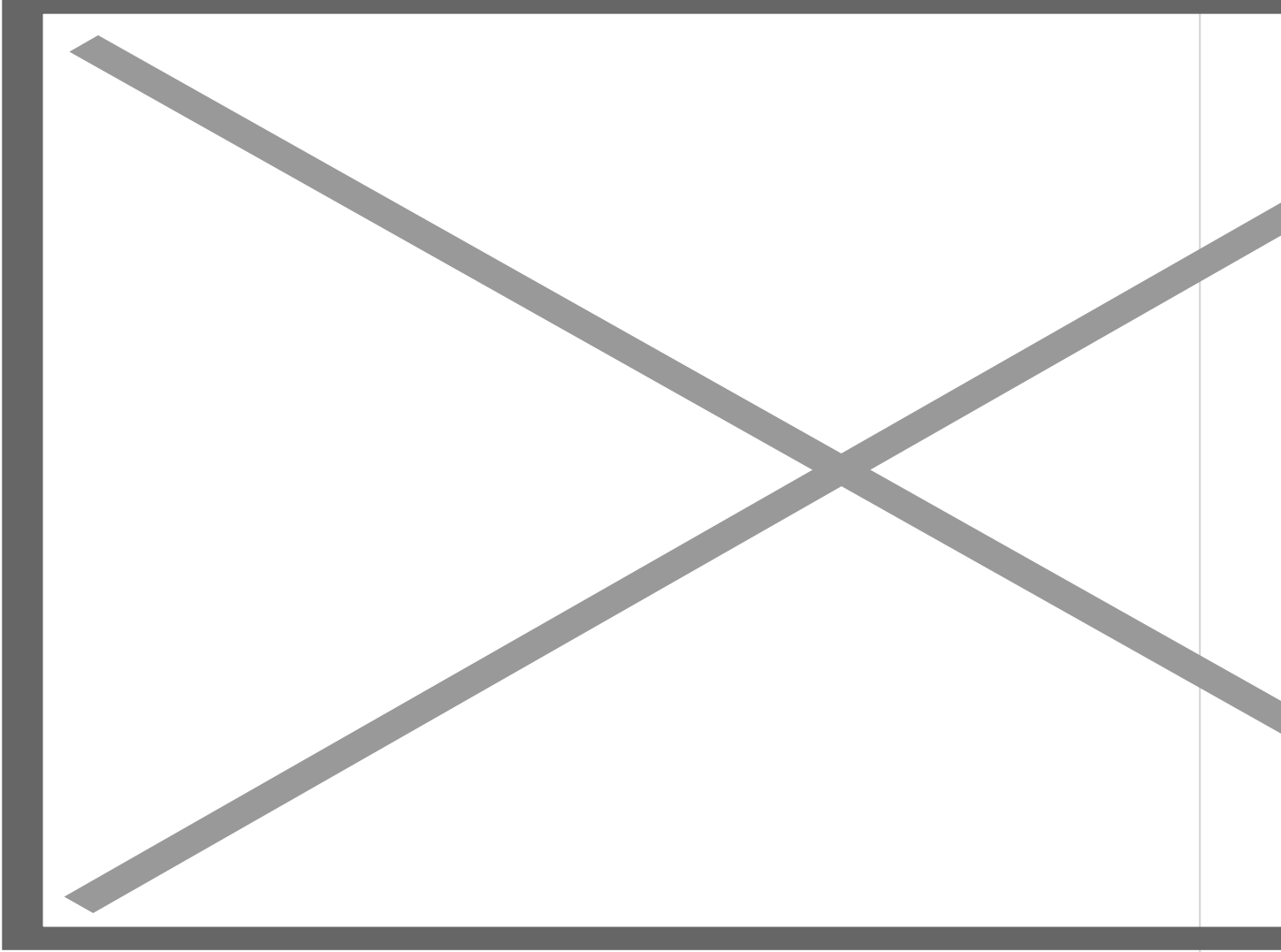


U.S. introduces land border checkpoints, biometric surveillance in new crackdown on pro-Palestine students

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A sign for the U.S.-Canada border is pictured at the Peace Arch border crossing in Blaine, Washington (Photo by AFP)

Washington, May 26 (RHC)-- The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump has introduced a new set of measures, including land border checkpoints and biometric surveillance, to expand its crackdown on students protesting Israel's genocide against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.

American media reports said the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) designed plans for new checkpoints near land exits from the United States and implemented programs that used photography and facial recognition technology to identify people attempting to leave the country.

Photographs taken at the border crossings would be matched to commuters' travel documents such as passports, green cards and visas to verify identity for outbound lanes, particularly from the United States to Canada and Mexico.

Jessica Turner, a spokesperson for the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), said the goal of the outbound system would be to "biometrically confirm departure from the United States."

The new measures were adopted as the U.S.-Canada land border has been the point of exit for a large number of foreign students who have been forced to have their immigration status revoked due to their participation in pro-Palestinian protests on campus.

American officials have stated that hundreds of students have already had their legal status in the country revoked for their involvement in demonstrations, writing articles, or posting on social media in protest against the Israeli war on Gaza.

Legal experts said that voluntarily exiting the US by land to Canada has been a common means of safely self-deporting for affected students, who may be subject to other legal measures or targeted for detention by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

"In their heads, many students are thinking that they can at least drive out of the country if needed -- especially those based at schools in New York, Boston, Michigan, or other northeastern states," an unnamed lawyer told investigative news outlet Drop Site.

"If the government is going to be checking people as they are leaving, using facial recognition, ID technology to track that is something that would alarm many people."

Since the DHS has access to flight logs, leaving the country through a land border typically entails less surveillance and allows people to exit without foreknowledge of the U.S. government. The checkpoints are currently established near the border between Washington state and British Columbia.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced in March that the Trump administration was implementing an AI-assisted "catch and revoke" program to comb through the social media accounts of foreign students deemed to be supportive of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas and revoke their immigration status.

Trump signed an executive order in January to combat what was claimed to be anti-Semitism and pledged to deport non-citizen college students and others who took part in pro-Palestinian protests that have been ongoing for months amid Israel's barbaric aggression on the besieged Gaza Strip after Hamas's October 2023 retaliatory attack on the occupied territories.

More than 1,000 international students across the U.S. have had their visas or legal status revoked since late March, according to an Associated Press review of university statements and correspondence with school officials.

[SOURCE: AFP and NEWS AGENCIES]

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