

ICE Gestapo expands deportation flights to third countries in Africa

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The Trump administration has dramatically expanded the forced deportation of immigrants to so-called “third countries,” shipping men and women in chains to impoverished and war-torn African nations where they have never lived and have no family or social connections.

Over a 10-day period in August, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) deported more than 100 people aboard three flights to eight African countries, according to internal government documents obtained by CBS News.

The deportees included men and women from Afghanistan, Cuba, Iran, Nepal, Nicaragua, Turkey and Venezuela. Others came from African countries different from those to which they were expelled. They were deposited in Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Liberia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

Many had lived in the United States for years. Some have serious medical conditions. Others had received legal protection from being returned to their countries of origin because they faced persecution, torture or death. Many had no criminal record beyond immigration-related offenses.

The flights are part of a rapidly expanding network of secret agreements through which the Trump administration pays foreign governments millions of dollars to receive people the United States wants to expel.

On Sunday, the *New York Times* published interviews with 10 people recently deported to Liberia. All had spent months imprisoned in ICE detention centers before being placed aboard the 14-hour flight.

The deportees described being shackled at the wrists, ankles and waist throughout the journey. ICE agents refused requests to use the bathroom, forcing detainees to urinate on themselves. When they protested being sent to a country where they had no connections, agents beat them, slammed them to the floor and dragged them by their chains, leaving scratches on their wrists and bruises on their necks.

Leonardo Sánchez, a 49-year-old man from Cuba, had been granted protection by a US immigration judge barring his deportation to the island. Years of surgeries and injuries had left his intestines, as the *Times* described it, “barely inside his body.”

ICE agents nevertheless kept Sánchez’s wrists, ankles and waist shackled throughout the flight. The chain around his waist constricted his injured abdomen.

“I was in pain, crying like a little kid,” Sánchez recalled.

Agents refused his pleas to loosen the chain or allow him to use the restroom, forcing him to urinate on himself.

Carlos Téllez-Sánchez, a Venezuelan deported to Liberia, said ICE

agents “didn’t treat us like people, like human beings.”

He told the *Times*, “They can say or do anything to you and there’s nothing you can do.”

Many of those interviewed requested anonymity because they feared retaliation by US or Liberian authorities.

Four of the *Times*’ interviewees were among six deportees who refused to disembark when the plane landed in Monrovia. ICE agents responded by pulling them by their handcuff chains, pinning them to the floor and pressing knees into their chests.

Sánchez said an agent threw him down and knelt directly on his wounded and bulging abdomen. Other deportees shouted, “You abuser! If he dies, it’s on you!”

The six were subsequently returned to the aircraft and flown to Equatorial Guinea, where they were forced off the plane. They are now being held with other deportees in a converted hotel reportedly owned by the family of President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, Africa’s longest-ruling dictator. Some arrived with serious medical conditions, including one person who required a colostomy bag.

Liberia has agreed to accept as many as 1,200 third-country deportees over the next year. While the Liberian government claims it is not receiving direct compensation, the United States has awarded \$5 million to support “migration management” programs connected to the deal.

The administration is accelerating these deportations following a record wave of ICE arrests. Nearly 50,000 people were arrested in July, the highest monthly total of Trump’s second term. More than half had no prior criminal record.

Among those recently expelled was a young Afghan man whose relatives served alongside the US military during Washington’s 20-year occupation of Afghanistan. An immigration judge had granted him protection from deportation because of the danger that the Taliban would persecute him. The Trump administration shipped him to the Central African Republic, one of the poorest and most dangerous countries in the world.

The US State Department warns American citizens not to travel to the Central African Republic because of armed conflict, crime, kidnapping and unrest. Rwanda, another recipient of third-country deportees, is under a Level 3 “Reconsider travel” advisory because of crime, unrest and health risks. The State Department warns Americans not to travel within 10 kilometers (6 miles) of Rwanda’s border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo under any circumstances.

The same government that tells American citizens these countries are too dangerous to visit is forcibly transporting immigrants there in chains.

The crime has a direct historical parallel to the grievances against

King George III enumerated in the Declaration of Independence.

During the recent WSWs webinar, “The American Revolution and Its Place in History,” historian Adam Hochschild recalled that the Declaration charged the British king with “transporting people beyond seas to be tried for pretended offenses.”

“I think of the deportations,” Hochschild said.

