

MILITARY BASES



DETENTION
WATCH NETWORK

INTRODUCTION

President Trump is aggressively following through on his campaign promise of mass detention and deportations. Two executive orders issued on day one of Trump's second administration made clear that detention is a center piece of the mass deportation plans. The orders call for the allocation of all available resources to [expand immigration detention](#) and for the [detention of all non-citizens](#) in deportation proceedings "to the fullest extent permitted." In the following days various reports, public solicitations, and memos have demonstrated that the administration intends to at least double Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention capacity to [more than 100,000 people](#) at any given time. By the summer of 2025, reports revealed plans to add [125 new or expanded facilities](#) to the detention system by the end of the year. This resource is part of a series that explores the various avenues for massive detention expansion. Here, we discuss plans to expand ICE detention into US military bases.

The expansion of large-scale detention facilities on military bases will exacerbate the well-documented abuse inherent to the detention system, and the secrecy and impunity with which ICE operates. It extends ICE detention, a part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), into other government agencies, and obscures transparency and any minimal oversight currently in place. It dangerously conflates immigrants with labels designed to dehumanize people to justify harsh treatment and further entangles a supposedly civil immigration enforcement system with militarism, harkening to some of the darkest moments in global history when people have been targeted, prosecuted and punished simply based on their place of birth, ancestry, race or religion.

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LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Guantanamo Bay



JANUARY
2025



Within days of his inauguration, President Trump announced plans to detain 30,000 immigrants at the [Guantánamo Bay Naval Base](#) and subsequently issued a [memorandum](#) directing the Secretaries of Defense and Homeland Security to expand immigration detention operations on the base. Almost immediately, ICE transferred more than 150 men who were already detained at ICE detention centers in the United States to the existing detention facilities at Guantánamo, including both the Migrant Operations Center (MOC) which has historically been used to detain migrants intercepted at sea, as well as [Camp Six](#), a prison that is part of the base's military detention infrastructure which has historically jailed people detained in wartime custody, most notoriously for the [War on Terror](#). While these detention facilities have been in use almost continuously for the last several decades, the transfer of immigrants apprehended and detained within the United States to Guantánamo Bay is an alarming development, made worse by the Trump administration's [criminalizing propaganda](#) and unfounded claims that they are sending the "worst of the worst" or gang affiliated immigrants to the facility.

Though the administration has been unable to expand anywhere close to the 30,000 initially announced, ICE continues to regularly transfer people from detention centers in the US to Guantánamo where people have limited or no access to counsel and no access to community support networks. [People have reported](#) being beaten by guards, denied showers and served almost no food. People have also testified that they experienced [strip searches](#), solitary confinement, shackling, suicide attempts, and retaliation for hunger strikes and protests to demand better conditions, including confiscation of mattresses and blankets.

Buckley Space Force Base



JANUARY
2025



Around the same time that news broke about Guantánamo, the Department of Defense (DOD) confirmed that it had come to an agreement with DHS to detain people in ICE custody at the [Buckley Space Force Base](#) in Aurora, [Colorado](#). This announcement coincided with [planned raids](#) in the Denver metro area, but ultimately [ICE](#) claimed the base would not be used for detention though it appears the base is used for staging and logistics.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Plans announced to expand across US bases

 FEBRUARY 2025



In February, reports emerged that DHS had sent a memo DOD outlining plans to expand ICE detention into a [network of military bases](#) across the continental United States, including bases in Washington, Oregon, California, Utah, Wyoming, New Mexico, Minnesota, New York, and Florida. The centerpiece of this [plan](#) is ramping up operations at Fort Bliss in Texas to serve as a model detention and deportation hub. Ultimately the administration hopes to be able to detain up to 10,000 people at Fort Bliss, with reports indicating that this could include both single adults as well as families.

Bases [under consideration include](#) Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey, Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station in New York, Homestead Air Reserve Base in Florida, Kirtland Air Force Base in Texas, Fort Bliss in Texas, Buckley Space Force Base in Colorado, Hill Air Force Base in Utah, and Travis Air Force Base in California.

Massive expansion after passage of reconciliation funding package

 JULY 2025



In July 2025, Congress passed a [historic reconciliation package](#) that included \$150 billion dollars for Trump's mass detention and deportation agenda, including \$45 billion specifically for ICE detention. This massive infusion of cash has turbocharged ICE's detention expansion efforts. Just days after the President sign the reconciliation bill into law, reports emerged about imminent plans to double official ICE detention capacity at [Guantánamo Bay](#), expand into [Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst](#) in New Jersey and [Camp Atterbury](#) in Indiana. In coordination with DOD, ICE plans to detain up to 3,000 people at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst and approximately 1,000 people at Camp Atterbury.

On July 26, 2025, the Trump administration announced a [\\$1.2 billion contract](#) to build a tent camp at Fort Bliss with the capacity to detain 5,000 people, with the DOD paying at least \$232 million of that for the construction effort. If completed, this facility would be the largest immigration detention center in the country.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Fort Bliss becomes operational with immediate capacity to detain 1,000 people

 AUGUST
2025



In August 2025 Fort Bliss officially opened with an immediate capacity to detain 1,000 people and a final capacity to detain up to 5,000 people at a given time, making it one of the largest detention center in the country. The tent camp built on the base is called "[Camp East Montana](#)." There are increasing reports of [inhumane conditions](#) at the facility, which started detaining people amid ongoing construction to expand capacity. Advocates, members of Congress and people detained at Fort Bliss have reported fowl water, rotten food, ongoing plumbing issues, filthy living conditions, lack of access to healthcare and more.

