



Trump Mobilizes National Guard in Memphis, Declares Crime “Dire”

President Donald Trump continues to expand the use of military resources for domestic law enforcement. On Monday, he signed a presidential memorandum titled “[Restoring Law and Order in Memphis](#).” The order establishes a sweeping federal task force and directs the mobilization of the National Guard in Tennessee.

The Memorandum

The president declared,

The city of Memphis, Tennessee, is suffering from tremendous levels of violent crime that have overwhelmed its local government’s ability to respond effectively.



AP Images

Donald Trump holding signed memorandum, along with AG Pam Bondi, Governor Bill Lee, and Senators Marsha Blackburn and Bill Hagerty

Trump called the situation “dire in one of our Nation’s most historic cities.” He said Memphis should be “safe and secure for all of its citizens and Americans who visit its historic landmarks.”

The order mandates an immediate infusion of federal manpower. The new Memphis Safe Task Force will bring together the Department of War (DOW), Justice Department (DOJ), Treasury, Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and more than a dozen other federal offices.

According to the order, the objective is to

end street and violent crime in Memphis to the greatest possible extent through the promotion and facilitation of hypervigilant policing, aggressive prosecution, complex investigations, financial enforcement, and large-scale saturation of besieged neighborhoods with law enforcement personnel.

The attorney general will appoint a chair for the Task Force, who will coordinate with state and local officials and report directly to the White House.

Mobilization Confirmed

Trump’s directive goes further than creating a task force:

The Secretary of War shall request that the Governor of Tennessee, under section 502 of title 32, United States Code, make available National Guard units of Tennessee to support public safety and law enforcement operations in Memphis, in such numbers and for such



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duration as the Governor may deem necessary and appropriate to assist with the activities of the Task Force.

Republican Governor Bill Lee is almost certain to accept the request. He [confirmed](#) Friday that he was in “constant communication” with the Trump administration. Lee said in a statement to the press,

The next phase will include a comprehensive mission with the Tennessee National Guard, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Tennessee Highway Patrol, Memphis Police Department, and other law enforcement agencies, and we are working closely with the Trump Administration to determine the most effective role for each of these agencies to best serve Memphians.

The local press pointed out that just two weeks ago, the governor boasted a 15-percent drop in Memphis crime over the past year and said he had no intention of sending in the Tennessee National Guard. A week later, however, he shifted his stance, acknowledging that a deployment could not be ruled out.

Crime in Memphis

The order comes at a striking moment. The Memphis Police Department (MPD) [reported](#) last week that overall crime has dropped to a 25-year low, with robbery, burglary, and larceny also at quarter-century lows. Murder is at a six-year low, aggravated assault at a five-year low, and sexual assault at a 20-year low.

Chief CJ Davis credited the decline to focused strategies, saying,

These historic reductions reflect the dedication and resilience of the men and women of the Memphis Police Department, as well as the strong partnership with our community.

MPD pointed to initiatives targeting fugitives, violent repeat offenders, and auto theft, along with expanded cooperation with federal partners. Davis said the aim is to sustain momentum through “precision policing and continued community engagement.”

Local Mayors React

Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris, a Democrat, [confirmed](#) on WREG that National Guard deployment has been discussed but urged Governor Lee to “please reconsider.”

The report quotes Harris as backing federal and state assistance, including the additional state troopers already stationed in Memphis.

But, he continued, “to have individuals with military fatigues, semi-automatic weapons and armored vehicles patrolling our streets is way too far, anti-democratic and anti-American.”

Memphis Mayor Paul Young, also a Democrat, signaled similar unease. He said he only received firm confirmation when Trump announced the plan on Fox News Friday. [Speaking](#) on CNN on Saturday, Young admitted that until then he had “no hard confirmation.” Earlier talks had centered on possible support from the FBI, the DEA, and the ATF.



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He rejected Trump's claim that he was "happy" about the deployment, but admitted that he had "no choice" but to accept such assistance pushed by the governor and the president. Young also said that since the Guard is "indeed coming," that he, as a mayor, wanted to "drive some of the decisions around, [and] how they engage in our community."

Asked about the roles for the Guard he sees fit, the mayor cited traffic management at big events, camera monitoring, and "beautification" of the neighborhoods. That, noted Young, would be "beneficial" to the city.

Tactical Shift After Los Angeles

Trump's move in Memphis reflects a change in strategy forced by the courts. In Los Angeles, a [federal judge ruled](#) that his unilateral deployment of the National Guard during the summer immigration protests violated the Posse Comitatus Act. The law bars the use of military forces in domestic law enforcement without proper authorization.

Trump's response has not been retreat but recalibration. By working through governors under [Title 32](#) authority, he sidesteps legal barriers while still achieving the same effect: soldiers in American cities, performing the work of police.

Bipartisan Embrace of the Boot

Local officials facing Trump's threats of direct intervention posture as defenders of democracy. Democrats — from Governor Gavin Newsom in California to Governor J.B. Pritzker in Illinois to the mayors in Tennessee — put on a show of various degrees of worry and outrage, warning of anti-democratic overreach and the specter of military occupation. That performance may fool a few who don't recognize them as the same soft-Marxist managers whose policies fuel the very decay that now drives crime. And if there is anything Marxists reliably generate and seek beyond crime and poverty, it is ever-tighter control over citizens.

The record suggests that in practice, like authoritarians everywhere, they quietly welcome federal muscle when it shores up their authority, calculating how best to harness the Guard and federal resources for their own ends. Their objections are theater, meant to appease their base while allowing militarization to advance. Republicans, by contrast, dispense with the theater altogether and embrace the show of force as an appropriate policy.

Together, both parties converge on the same instinct: to normalize soldiers on American streets and condition citizens to accept it as "public safety." The rhetoric may differ, but the result is the same — a creeping police state wrapped in the language of law and order.

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