There can be no mass deportation operation without the construction of a police state.

With the collaboration of the Democratic Party, the Trump administration has received billions of dollars to hire more agents, expand its network of concentration camps and purchase the latest torture and surveillance technology.

Last week, ICE awarded a \$16.7 million no-bid contract to Compliant Technologies for 6,000 electric-shock gloves.

The CTG-5 Generated Low Output Voltage Emitter, marketed under the acronym G.L.O.V.E., functions as an ordinary patrol glove until an agent activates its “electrical mode.” Upon contact with a person’s skin, it administers an agonizing electrical shock.

ICE’s procurement documents authorize the use of the gloves against people who are “actively or passively resisting,” including during arrests, prisoner transports and protests outside detention centers. The gloves cost \$2,495 each.

The devices have already been used in jails and against children in Omaha public schools. A pending wrongful-death lawsuit alleges that Kentucky jailers shocked Johnathon Mansfield 27 times with a G.L.O.V.E. and subjected him to 13 Taser discharges before he suffered cardiac arrest and died in October 2024.

Alongside these instruments of torture, ICE is preparing to spend between \$1 million and \$2 million on Boston Dynamics’ quadruped Spot robots.

The robotic dogs are equipped with 360-degree cameras, sensors and extendable arms and can open doors. A Department of Homeland Security procurement notice said they would be used for “inspection, situational awareness, and hazard assessment” in border enforcement, infrastructure security and police operations.

While millions are spent equipping the immigration Gestapo with electric-shock weapons and robotic surveillance dogs, the Trump administration has eliminated federally funded legal representation for an estimated 26,000 unaccompanied immigrant children.

The federal contract with the Acacia Center for Justice expired on July 31. Acacia coordinated nearly 100 organizations that provided legal representation to children, including infants, facing deportation proceedings.

The administration allowed the contract to lapse after attempting to condition continued funding on the disclosure of confidential information about the children, information that could be used to facilitate their deportation.

“Our analysis has shown that [children] are 99% likely to be ordered deported if [they] go to court without a lawyer,” Acacia communications director Bilal Askaryar said.

The consequences are already visible. On August 18, a 1-year-old baby appeared without representation in an Arizona immigration court. According to an August 20 federal court filing, an attorney from the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants appeared virtually but remained silent as the immigration judge ordered the baby to submit an asylum application before the next hearing.

The filing noted the “facially absurd” character of ordering an unrepresented infant to complete one of the most complicated forms in immigration law. If the application is not filed, the child can be

ordered deported.

“To the best of Plaintiff Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project’s knowledge, Defendants are not funding any lawyer to represent the baby,” the filing states.

The spectacle of a judge ordering an infant to prepare a legal application while the government spends millions on electric torture devices expresses the class character of the emerging dictatorship.

It is directed not only against immigrants. The immigration Gestapo is the spearhead of a police state apparatus being prepared for use against the entire working class. The same agents, databases, detention centers, drones, robotic surveillance systems and torture devices deployed against immigrants will be turned against workers, students and all opponents of war, inequality and capitalism.

The Democratic Party is not opposing this apparatus. It has provided Trump with the funds and political cover required to build it.

Democratic leaders are now making clear that even if they regain control of the House in the November midterm elections, they will do nothing to remove the fascist president responsible for these crimes.

Speaking to CNN last week, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries refused to commit to impeaching Trump.

“We haven’t ruled anything in and we haven’t ruled anything out,” Jeffries said, adding that Democrats would respond only to unspecified “moments of accountability.”

On NBC’s *Meet the Press* Sunday, South Carolina Representative James Clyburn was equally explicit.

“I don’t rule it out, but I don’t rule it in,” Clyburn said when asked about impeaching Trump.

“I don’t think that should be our priority if we get into office,” he added. “Our priority ought to be making housing, education, energy, healthcare affordable and accessible for all of our citizens. Impeaching the president will not do that.”

Clyburn’s attempt to counterpose living standards to the defense of democratic rights is a fraud. The same capitalist oligarchy that is destroying healthcare, education, wages and housing is building the police state to suppress the social opposition its policies will inevitably produce.

The Democratic Party fears the independent intervention of the working class far more than it fears Trump. Its overriding concern is to prevent mass opposition to dictatorship, war and social inequality from escaping the confines of the capitalist two-party system.



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