

Homeland Security secretary Noem leads immigration raids in New York City

Jesse Thomas
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Early Tuesday morning, federal immigration officials conducted raids on several working class neighborhoods throughout New York City.

The federal departments which were reported to have been involved in the attacks included the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the US Marshals Service. The New York Police Department (NYPD) also provided support for the raids.

Trump's recently appointed Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Kristi Noem, made a coordinated appearance on the scene, posting a video on Twitter/X in which she stated "7 AM in NYC. Getting the dirt bags off the streets."

So far, over 20 arrests have been reported from raids which have been carried out in southeast Bronx, northern Manhattan and in Queens. The most heavily publicized of the detentions was that of 26-year-old Anderson Zambrano-Pacheco, who is alleged to be a leader of the Tren de Aragua gang. The latter is a Venezuelan organization which was recently named as terrorist in a January 20 executive order, "Designating Cartels and Other Organizations As Foreign Terrorist Organizations And Specially Designated Global Terrorists."

Among the others arrested, 12 were designated as "targets" of the federal authorities, while eight of those detained were deemed "collateral" arrests by a local news source.

Tuesday's raid is a component of the Trump administration's effort to completely restructure the political landscape of America and establish a presidential dictatorship. One of its major rationales in this shift is the claim of an immigrant "invasion" equivalent to that of a foreign army landing on American soil. In a Saturday meeting between Trump and ICE officials, undocumented immigrant arrest quotas were ramped up to 1,200-1,500 per

day. This represented an increase from the original targets outlined in the executive orders written by Trump within the first several days of his second presidency.

Trump and Noem's assault on New York City is a deeply provocative move, the intended target of which is the entire working class. New York's workforce is one of the most diverse in the world. The current immigrant-born population of New York City is the largest, in real terms, in the country. Roughly 38 percent of the city's 8 million inhabitants are foreign-born, while 44 percent of the city's labor force are immigrants, contributing hundreds of billions of dollars to the city's economy every year. New York State's population of immigrants is similarly high, with 23 percent of its 19 million residents having been born in a country outside of the US.

DHS Secretary Noem is a former South Dakota US House of Representatives member (2007-2019) and governor (2019-2025). Throughout her career, she has endorsed anti-immigrant legislation, including Trump's 2017 Muslim travel ban, advocated for an end to asylum laws, deployed South Dakota National Guard troops to the US' southern border, and referred to the US-Mexico border as a "warzone."

New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York State Governor Kathy Hochul, both Democrats, were complicit in Tuesday's raids. In a statement Tuesday, Adams admitted that his administration had allowed the NYPD to coordinate with the DHS in carrying out Tuesday's attack, emphasizing its legality despite New York's "Sanctuary City" laws which restrict cooperation with federal immigration agencies.

"People who commit violent crimes must be held accountable. We should be sending a strong message about consequences for those who break the law," Adams stated. "[W]e will not hesitate to partner with federal authorities to bring violent criminals to justice—just as we have done for years. ... Our commitment to protecting our city's law-abiding residents, both citizens and immigrants, remains unwavering."

Adams has recently made a significant effort of cozying up to Trump after having been indicted in September of last year on federal charges of bribery, wire fraud and solicitation of foreign campaign contributions. On January 17, Adams attended a meeting with Trump at his Mar-a-Lago estate and was a guest at Trump's January 20 inauguration ceremony. While Adams has pleaded innocent, it is widely speculated that he is seeking a presidential pardon, should he be convicted.

On Wednesday, the *New York Times* published an article which claimed that officials from the Trump administration had discussed with federal prosecutors in Manhattan the possibility of dropping corruption charges against Adams.

Hochul, for her part, downplayed the significance of Tuesday's raids, while remarking cynically: "I want to be clear, there has always been ICE raids in the state of New York, even in the past, and this is not a new dynamic," she stated. She continued, "my understanding is that they had specific names of people who committed crimes, serious offenders, and those are exactly the people that we want removed from the state of New York."

Both Hochul and Adams are aware of the massive opposition to the Trump regime's fascistic attacks on immigrants and democratic rights, an opposition that could erupt at any time. Attempting to assuage fears about the presence of agencies like ICE and its impact on the lives of workers, Hochul stated, "I don't know at this point, with the knowledge I have, whether [Tuesday's raid] can be described as a wholesale 'raid' where you're scooping up everybody."

Some Democratic Party politicians in New York City and state governments have made oppositional noises in response to Tuesday's events. On Wednesday, New York Attorney General Leticia James, whose offices have recently filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration's freeze on federal grants, wrote on an X/Twitter post, "[m]y office is aware of the increased presence of ICE across New York City. I am monitoring the situation to ensure our laws are being respected and people's rights are not being violated."

Also on Wednesday, the New York City Council launched the Protect NYC Families Initiative, which provides a paltry \$2 million to dozens of nonprofit organizations with the aim of providing legal services and resources to those targeted by federal raids. An additional \$1.4 million was proposed to establish a network of free translation services to New York City residents.

City Comptroller Brad Lander, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America and co-founder of the City Council's Progressive Caucus in 2010 when he was a freshman member of the council, postured as an opponent of the Adams administration for collaborating with ICE in

Tuesday's attack. At the same time, Lander critically supported Adams' prostration before the Trump administration. "[The] laws are clear when someone has been convicted of a range of serious or violent offenses, cooperation [with ICE] is appropriate ... but it is not legal under New York City sanctuary laws for the NYPD to aid ICE when they show up at a school or a homeless shelter, or a hospital."

These efforts, however, will amount to spitting in the wind within the context of a political framework that has rapidly shifted to the right, on a bipartisan basis, in response to the global crisis of capitalism. This was exemplified recently with the signing of the Laken Riley Act by Trump, which passed Congress with crucial support from the Democratic Party. The new law makes it easier for the government to detain immigrants, including those who have merely been accused of a misdemeanor.

The Trump administration's attack on immigrants rests on the basis of an evisceration of the Constitution and the separation of powers. It has been able to carry out such a blatant attack on democracy due to decades of complicity of the Democratic Party, which has included all the top representatives of the DSA.

While Trump's measures represent a grave threat to the American workers, they can and must be stopped by the mobilization of the working class on a politically independent basis. Workers must establish neighborhood and workplace committees, independent of the Democratic Party and their lackeys in the trade union bureaucracy, to combat all efforts to divide the workforce on national and ethnic lines. The defense of immigrants must be connected with the fight for the defense of wages, living standards and working conditions, as well as the defense of the democratic right to education, healthcare and culture for all.

The WSWS urges all those who wish to advance this struggle to get involved with the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees today.



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