

## Troops and Federal Agents Sweep LA's MacArthur Park, Stirring Fear and Outrage

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A sudden show of military and federal force at Los Angeles's MacArthur Park has left residents, city officials, and immigrant advocates alarmed and searching for answers. On Monday morning, about 90 California National Guard troops and dozens of federal immigration officers arrived in the neighborhood known as the "Ellis Island of the West Coast," bringing tactical vehicles, Humvees, and armed personnel into a park usually filled with families and street vendors.

Word of a possible raid had already spread, so the park was nearly empty when the troops arrived. Mayor Karen Bass described pulling over on her way to City Hall to see officers on horseback and soldiers in combat gear near a playground where children were quickly taken inside. The Department of Homeland Security declined to say whether any arrests were made, and Associated Press journalists at the scene did not witness any detentions.

Federal officials insisted the soldiers were only providing security for immigration officers and denied it was a military operation. Still, the size and appearance of the deployment raised serious concerns. Defense officials, speaking anonymously, admitted that it could look like a military action to the public.

MacArthur Park has long been a symbol of Los Angeles' immigrant communities and their resilience. It was renamed in 1942 after Army General Douglas MacArthur and has become a gathering place for generations of people from Mexico, Central America, and beyond. Over the years, it has hosted immigrant rights rallies, including a 2007 demonstration where police fired rubber bullets at protesters.

Governor Gavin Newsom and Mayor Bass condemned the operation, calling it an intimidation tactic meant to frighten immigrants. Newsom has already sued the federal government over the broader deployment of troops to California, arguing it violates state rights and endangers communities.

Residents who witnessed the scene described feeling fear and disbelief. One woman said seeing helicopters overhead and armed troops on city streets was “gut-wrenching.” Legal advocates noted that the raid reflects a broader strategy to discourage immigrants from appearing in public spaces out of fear.

As legal challenges continue, the operation has sparked debate about the use of military resources for immigration enforcement and what it means for a city built on the hopes and hard work of newcomers.

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