Yeah, just go home."

In an interview on the incident Rheba, said seeing the armed agents on her property was "absolutely terrifying." She explained that she was half asleep on her porch when the agents showed up:

We've got great people here. I'm sure there is some bad people here, there are bad people everywhere, but this is a great city and nobody's going to regret moving here if you come here with the right kind of heart, and that includes our immigrants and that's why some of them come here.

Contrary to claims offered by immigration police, the raids

are not targeted operations but indiscriminate attacks on the working class, especially those of Hispanic descent. On Saturday, Will Aceituno, a Honduran-born US citizen, said he was harassed and accosted on two separate occasions by federal agents Saturday morning.

Aceituno was driving to get breakfast when he noticed two Latinos “running really fast” with immigration agents trailing them. To avoid the agents, Aceituno said he went inside a local restaurant to get his breakfast. As he parked his truck, several government vehicles surrounded him, with agents pouring out demanding to know his immigration status.

Aceituno said he talked with the agents for “like twenty minutes” and provided them documentation proving his status. He said that following that interaction he went into the restaurant to get his breakfast to go. About two minutes later he came out with his food and got into his vehicle, at which point agents again surrounded his vehicle and blocked him. He said the agents, speaking in English, began tapping on his door and told him to open it.

Aceituno said he was confused, but was moving to open his door when he heard an agent yell, “I’m going to break the window.” Aceituno objected, telling the agents, “No. If you break it, you will pay for it.”

Video shot by Aceituno shows a masked thug breaking his truck window, sending broken glass inside and outside the vehicle. Two masked agents then grabbed Aceituno and tried to pull him out of the vehicle, which they were not able to do at first.

Eventually, Aceituno was dragged outside the vehicle. He attempted to film the agents with his cell phone but they smacked it out of his hand before throwing him to the ground, scuffing his elbows in the process.

The agents again asked Aceituno his status, to which he replied, “I am a citizen of this country.” After about 10 minutes, the agents finally let him go. Aceituno advised Hispanics in the area to stay home because “these guys are acting like bitches.”

In response to the federal occupation, several local businesses and restaurants have closed their doors to protect workers and customers. Manuel “Manolo” Betancur, owner of Manolo’s Bakery, told local reporters on Saturday he was closing his store for the first time in 28 years.

Betancur told the *Charlotte Observer* it was not safe for the Latino community in Charlotte with CBP in the area. Rejecting lies proffered by Trump and large sections of the ruling class that the raids are targeting criminals, Betancur said, “They’re lying... They’re not chasing criminals. They’re chasing anyone who looks, speaks like me, who has an accent like me.”

Betancur said the bakery would remain closed on Sunday

and that he didn’t know when it would reopen.

In response to federal agents illegally arresting and assaulting residents, the Democratic governor of North Carolina, Josh Stein, posted a video Sunday night addressing the situation. Speaking out of both sides of his mouth, the governor praised CBP’s efforts. “To the CBP: If you know that we have violent criminals in Charlotte who are undocumented, we want them out too.”

Stein then added, “But the actions of too many federal agents are doing the exact opposite in Charlotte.” He advised that residents continue to “peacefully protest” the kidnapping operations and film them with cell phones.

These actions will do nothing to stop the anti-immigrant pogrom or defend democratic rights. The Democratic Party is not an opposition party and has refused even to bring impeachment proceedings against Trump, even as his administration tramples on the Constitution and the democratic rights of all on a daily basis.

Before the Democrats supplied Trump the necessary votes to reopen the government, Trump declared that he would support abduction operations no matter how violent they were. Speaking from the White House in August, Trump recalled telling federal agents that if they are spit upon, “we hit, and they can hit real hard.”

Trump added, “But now, they are allowed to do whatever the hell they want.” This was confirmed by police officials and Department of Justice lawyers speaking to CNN anonymously over the weekend. One cop told the outlet that if it’s a federal agent’s word against “someone else, game over.”

The cop added, “Unless it’s beyond egregious and on film, they are basically untouchable.”

A “senior Department of Justice lawyer” told the outlet: “There is zero chance of an (immigration) agent being criminally charged with this administration.”



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