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Over 1,000 Federal Troops Withdraw From Los Angeles After Protests

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— Categories: Defence & Security

The Pentagon began withdrawing federal troops from Los Angeles on July 15, 2025, following weeks of public outcry and legal challenges over their deployment during immigration-related protests. The decision marks a significant shift in federal response after criticism from local and state leaders.

Roughly 2,000 California National Guard personnel were withdrawn, reducing the original force of 4,000 by half. The reduction also includes the planned departure of 700 U.S. Marines, who had been stationed in the city since early June to help secure federal property during demonstrations following Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth cited improving conditions as the reason for the drawdown. Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell states that federal forces “sent a clear message” against lawlessness and that their presence is no longer required at the same level. Local officials, including Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass and California Governor Gavin Newsom, welcome the move and credit sustained public protests and legal pressure for restoring civil control.

Governor Newsom previously filed a federal lawsuit, Newsom v. Trump, challenging the deployment under the Posse Comitatus Act, which restricts federal military involvement in domestic law enforcement. While a lower court initially ruled in favor of Newsom, an appellate court temporarily upheld the legality of the deployment, leaving final resolution pending.

Although approximately 2,000 National Guard troops and 700 Marines remain, their role has been narrowed. Their current responsibilities include guarding federal buildings and immigration facilities; while they may detain individuals posing threats, they are not authorized to make arrests.

Newsom voices concern over the impact on California’s resources, noting that many Guard members had been pulled away from essential

state duties, including wildfire response, education, emergency services, and drug enforcement programs. He warns that the prolonged federal presence weakens the state's ability to meet its internal obligations.

The departure of Marines alongside National Guard reductions marks a turning point in the broader debate over the federal government's role in domestic security. While defense officials praise the troops for their conduct, critics argue their deployment was unnecessary in a situation that remained largely peaceful.

As the legal case progresses and more troops prepare to leave, state leaders continue to push for full control over the National Guard and emphasize the importance of respecting state authority during civil unrest.