

# *U.S. military sends troops to Mexico border amid Trump immigration crackdown*

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The deployment is part of Trump's executive action to declare a 'national emergency' at the U.S. southern border. Members of the Mexican National Guard in Tijuana patrol the border wall separating Mexico from the United States on January 22 [Gregory Bull/AP Photo]

Washington, January 23 (RHC)-- The U.S. military has started to send 1,500 active-duty troops to the country's southern border with Mexico, as part of President Donald Trump's long-promised crackdown on immigration.

The White House confirmed the troop movement on Wednesday, though the full details of the order have yet to be released.

Officials told U.S. media that the service members involved included 500 marines. They are not expected to conduct law enforcement duties as part of their role at the border. The troop deployment was widely expected, as immigration had been a hallmark of Trump's campaign for a second term.

Shortly after he was sworn in on Monday, the Republican leader signed an executive order declaring a "national emergency" at the border, repeating some of the heated rhetoric he had delivered on the campaign trail.

"America's sovereignty is under attack," the executive order said. "This invasion has caused widespread chaos and suffering in our country over the last 4 years."

The order included provisions for the deployment of armed forces "to support the activities of the Secretary of Homeland Security in obtaining complete operational control of the southern border."

It also called for additional physical barriers to be erected, as well as the use of unmanned aerial surveillance.

Trump's communications team quickly hailed Wednesday's troop deployment as a fulfillment of his election-season promise. "This is something President Trump campaigned on," said Karoline Leavitt, the White House press secretary.

"The American people have been waiting for such a time as this – for our Department of Defense to actually implement homeland security seriously." An estimated 2,500 U.S. National Guard members and reserve troops are already at the border.

In addition, U.S. Customs and Border Protection employs more than 45,000 people. As of fiscal year 2023, 19,104 of those employees served as border patrol agents to secure the areas between official ports of entry.

Immigration advocates, however, fear an increased military presence at the border could discourage legitimate asylum claims or lead to the use of military tactics on civilians.

But Trump has argued that a military response is needed given the rates of irregular entry into the United States. He has also regularly conflated immigration with increased crime, something not borne out by statistics. Studies have repeatedly shown that undocumented people in the U.S. commit crimes at a much lower rate than US-born citizens, including violent crimes.

Still, Trump has used examples like that of Laken Riley, a 22-year-old nursing student, to advance his proposals. In February 2024, Riley was killed while jogging at the University of Georgia, and an undocumented Venezuelan man was ultimately found guilty of her murder.

On Wednesday, the House of Representatives passed the Laken Riley Act, named in her honor. It requires Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to detain any undocumented person arrested or charged with a crime like theft or robbery. Having already passed the Senate, the bill now proceeds to Trump's desk, where he is expected to sign it. It will be the first major legislation of his administration.

But human rights advocates warn the bill could violate defendants' due process, as those subject to the law need only be accused, not convicted, of a crime.

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