

As part of deportation operation

Trump orders construction of massive Guantánamo Bay concentration camp

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Prior to signing the fascistic Laken Riley Act into law on Wednesday at a ceremony at the White House, President Donald Trump revealed that he had instructed the Pentagon and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to expand the detention facilities at the Guantánamo Bay Migrant Operations Center (GMOC).

Trump said he was signing an “executive order to instruct the Department of Defense and Homeland Security to begin preparing the 30,000-person migrant facility at Guantánamo Bay.”

He added, “Most people don’t even know about it. We have 30,000 beds in Guantánamo to detain the worst criminal illegal aliens threatening the American people. Some of them are so bad we don’t even trust the countries to hold them because we don’t want them coming back.”

The announcement is part of Trump and the ruling class’s efforts to carry out the “largest deportation operation” in US history. Currently, some 40,000 people are imprisoned across the sprawling US immigrant detention apparatus, mostly at private prison facilities located in remote regions on the US-Mexico border.

“So we are going to send them out to Guantánamo,” Trump said, adding ominously, “This will double our capacity immediately. That’s a ... that’s a tough place to get out of.”

Speaking on Fox News, fascist Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, a veteran of the torture facility, said that Guantánamo was “meant and built for migrants ... away from the American people.” He said that the “golf course” at the naval station “could be expanded to provide an additional 6,000 places where migrants or illegals could go.”

He added, “This is a plan in movement ... because we are ramping up for the possibility to expand mass deportations.” Hegseth concluded that the Department of Defense was “not only willing, but proud to partner with DHS” to wage war on immigrants.

For decades, Democratic and Republican administrations have used the US Navy base in Cuba to imprison anywhere from hundreds to thousands of immigrants, including whole families, primarily from Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Cuba. Throughout its existence as a migrant detention facility, workers and their families have reported horrendous conditions and mistreatment.

In 1991, under the George H.W. Bush administration, a section of the naval base at Guantánamo Bay was converted to house Haitian migrants fleeing the country after President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was deposed in a military coup. Within a year, some 10,500 Haitians were detained at the facility, described by lawyers and immigration advocates as a “legal black hole.”

While he campaigned on reversing Bush’s policies in Guantánamo, by 1994 President Bill Clinton not only resumed but expanded immigrant detention at the facility, housing some 30,000 Cubans and 20,000 Haitians at the facility throughout the year.

In 2002, the George W. Bush administration began using a portion of the naval base as a blacksite torture facility and prison camp to illegally imprison people as part of the “Global War on Terror.”

In August 2024, the Biden administration, on its way out the door, awarded a \$163.4 million contract to Akima to expand the Guantánamo Migrant Operations Center (“GMOC”). The deal had been under negotiations since September 2021, when it was

revealed that Biden’s DHS was seeking to expand the number of beds at the facility by at least 400.

The *New York Times*, citing internal government reports and interviews with migrants, reported on the horrendous conditions at GMOC last September. Migrants, none of whom are eligible to resettle in the United States, recalled being forced to wear “blackout goggles during transport through the base; that their calls with lawyers are monitored; and that some areas are unfit for habitation, with rats and overflowing toilets.”

A copy of the “rules” obtained by the *Times* stipulated that migrants can get “up to” 30 minutes a week for phone calls—all of which are monitored—and are prohibited from discussing “facilities on the base, information about other migrants, or ‘information distorting or exaggerating’ their treatment.”

A DHS inspector who visited the facility in March 2023 recommended that the agency no longer house children or families at the facility. A September report from the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP), an immigrant advocacy group, detailed the inhumane conditions migrants are subjected to at GMOC.

After conducting interviews with migrants at the facility, IRAP wrote:

Interviewees described signs of deterioration and dilapidation: toilets spewing sewage when someone in another room flushed their toilet, a plumbing problem known in notorious prisons as ‘Ping-Pong toilets’; showers overflowing; fungi growing on ceilings; and rats running around in the room.

These deplorable conditions did not prevent the Biden administration from awarding Akima a \$685.5 million contract to support ICE operations in Miami, Florida. The contract, according to government contract news site *GovConWire*, calls for expanding “detention services” at the Krome Service Processing Center, where Akima “will support the Enforcement and Removal Operations program, which is mainly focused on the processing and enforcement of departure from

the United States of detainees.”

Prior to signing the Laken Riley Act into law Wednesday, Trump repeatedly praised the many Democrats who supported the legislation. “This is a very important law,” he said. “This is something that has brought Democrats and Republicans together.”

Later Trump added, “I want to thank every House Republican, every Senate Republican as well as the 12 Senate Democrats and the 48 House Democrats who voted to pass this vitally important bill, and many of them are with us today, and I really do appreciate it.”

He concluded, “And I very much, especially, appreciate the bipartisan support. The Democrats are really, a big percentage of them came through, and plenty of them wanted to.”



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