Plans to collaborate with US Navy

 OCTOBER
2025



In October 2025, reports revealed that ICE intended to [collaborate closely with the U.S. Navy](#) to speed up construction of detention facilities. The plans including using the Navy's contracting operations, Supply System Command, to more quickly and easily hire private contractors to build and maintain ICE detention centers. The \$10 billion scheme is expected to result in more tent camps to detain up to 10,000 people in several states, including Louisiana, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Utah and Kansas. More broadly, the plans are part of efforts by the current administration to find ways to avoid ICE's usual contracting requirements.



PLAYERS

While expansion of ICE detention into military bases is a concerning commingling of immigration enforcement and militarization, **DHS and DOD (including the US Navy, US Army, National Guard and more)** are not the only actors involved in these plans. For ICE to expand its reach, it relies on contracts with [private prison companies](#), who also stand to gain [exorbitant profits](#) from ICE detention metastasizing into other agencies. Currently, Guantánamo's MOC is [run primarily by a private company](#), **Akima**, which runs several other ICE detention centers where conditions have been found to be "[unsafe and unsanitary](#)," and where guards have used unnecessary use of force, including pepper spray, according to the government's own inspectors. The MOC facility has previously been run by **GEO Group**, which is a major player in the ICE detention system and **MVM**, a defense contractor.

On April 10, 2025, ICE awarded a [\\$3.8 billion contract](#) to **Deployed Resources** to build a massive tent city at Fort Bliss but canceled the contract just days later. The agency was reportedly in negotiations with mega private prison companies GEO Group and **CoreCivic** to forward its plans expand Fort Bliss as a detention and deportation hub. In July 2025, the Trump administration awarded a [\\$1.2 billion contract](#) to **Acquisition Logistics LLC**, a [new player in the immigration detention space](#), to officially begin construction of a tent camp at Fort Bliss. Subcontractors also include [Disaster Management Group](#) and others.



AKIMA

GEO
The GEO Group, Inc.®

MVM

DEPLOYED RESOURCES

CoreCivic
Better the public good.™

Acquisition Logistics
(no known logo)

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Japanese incarceration during World War II

During World War II, the US government [incarcerated roughly 125,000](#) people of Japanese descent and others at detention camps across the United States, including at facilities built up specifically for this purpose, warehouses, county fairgrounds, stables, federal prisons, immigration facilities, US Army bases and more. Among these facilities were Fort Sill and Fort Bliss, which were also used to detain unaccompanied children, and/or are currently being prepared to detain people by the Trump administration.



Krome

The Krome Service Processing Center is the [oldest modern day detention center](#) in the United States and was built on a former military base used for missile defense during the Cold War. It was set up in the 1970s to detain primarily Haitian and Cuban migrants and continues to be one of the most notorious immigration detention centers today.

Guantánamo Bay

Guantánamo Bay and other offshore military bases have played a central role in the history and expansion of immigration detention in the United States. As with the founding of Krome, Guantánamo Bay was used as a detention site starting in the 1970s to detain mostly [Haitian asylum seekers](#) interdicted at sea. The practice has continued on and off, with a massive resurgence in the 1990s under the Bush administration. Both single adults and families have been detained at Guantánamo and recent reports detail the [inhumane conditions](#) they have experienced.

Child Detention

So called ["unaccompanied" migrant](#) children are detained by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), part of the Department of Health and Human Services, in a variety of facilities. When the agency runs out of capacity in its network, usually when there is an uptick in the number unaccompanied children crossing the border because of deterrence policies that target families and adults, ORR opens large scale "influx" facilities, despite extensive evidence that such settings are entirely inappropriate and harmful for children. These [influx facilities](#) are often set up on military bases and have an extensive history of neglect and abuse including at the notorious Homestead facility during the first Trump administration, and Fort Bliss and Fort Sill during the Biden administration.

TAKE ACTION

- Sign the petition: [Tell your members of Congress to stop ICE expansion](#)
- [Tell your members of Congress to End Family Detention](#)
- [Communities Not Cages toolkit](#)
- Visit [detentionwatchnetwork.org](#) for up to date calls to action



LEARN MORE

- [Boats Borders and Bases: Race, the Cold War, and the Rise of Migration Detention in the United States by Jenna M. Loyd and Alison Mountz](#)
- [Trump's Day 1 Executive Orders: Focus on Criminalization and Detention](#)
- [Offshoring Human Rights: Detention of Refugees at Guantánamo Bay](#)
- [Guantánamo Public Memory Project](#)
- [Guantánamo's Other History](#)
- [The Toxic Truth: Organizing Against Migrant Detention, Militarism, and Environmental Racism in Homestead, Florida](#)
- [Timeline of Resistance on the War on Terror](#)
- [War on Terror Resistance Archives](#)
- [Video: HIV+ refugees at GTMO](#)
- [Legacy of the "Dark Side": The Costs of Unlawful US Detentions and Interrogations Post-9/11](#)
- [Understanding Child Detention in the US](#)
- [Resisting Authoritarianism: Our Collective Struggle Against Trump's Escalating Attacks on Immigrant Communities](#)

Reach out to program@detentionwatchnetwork.org with questions, to get involved, or to view our recent webinar on this topic.