

Fifty people deported to Ukraine by ICE on Tuesday

Kevin Reed

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On Tuesday, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) forcibly deported 50 people to Ukraine from the US.

The ICE-chartered plane departed from Alexandria, Louisiana. Many of those deported had lived in the US for years, built lives with families and were seeking refuge from war and political instability in Ukraine.

Of the 83 Ukrainian nationals originally scheduled for deportation, 50 were on the flight. The other 33 were either granted stays, had their deportations delayed due to ongoing legal proceedings or were not included in the final flight for logistical or administrative reasons, according to multiple sources tracking the event.

As of November 19, Ukrainian and US officials confirmed that 50 returned to Ukraine via the Shehyni checkpoint, while others remain detained or are under review for future deportation.

Andrii Demchenko, spokesman for Ukraine's State Border Service, told NPR, "Currently, border guards have ensured their registration in the border relation for entry into Ukraine in accordance with the rules established by law. It is worth noting that Ukraine accepts its citizens in any case." Demchenko also confirmed to news agencies that 45 of those deported were men and 5 were women.

The US Department of Homeland Security issued a statement through a representative defending the deportation and claiming the individuals had received "full due process" and were ordered removed by an immigration judge, in some cases many years ago. As has been proven multiple times since the Trump White House began its assault on immigrants, these assertions cannot be trusted because no evidence or legal record of the alleged proceedings has been presented.

The abrupt expulsion to Ukraine is a violation of

basic rights and places them directly in the path of the Zelensky government's relentless conscription efforts for the ongoing US-NATO war against Russia.

Several family members of the deportees, interviewed by NPR and CNN, described the trauma and fear caused by these forced removals. Children have been reportedly left behind, American spouses are now separated from loved ones and entire households have been shattered.

The designated deportation destination guarantees that some will be forcibly conscripted and sent against their will to the front lines in what has become a death trap for working-class youth on both sides of the conflict.

According to figures published by the Ukrainian government, the number of military dead and wounded in the war with Russia is more than 400,000.

Eric Lee, an immigration attorney who has represented several of the Ukrainian deportees, told NPR: "These individuals are not soldiers—many have fled direct persecution, only to face ICE's indifference and a tragic return to a country that will press-gang them into war. This is more than deportation. This is state-sanctioned violence, carried out in concert with the Ukrainian regime and Washington's war agenda."

Lee further elaborated to CNN, "We are seeing cases where ICE is actively ignoring asylum claims and humanitarian protections. It's clear that the Department of Homeland Security is prioritizing geopolitical objectives over basic rights and international laws designed to protect refugees and those seeking asylum."

The case of Roman Surotsev illustrates the brutality of the US policy. Born in the Soviet Union, Surotsev moved to the US as a refugee in the early 1990s, escaping the chaos and violence that erupted after the

dissolution of the USSR.

He built a life, working in construction, marrying, and assisting his local community in Houston, Texas. Surotsev has lived in the US for over 25 years.

For years, Surotsev's legal status remained precarious. The US government previously attempted to deport him in 2014, but internal legal setbacks prevented his removal. It was recognized then that his return placed him at risk.

This time, however, he was suddenly detained in Texas and whisked away to a deportation facility. "We were given almost no warning," his lawyer said. "Roman was not even allowed to contact his wife before the transfer. ICE knew full well that sending him to Ukraine meant near-certain conscription, and possibly death."

Speaking on Surotsev's behalf, Eric Lee added, "Roman's case is emblematic of the reckless disregard ICE exhibits for established legal protections. He's lived more than half his life in the US, has family, a job, and roots here. That counts for nothing to the bureaucrats, who see these deportations as simply numbers to process for political gain."

On November 15, the Socialist Equality Party issued a powerful statement, "Stop Trump's deportation flight of Ukrainian immigrants into forced conscription!" Referring to the deportations as "The modern-day Voyage of the Damned," the SEP statement condemned the flights, linking them to the Trump administration's broader assault on immigrants and democratic rights.

The statement said, "The forced removal of Ukrainian immigrants marks a new front in the Trump administration's war against immigrants...These deportations serve two purposes: fueling the military needs of the Ukrainian government and sending a chilling message that no immigrant, regardless of their circumstances, is safe under this regime."

The SEP also documented the mounting collaboration between US immigration officials and Ukrainian conscription agencies, with US authorities fully aware that deportees are immediately seized for war service upon landing.

Despite international conventions forbidding forced conscription of refugees, arrangements have been made to hand over deportees straight to Ukrainian military officials at the airport, which is a grotesque violation of their rights.

The forced removal of Ukrainian refugees is another step in the Trump administration's drive to establish a fascist dictatorship in the US with the support of the Democratic Party. Undocumented immigrants and refugees from multiple countries now face the threat of arbitrary removal, family separation, and intentional exposure to violence.

The US government's overt collaboration with foreign authorities complicit in such abuses highlights an agenda aimed at eviscerating basic democratic rights, not just of immigrants but of the working class as a whole. It is also part of the preparations of the American ruling class for world war.

The SEP statement warns, "Deportation flights, family separations and the disregard for legal process all serve to build the architecture of a police-state dictatorship." This campaign is driven not only by racist and xenophobic impulses but also by a class strategy aligned with the needs of US imperialism that seeks to impose military service on vulnerable populations and simultaneously ramp up repression at home.

The deportation of Ukrainian refugees is a warning to the entire working people in the United States and worldwide. The story of Roman Surotsev and countless others being sent into harm's way must become the cause for renewed resistance by workers and youth to the attacks on immigrants, refugees and in defense of democratic rights.

As the SEP statement urges: "This struggle is inseparable from the fight against war and dictatorship. Workers must unite, internationally, to overturn the policies that lead to forced conscription, militarism, and the construction of an authoritarian US state." Only through the independent, international action of the working class can the onslaught be halted.



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