

White House Clarifies National Guard Role in Immigration and Crime Crackdowns

August 23, 2025

— Categories: Defence & Security



Download IPFS

The White House confirmed Friday that the deployment of National Guard troops across 19 states is not tied to President Donald Trump's recent initiative to address violent crime in Washington, D.C., but rather to assist with immigration enforcement support tasks.

Up to 1,700 National Guard members will mobilize in the coming weeks under Title 32 Section 502F authority, allowing them to assist the Department of Homeland Security

(DHS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) with administrative and logistical duties. Their work will include processing illegal immigrants at ICE facilities, such as data collection, fingerprinting, DNA swabbing, and photographing detainees.

“This isn’t new, nor is it tied to the President’s efforts to address violent crime in D.C.,” a White House official told Fox News. The Pentagon initially announced the deployment on July 25, describing it as an expansion of existing support operations for ICE.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth approved the request from DHS in July, authorizing hundreds of additional troops and shifting prior authorizations from Title 10 to Title 32 status. That change allows Guard members to remain under state-level authority while still carrying out federally funded missions.

A U.S. defense official explained the move by saying ICE’s needs were “more administrative in nature,” ensuring agents can focus on enforcement operations instead of paperwork.

The White House stressed that these deployments are separate from the President’s federal crime reduction push in Washington, D.C. Under the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, U.S. armed forces are barred from engaging in civilian law enforcement. However, the National Guard under Title 32 is not restricted by that law when operating in a support role.

In addition to the immigration-related mobilization, 2,279 National Guard members are already active in Washington, D.C., and surrounding states under direct presidential authority. Their mission is to reinforce law enforcement efforts against violent crime and to provide visible security across the capital.

Guard members have been deployed to monuments, Metro stations, traffic checkpoints, and patrols across all eight wards of the city. The effort, according to federal officials, has already led to 465 arrests.

President Trump praised the results during a visit to a D.C. patrol center, telling federal agents and Guard members, “We’re going to make it safe, and we’re going to then go on to other places.” He later named Chicago and New York as potential next targets for expanded crime reduction efforts.

The President has also tied the D.C. security mission to broader preparations for the nation’s 250th Independence Day celebration next year, suggesting the Guard may remain in the city for an extended period.

Despite the overlap in timing, officials emphasized that the two missions are distinct. “The National Guard mobilizing to assist ICE processing with clerical and logistical tasks in several states is not the same as the President’s actions to stop crime in D.C.,” a White House spokesperson reiterated.

The clarification comes as the administration balances separate initiatives: immigration enforcement across multiple states and a crime crackdown in the nation’s capital. Both rely on the National Guard, but under different authorities and for separate purposes.