



The first group of migrants has been sent to Guantánamo, but legal challenges loom

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Sailors and Coast Guardsmen erect tents for a migrant holding facility in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. President Trump has directed the Pentagon and the Department of Homeland Security to prepare for 30,000 detained migrants.

Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Raphael Dome/U.S. Navy

This is a developing story

The Trump administration said Tuesday it has begun flying migrants from the U.S. to a deportation holding facility in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, even though some immigration lawyers question the legality of that move.

The White House press secretary, Karoline Leavitt, said the flights contain migrants who are being deported because "President Trump is not messing around and he is no longer going to allow America to be a dumping ground for illegal criminals from nations all over this world."

The Trump administration said last week it wants to [create space at Guantánamo](#) for 30,000 migrants, although its plan will face numerous [financial, political and logistical hurdles](#). Some immigration experts say sending the migrants to Guantánamo is illegal, but the White House is moving forward despite potential

litigation to come.

Several hundred U.S. military service members have arrived at Guantánamo in recent days in preparation for the arrival of deported migrants, according to the Defense Department. It said the number of service members deployed there will "continue to fluctuate" based on guidance from the Department of Homeland Security, which will oversee the holding facility.

For decades, the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo has had a detention facility used to house migrants intercepted at sea, typically Haitians, Cubans and Dominicans. However, it has been mostly empty for years, and the Trump administration intends to expand it to make room for deported migrants.

"We've always had a presence of illegal immigrants there that have been detained. We're just building out some capacity," said Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem.

"Due process will be followed," she added, "and having facilities at Guantánamo Bay will be an asset to us in the fact that we'll have the capacity to continue to do there what we've always done."



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