

Canadian border authorities handing refugees over to Trump's fascist ICE thugs

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Canada's Mark Carney-led Liberal government is fully complicit in the Trump administration's anti-immigrant witch hunt and its enforcement by the fascist thugs of the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). A recent *Guardian* report revealed that border authorities are systematically handing over asylum seekers and refugees to ICE, full in the knowledge that they will be confined to concentration camp-like conditions before being expelled from the US.

The report describes the experiences of refugees from around the world, who were (or still are) detained by ICE after having made a legal claim to asylum in Canada. It follows the House of Commons' adoption earlier this year of Bill C-12, which cracks down even further on Canada's already restrictive immigration rules, and a February 2026 report by CBC confirming that ICE officers operate at five offices across Canada, in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Calgary and Ottawa.

One of those turned over to ICE by Canadian border guards was Markens Appolon, a 25-year-old Haitian student who fled the gang violence and social disruption caused by a century of imperialist domination, including Canadian imperialism's own involvement. Appolon arrived at the Quebec-Vermont border on December 28, 2025 to claim asylum in Canada, where his aunt holds citizenship. Canadian border agents turned him away on a pretext, handing him to ICE, in whose detention facility he has now spent close to five months.

Since the beginning of Trump's second term in office, Canadian immigration lawyers have reportedly been inundated with similar cases. "Canada is participating in this. Canada is handing people over to ICE," Appolon's Toronto-based immigration lawyer Erin Simpson told the *Guardian*.

Tenzin, a 29-year-old Tibetan refugee, arrived at the Canadian border in August with Canadian family waiting to receive him. Border officials refused to interview his relatives. He was placed in ICE's Buffalo detention facility, where he was left without adequate medical attention with severe consequences for his health. Gurbir Singh, who fled death threats from Indian police, was turned over to ICE because Canadian border agents refused to accept that he was who his documents said he was.

The Canadian government has sought to justify its long-

standing collaboration with the brutal immigration regime in the US by citing the Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA). Originally signed in 2004 in the wake of 9/11, the STCA compels asylum seekers to make their refugee claim in the first "safe" country they enter; meaning the United States for the vast majority of claimants arriving in Canada from the south.

In blatant disregard of the now widely established consensus among global human rights organizations, as well as legal and academic experts, the Canadian state continues to insist the United States meets the standards of a "safe country" for refugees.

Under Trump, this claim has become grotesque. Since January 2025, ICE has conducted sweeping military-style raids in major American cities, detained toddlers at schools, confined Latin American migrants in concentration-camp conditions in the US and El Salvador, and shot civilians during immigration operations. More than a dozen people have been killed by federal agents or died in ICE custody in 2026 alone. In January, mass protests and calls for a general strike broke out after an ICE agent fatally shot Renee Nicole Good in Minneapolis. Less than three weeks later, Alex Pretti, an ICU nurse, was gunned down by another ICE thug in the city.

Canada's own courts previously struck down the STCA as a violation of Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. After an appeal by the Trudeau Liberal government, the STCA's constitutionality was eventually upheld by the Supreme Court in June 2023. The Trudeau government and the Biden administration went on to expand the STCA to cover the entire 3,000-mile Canada-US border, closing the so-called "irregular crossing loophole" that had previously allowed tens of thousands of people to seek protection in Canada if they crossed the border without using a regular checkpoint.

The Carney government has gone further still. Bill C-12, the Strengthening Canada's Immigration System and Borders Act, passed this spring, grants the immigration minister sweeping, unaccountable powers to cancel or suspend asylum claims for entire categories of people without notice or oversight. It also imposes a retroactive one-year deadline for filing refugee claims and facilitates the sharing of migrants' sensitive personal data with foreign agencies (including American ones).

The principle of nonrefoulement—the core obligation of international refugee law, to which Canada is a signatory, not to return a refugee to a place where their life or freedom is threatened—is being openly and systematically violated.

