# **Trump administration seeks to prevent "panic" over new immigration rules**

By David Nakamura, Washington Post

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The Trump administration sought to allay fears in immigrant communities Tuesday as it publicly released wide-ranging new guidelines that allow federal authorities to take stronger enforcement actions against illegal immigrants, saying the directives are not intended to produce mass deportations.

Federal officials cautioned that many of the changes detailed in a pair of memos signed by Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly will take time to implement and that other policies that grant agents and officers greater powers will be used with care and discretion.

Kelly's memos, first disclosed in media reports over the weekend, establish new policies at the Department of Homeland Security to hire thousands of additional enforcement agents, expand the pool of immigrants who are prioritized for removal, speed up deportation hearings and enlist local law enforcement to help make arrests.

"We do not need a sense of panic in the communities," a DHS official said in a conference call with reporters to formally release the memos to the public.

"We do not have the personnel, time or resources to go into communities and round up people and do all kinds of mass throwing folks on buses. That's entirely a figment of folks' imagination," said the official, who was joined on the call by two others, all of whom spoke on condition of anonymity to answer questions. "This is not intended to produce mass roundups, mass deportations."

Immigrant rights groups have expressed concern that the new policies will lead to widespread enforcement raids and abuses by federal authorities as they seek to ramp up deportations of the nation's 11 million undocumented immigrants. The memos are intended as an implementation blueprint for DHS to follow through on three executive orders Trump signed in January to pursue construction of a border wall, beef up patrols along the southern border with Mexico and escalate enforcement inside the country.

The White House has blessed the memos after lawyers reviewed the documents over the weekend.

The new policies represent a sharp break from the final years of the Obama administration and could reverse a reduction in the number of deportations in President Barack Obama's last years in office.

After deportations reached a record high of 434,000 in 2013, pressure from immigration advocates prompted the Obama administration to implement new guidelines that focused enforcement on hardened criminals. The number of people deported in 2015 was just over 333,000, the lowest number since 2007.

Kelly's new DHS policies considerably broaden the pool of those who are prioritized for deportations, including undocumented immigrants who have been charged with crimes but not convicted, those who commit acts that constitute a "chargeable criminal offense," and those who an immigration officer concludes pose "a risk to public safety or national security."

The Trump administration "is using the specter of crime to create fear . . . in the American community about immigrants in order to create an opening to advance the indiscriminate persecution of immigrants," said Clarissa Martínez-de-Castro, deputy vice president at the National Council of La Raza. "This administration is saying, 'Now, everybody is going to be a priority,' and the devil may care."

DHS officials emphasized that the guidelines in Kelly's memos are focused on carrying out Trump's vision and that they hew closely to the language of the executive orders. And they said the secretary has written the memos to abide by federal immigration laws established by Congress.

"We are not creating anything out of whole cloth," the DHS official said.

Yet Kelly's memos have alarmed immigrant rights groups because they supersede most of those issued by previous administrations, including policies from the Obama administration aimed at focusing deportations exclusively on hardened criminals and those with terrorist ties.

Kelly's directives seek to expand partnerships with local law enforcement agencies to apprehend undocumented immigrants, hire 10,000 new Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers and 5,000 new Border Patrol agents, and broaden expedited deportations, currently limited to those in the country two weeks or less, to those who have been in the country for up to two years.

The provisions mandate that the government detain immigrants until they are granted a hearing before an immigration judge, ending the Obama administration's policy of releasing some to live with relatives until their hearings. Backlogs at immigration courts have delayed hearings for more than a year.

The provisions also allow federal authorities to prosecute the parents of unaccompanied minors who enter the country illegally if they are found to have paid smugglers.

The DHS officials said the Trump administration is seeking to maximize federal immigration policies that have been on the books for years but were not used by the Obama administration. Some of the changes, they said, will take time to implement because of the costs and because some of the policies must be announced through the federal registry.

"This will not happen tomorrow," the DHS official said.

"The big picture here is that we're executing what the president directed, which is consistent with what Congress put into law" the official added. "We will do so professionally. We will treat everyone humanely and with dignity, but we're going to execute the laws of the United States."

The memos do not overturn one important directive from the Obama administration: a program called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals that has provided work permits to more than 750,000 immigrants who came to the country illegally as children.

Trump had promised during his campaign to "immediately terminate" the program, calling it an unconstitutional "executive amnesty," but he has wavered since then. Last week, he said he would "show great heart" in determining the fate of that program.

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**Possible Response Questions**:

* Based on what you know about the US Constitution, do you think these new immigration laws are constitutional? Consider due process and immigrants awaiting approval of their immigration status.
* Pick a passage and respond to it.