

# VOA NEWS

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I'm VOA's Joe Ramsey with this worldwide news update.

The U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday passed a bill to require the detainment of unauthorized migrants accused of theft and violent crimes. It marks the first legislation that President Donald Trump can sign as Congress, with some bipartisan support, swiftly moved in line with his plans to crack down on illegal immigration.

The Laken Riley Act is named after a nursing student who was murdered last year by a Venezuelan man.

The bill requires a massive ramp-up in U.S. immigration and customs enforcement's capabilities but does not include any new funding.

Meanwhile, the new president has launched a slew of executive orders intended to seal off the border with Mexico to immigration and ultimately deport millions of migrants without permanent legal status in the U.S.

Trump has also canceled refugee resettlement, and his administration has signaled intentions to prosecute local law enforcement officials who do not enforce his new immigration policies.

The Pentagon said Wednesday it has begun deploying U.S. active duty troops to help secure the southern border. AP correspondent Sagar Meghani reports.

There are no active duty forces working along the border right now. Officials say up to 1,500 may be sent there to join the roughly 2,500 National Guard and Reserve forces who are there. They're expected to support Border Patrol agents with things like logistics, transportation, and barrier construction, similar to what they've done in the past under both the Trump and Biden administrations.

It's unclear if they'll end up doing law enforcement, which would put U.S. forces in a dramatic new role unseen in recent history.

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

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An extremist group leader who orchestrated part of the assault on the U.S. Capitol four years ago defended his role in the attack as he returned to the scene of the crime on Wednesday. AP correspondent Haya Panjwani reports.

Oath Keepers' founder Stuart Rhodes, the far-right extremist group leader convicted of seditious conspiracy in the January 6th, 2021 attack, has visited Capitol Hill after President Trump commuted his 18-year prison sentence.

Rhodes was convicted in one of the most serious cases brought by the Justice Department over the riot that left more than a hundred police officers injured. Rhodes's appearance came the day after he was released from prison as a result of Trump's order of clemency benefiting the more than 1,500 people charged with federal crimes in the January 6 attack.

Meanwhile, the Proud Boys' former top leader, Enrique Tarrio, and three of his lieutenants were also convicted of seditious conspiracy in the attack. Tarrio was serving a 22-year prison sentence, the longest of any Capitol riot case, before Trump pardoned him.

He came home to cheers when he landed at a Miami airport.

Haya Panjwani, Washington.

Experts say the extraordinary reversal for rioters who committed both violent and nonviolent crimes four years ago will only embolden extremist groups who've openly called for political violence. Reuters correspondent Freddie Joyner reports.

House Speaker Mike Johnson on Wednesday defended President Donald Trump's sweeping pardon of January 6 rioters, referring to the 2021 attack as a, quote, "peaceful protest." This, despite 140 police officers suffering injuries on January 6th and one who died the next day after fighting the rioters.

House Democratic Caucus Chair Pete Aguilar said the pardons posed a danger to public safety.

"These violent offenders are roaming the streets because Donald Trump took these actions."

Chad Alan Goldberg, professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin: "What we see, if anything, is a deepening of that partisan divide around January 6, a deepening division about what it means and how we should understand it. And I think that is going to grow."

Among the people he pardoned were more than 300 who pleaded guilty to either assaulting or obstructing law enforcement, including 69 who admitted to assaulting police with a dangerous or deadly weapon.

Some political extremism experts said the pardons would incentivize pro-Trump vigilantes to commit violence under the belief they'll receive legal immunity if they act in the interests of Trump.

Reuters correspondent Freddie Joyner.

That wraps up this update, but the world and news never stop. For additional updates, visit our website, [voanews.com](http://voanews.com). I'm Joe Ramsey, VOA News.