



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Joint Hearing Statement of Border Security & Enforcement Subcommittee Representative Delia Ramirez (D-IL)

From Cartels to Coastlines: An Examination of U.S. Federal Efforts to Confront Illicit Maritime Activities in U.S. Waters

June 10, 2025

Despite the Administration having so much to answer for, today is one of our Committee's first hearing with government officials, outside of Secretary Noem a few weeks back. It is shameful that it took until June for my colleagues to request that Administration officials appear before us. I am certainly glad that you are finally here.

I agree that maritime security is important. And we certainly should be discussing the resources are being redirected outside of the mission. And I would support having a full hearing to discuss this if we were not in extraordinary times. However, we are in extraordinary times. Our communities are being terrorized by the weaponization of the government and the military against U.S. citizens.

The Trump administration is using authoritarian tactics to incite fear and chaos in our communities so they can further weaponize the government to exert control and suppress dissent. Let's look at Los Angeles: Heavily armed, masked agents conducted military style raids at places like Home Depot, a donut shop, and a clothing wholesaler. These are purposefully inflammatory tactics meant to escalate violence and justify further violations of our constitutional rights and civil liberties.

And these kidnappings are targeting mothers, children, and law-abiding neighbors who have contributed to our communities for years and have complied with the courts' requirements, attending check-in appointments when asked to do so. Do you know why I can say that with confidence? Because that's what is happening in Chicago.

ICE texted law-abiding members of our communities for unscheduled check-ins and were told that within days they had to present themselves for a check in. When they showed up, many of them mothers, their cases were immediately dismissed followed by ICE agents waiting for them at the door to handcuff them, put them in freight elevators, and rush them out in order to shove them into vans while wearing masks. Can you imagine if that happened to one of your family members?

They are using text messages to call people in to arrest the exact immigrants who are demonstrating their commitment to the law by complying with ICE's instructions. This runs counter to every claim the Trump Administration has made — but is consistent with reporting that the Administration's actual intent is to simply maximize arrests. For this Administration, let me very clear - the terror is the point.

They are kidnapping people. They are tearing families apart. They are deporting U.S. citizens, including U.S. citizen children with cancer. They are ignoring our right to due process and, in doing so, are making mistakes they call administrative errors as they arrest and deport people. Just last week, DHS had to return a Guatemalan man wrongfully deported to Mexico despite fearing he would be persecuted there.

And they finally returned Kilmar Abrego Garcia to the United States, who now faces what could be trumped-up charges.

We've all heard about the others disappeared to a prison in El Salvador, based on allegations of being in a gang - including Andry Hernandez Romero, a gay makeup artist who legally arrived to the United States seeking asylum. The only so-called evidence this administration has given of him being in a gang is tattoos of his parents' names with crowns.

But this Administration's obsession with persecuting immigrants and achieving their mass deportations means they are using every resource they can to, instead of keeping our communities safe, to terrorize them. We're seeing the CBP and law enforcement agencies like the FBI, DEA, and ATF focus on rounding up law-abiding, contributing immigrants in our communities.

The message sent to our communities through these actions are:

The Trump Administration does not care if you are complying with the law because they do not respect the rule of law. They do not care if you have constitutional rights because they do not respect the Constitution. They only care about the arbitrary deportation quotas set by Steven Miller.

Not only are these officers NOT doing the jobs they were hired to do - like pursuing child abusers, investigating sex trafficking, or weapons smuggling - they are terrorizing our communities while wearing masks... You know who else wears masks - people committing crimes, executioners, prison guards in CECOT, Klansmen. People who don't want to be held accountable for what they do because they know their actions violate the foundations of our shared humanity. So, we need oversight of this Administration. And the most urgent need is to rein in the abuses of power that make all of us less safe all over this country.

Today, they are violating immigrants' constitutional rights, stripping our communities of due process, and they are seeking to separate us from our humanity. They are testing the limits now because they intend to use this same playbook next on anyone they deem undesirable. This Committee's responsibility is to oversight and not to the President of the United States of America.

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