

Federal agents raid Ilhan Omar's home: A new step in Trump's drive toward dictatorship

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Early Monday morning, agents of Homeland Security Investigations, the criminal investigative arm of ICE, raided the Washington D.C. home of Representative Ilhan Omar, Democrat of Minnesota, on a search warrant secured by the Justice Department. The immigration police have been sent against a sitting member of Congress three weeks before a national election. This is a lawless act of political persecution, and it must be condemned and opposed by every worker and every defender of democratic rights.

Omar, 44, came to the United States as a child refugee from the civil war in Somalia. She has been targeted by the White House for years because of her criticism of aspects of US foreign policy, particularly the Israeli genocide in Gaza. She has not been charged with any crime.

The raid is not simply an effort to influence the November 3 vote. It is a step in the drive by the Trump administration toward presidential dictatorship, and the election itself is one of its targets. A government that sends federal agents into the home of an opposition legislator, on the strength of smears spread by the president, is preparing to dispense with the constitutional forms that are supposed to hold it to account.

The timing was deliberate. The raid came 22 days before the election, in open disregard of the longstanding Justice Department practice of avoiding overt steps against candidates within 60 days of a vote. According to CBS News, Attorney General Todd Blanche was personally aware of the search. Trump told reporters he “had nothing to do with” it.

In fact, Trump gave the signal. On Thursday, October 8, he posted on Truth Social: “The once Great State of Minnesota is being taken over by Somali Immigrants. There is Violence, Murder, and Mayhem all over the State.” He went on: “Fight back Minnesota, fight back! If you need, the Federal Government will come to your rescue.”

Two days later, at a campaign rally in Clarksville, Tennessee, he turned on Omar: “She comes from Somalia,

they don't have a government, they don't have police. All they have is crime and squalor.” Referring to unproven allegations of fraud spread on right-wing social media, he added, “These people from Somalia, what they've done to Minnesota should never be allowed.” On Monday morning, the agents arrived.

The investigation reportedly concerns immigration paperwork filed by Omar's late father when she was a child. Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin has gone further, repeating the right-wing smear that Omar married her brother. “If we can prove it,” he said in an interview last month, “then maybe you shouldn't have been here in the first place; we'll deport you.”

Omar has been a naturalized citizen since 2000. The administration is openly threatening to strip a member of Congress of her citizenship and expel her from the country.

“Border czar” Tom Homan told Fox News last month that “regardless if they're a congressman or not, no one's above the law.” This from a government so riddled with criminality that Trump said this month he would consider pre-emptive pardons for officials of his administration before he leaves office. According to *Forbes*, Trump's own fortune has nearly tripled since early 2024, to \$6.2 billion.

The pretext for the assault on the elections is the lie of mass voting by non-citizens, herded to the polls by the Democrats. Investigations have found only small numbers of non-citizens incorrectly registered to vote, usually through mistakes made when they applied for driver's licenses and an infinitesimal number of votes actually cast.

These lies are not used merely to bolster Trump's claim that he won the 2020 election, which he lost convincingly to Joe Biden. Their real purpose is to whip up an anti-immigrant hysteria among his fascist supporters that would facilitate calling off the elections entirely or holding them under martial law conditions, with armed troops and the immigration Gestapo deployed at polling stations, particularly in neighborhoods with large immigrant and

minority populations.

The raid comes as the polls point to a Republican debacle. A Reuters/Ipsos poll released October 5 put Trump's approval rating at 32 percent, a record low, and the Cook Political Report rates the Democrats as favored to win the House. Trump is not preparing to accept such a result. He is preparing to prevent it.

The administration has turned the Justice Department and the DHS against its political opponents, singling out black women in particular and appealing to racism and misogyny: Omar, New York Attorney General Letitia James and Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook. Representative LaMonica McIver, Democrat of New Jersey, faces federal assault charges, carrying a potential sentence of more than a decade, relating to an oversight visit to Delany Hall, an ICE detention center in Newark.

Omar called the raid "an attempt to target political enemies and weaponize federal law enforcement." She said, "For 10 years, Trump has targeted me with baseless lies and smear campaigns. This is just the latest escalation in his campaign of political intimidation," adding, "I will not be silenced."

House Democratic leaders Hakeem Jeffries, Katherine Clark and Pete Aguilar called the raid "deeply disturbing" and promised "full accountability for the rogue abuse of power," without proposing to actually do anything. Other Democrats issued statements and nothing more.

The Democrats' concern for Omar is of recent vintage. In 2019, the party leadership forced her to apologize for criticizing the influence of AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee), a lobby that has defended every crime of the Israeli state, including the genocide in Gaza. When Republicans removed her from the House Foreign Affairs Committee in 2023, the Democrats confined themselves to a party-line vote while lining up behind a resolution declaring Israel America's "legitimate and democratic ally," which Omar herself signed.

It was the Biden Justice Department that opened an investigation into Omar's finances, campaign spending and interactions with a foreign citizen. According to the *New York Times*, that inquiry stalled for apparent lack of evidence, but it helped create the conditions for the present effort to vilify, prosecute and deport her.

In the coming weeks, the Democrats will present the November 3 vote as the answer to Trump. The pseudo-left organizations and the trade union apparatus will do the same, working to channel the anger over the raid behind the Democratic Party as the "lesser evil." The working class must reject this trap.

Under the two-party system, the Democrats would be the sole beneficiaries of a Republican collapse. But they are a

party of Wall Street and the military-intelligence apparatus. Their conflict with Trump centers not on the defense of democratic rights but on questions of imperialist strategy, above all, the war against Russia in Ukraine.

A Democratic victory on November 3 would not halt the drive toward dictatorship. Trump has made clear that he will not accept a result that goes against him, and the Democrats, who downplay the danger at every turn, are terrified of the growth of opposition from below. The forces behind this drive, including the immense concentration of wealth in a financial oligarchy, the turn to war abroad and the assault on immigrants and workers at home, are rooted in the crisis of American capitalism, which the Democrats defend no less than the Republicans.

The Socialist Equality Party has fundamental political differences with Omar and the other Democratic officeholders, who uphold and defend the capitalist system. But we oppose the persecution of them by the Trump administration, and we demand that all investigations and prosecutions of those on Trump's "enemies list" be immediately halted. The methods now being used against Omar have already been used against immigrants, and they will be turned against every section of working people.

The defense of democratic rights falls to the working class, mobilized independently of both parties of big business. Workers should build rank-and-file committees in every workplace and neighborhood to oppose the raids, the deportation machine and every move toward dictatorship, and to connect this fight to the struggle against the capitalist system from which the danger of dictatorship arises.



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