

Surge of immigration arrests and state terror in the Pacific Northwest in 2025

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Recent data released by the academic and lawyer-operated database, the Deportation Data Project, reveals a surge in immigration-related arrests in 2025. The database tracks public records of national Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrests, along with data gathered by immigration advocates.

The records requests from September 1, 2023, to October 15, 2025, lay bare the capitalist ruling elite's systemic campaign of terror directed at some of the most vulnerable sections of the working class.

In 2024, the total number of arrests recorded in Oregon for the entire year amounted to 113. At least 1,200 were arrested in 2025, a staggering ten-fold increase. The first 10 months alone accounted for 660 arrests. After the data cutoff point in mid-October, U.S. Border Patrol Chief Michael Banks stated on X that over 560 people in Portland were arrested by federal agents.

However, even these counts are likely an underestimation, as Diane Goodwin, a spokesperson from a coalition of immigrant advocacy organizations, Oregon for All, reported a total of nearly 1,900 arrests.

Of those arrested in the first 10 months of 2025, roughly 84 were percent male, two-thirds aged 19-40, with detainees ranging from 4 to 71 years old and people coming from 45 countries—most from Mexico, Honduras, Venezuela, Guatemala and China. Only 32 percent of those arrested in 2025 had criminal convictions (down from 45 percent in 2024), undercutting ICE's fraudulent claims that the arrests consisted of only "hardened or violent criminals."

The means to carry out these fascistic attacks has been revealed in recent court testimony, which exposes ICE's use of facial recognition, airline passenger lists and software aggregators to generate arrest lists and

meet quotas, producing mechanized, indiscriminate targeting—a tactic honed by Israel in its AI-driven kill list targeting Palestinians in the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

Notably, arrests spiked in July, October, and November, following the springtime decree by President Donald Trump to triple the national arrest quota from 1,000 to 3,000 daily. The regional ICE director for Oregon, Washington, and Alaska, Cammilla Wamsley, also doubled the internal daily goal the agency had set for 2024, to 30 arrests per day.

Immigrant workers in Washington also faced particularly brutal targeted workplace raids, aimed primarily at those in state's vast orchards.

Central Washington's orchards rely heavily on immigrant labor; many detained workers are long-resident undocumented workers or family members trying to legalize status.

In 2024, Washington farmers and growers employed over 36,000 H-2A short-term visa workers, and produced 70 percent of the US apple crop.

The targeted attacks of workers in central Washington, primarily in farmworking communities around Yakima, Wapato, Granger and Toppenish, reached a late November peak of 5-10 arrests daily.

An estimated 40 percent of all agricultural work done in the US is performed by immigrants, many of whom now face exploitation, fear, and uncertainty.

The shifting tactics utilized by ICE, from primarily targeted workplace raids, to broad-daylight kidnappings in public spaces—such as banks, gas stations, grocery stores, while commuting, or even at hospitals—has had widespread ramifications.

A report by *The Columbian* highlights the effects that the crackdown has had on workers whom are simply seeking medical care, and especially those seeking

medical exams for green card applications.

Dr. Nicolette Bembeneck, a civil surgeon licensed in Vancouver, Washington to perform such exams, stated that when the exams became available in 2022, applicants would travel for hours to see her, with high demand necessitating a monthly cap. She noted that demand had sharply fallen off since January 2025, with the advent of the Trump administration's crackdown.

In a survey of 691 healthcare workers in 30 states by the Migrant Clinicians Network and Physicians for Human Rights, 84 percent reported that ICE activity has led to moderate to significant decreases in patient volume, 26 percent reported that enforcement directly affected care, with an additional 7 percent reporting direct ICE activity inside the facilities.

A particularly heinous example of ICE's interference in patient care and privacy has unfolded at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center in Portland.

The Columbian reports,

ICE officers have been allowed to remain at patients' bedsides at all times, including during sensitive exams, mental health assessments and bathroom use, according to the Oregon Nurses Association. Nurses also report being told by hospital management that "detainees do not maintain the same HIPAA rights as other patients." [The 1996 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act set national standards protecting patient health information.]

The response to these violations of human rights, dignity, and privacy, in conjunction with exploitative working conditions, chronic and unsafe under-staffing, and stagnant pay, has found expression in a recent strike by 140 medical professionals at Legacy Health.

The strike is part of a wave of working class resistance, including a walk-out by 1,600 students in Hillsboro, Oregon, where the city's large minority population has been targeted by anti-immigrant raids.

Although resistance to the attempts by the ruling class to scapegoat immigrant workers and divide the working class has been growing, workers can only succeed in this defense by arming themselves with a clear

understanding of the political forces and historical tasks at hand.

Most critically, they must break wholly and completely with the Democratic Party, whose direct complicity in these attacks, as well as the imperialist invasion of Venezuela, reveals their class orientation. They must organize independently from the union bureaucracies—the labor police that have aided and abetted nationalist filth and the largest wave of mass layoffs since the Great Recession.

The fight to defend immigrants is inseparable from the fight for the working class and democratic rights; only independent, class-based mobilization can stop the deportation machine and the authoritarian program it advances.



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