The Liberal government has committed to hitting the NATO target of 5 percent of GDP on military spending within a decade, with the explicit corollary of eviscerating what remains of Canada’s social services. The rapid militarization of society requires the slashing of public services and social supports for the working class to fund the hundreds of billions being poured into rearmament and corporate subsidies.

The attack on immigrant workers is part of this broader assault on the entire working class. If Canada is so openly complicit in the Trump administration’s crackdown on immigrants and workers in the US, this is because the Canadian ruling class is pursuing its own authoritarian agenda at home: criminalizing strikes, suppressing protests, gutting social programs and normalizing the use of the Constitution’s “notwithstanding clause” to override democratic rights. Far-right, Trump-style politics have become the norm within ruling circles, as shown by the rise of the far-right Pierre Poilievre to lead the official opposition Conservatives.

The Canadian government’s collaboration with ICE thoroughly exposes the bogus character of the “Team Canada” nationalism promoted by the ruling class, trade union bureaucracies and pseudo-left forces in response to Trump’s threat to annex the country as the 51st state and crash its economy. According to its proponents, Canada is a “kinder, gentler” society than the United States, and a “Team Canada” bringing together corporate bosses, government ministers and workers can resist Trump’s fascist “America first” agenda.

In reality, as the *World Socialist Web Site* has repeatedly insisted, the Canadian ruling class shares broad swathes of Trump’s social and economic policies. They disagree with him only on the question of whether or not the Canadian bourgeoisie should retain “first rights” to exploit workers in Canada for profit.

The social democratic New Democratic Party (NDP), which has been in the forefront of giving “Team Canada” nationalism a “left” cover, has proposed a handful of token measures to distance Ottawa from Trump’s vicious persecution of immigrants. NDP MPs have backed calls for limiting defense contracts with the United States and in particular with ICE. Alberta MP Heather MacPherson wrote to Carney earlier this year demanding that he close down the five ICE offices the US maintains in Canada.

A petition calling on the government to cancel contracts with companies supplying ICE has gathered nearly 16,000 signatures, reflecting widespread opposition to ICE and its persecution of immigrants. NDP and Green MPs have called for letters to the Prime Minister, petitions and proposed amendments to export permit legislation. NDP MP Jenny Kwan’s Bill C-233, which would have removed the United

States’ blanket exemption from Canadian arms export regulations, was defeated at second reading in March.

In late May, the NDP called for the cancellation of a defense contract supplying vehicles worth \$10 million to ICE. The CEO of Ontario-based supplier Roshel, Roman Shimonov, stated unapologetically to the *Hill Times*: “We’re the great example of how Canadian industry can be better than any other industry when it comes to armored vehicles, and we’ll continue this support for the U.S. government.” When asked whether he had been approached by the Canadian government to reconsider the contracts, he said he had not, and that he would find it “ridiculous” to do so.

Roshel is merely one representative business within a growing industrial sector geared towards producing the weapons and equipment needed for Canadian imperialism’s war machine. Its profitable relation with ICE illustrates the coincidence between militarism and the persecution of immigrants, and the working class more broadly. The same Canadian supplies used by ICE against workers in the US will be used against workers in Canada. For all its tepid objections to doing business with ICE, the NDP is a full-throated supporter of the Carney government’s massive rearmament drive that, among other things, funds the companies supplying Trump’s fascist thugs.

Canada’s collaboration with ICE flows from a common need of the American and Canadian ruling classes. In order to implement their program of war and austerity, they must counter the resistance of the working class by dividing it along national and ethnic lines and strengthening the repressive powers of their respective states.

The defence of immigrant workers’ rights, and the working class as a whole, requires its independent political mobilization as a social force—in Canada, in the United States, internationally—against the capitalist system that produces the conditions driving mass migration, and the ruling classes on both sides of the border who exploit and persecute those forced to flee. The fight for refugee rights is, at its root, a fight for socialism.



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