

Trump has the green light for concentration camps

Published: February 8, 2026, 8:17 am

In her overnight '[Letter from an American](#)', Heather Cox Richardson noted:

Yesterday two right-wing circuit judges signed off on the Trump administration's new mass detention policy: the extraordinary assertion that vast numbers of noncitizens throughout the country can be arrested and held in detention centers without the right to release until they are deported.

She added:

[I]n more than 700 cases, at least 225 judges appointed by all modern presidents—including 23 appointed by Trump—have ruled that the new policy likely violates both the law and the right to due process.

But the administration handpicked a right-wing circuit to rule on the policy, and last night ... Judge Edith Jones and Judge Kyle Duncan of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit okayed the Trump administration's new rule denying detained immigrants the right to release on bond. That includes ... “millions of non-citizens who have been here for generations; who have never committed a crime; and who pose neither a risk of flight nor any threat to public safety.”

She noted:

It is likely the plaintiffs will appeal the decision.

I obviously hope that they succeed, but the direction of travel here is clear. Already, the number of people being detained in the USA for deportation has almost doubled, and the number is bound to rise considerably, as will the cost to the US federal government of doing this. Ethnic cleansing does not come cheap.

Heather Cox Richardson went on to discuss the cost of these "federal facilities" and the considerable disquiet that they are causing in the communities that host them. What she did not describe them as is what I think they are, which is concentration camps.

As far as I can see, this term is entirely appropriate. What this decision means is that the Trump administration can arrest anyone it wishes, without charge, and without a right of appeal, with the sentence that they may deliver being deportation from the USA. In the meantime, these people will be held in mass detention facilities.

I do, of course, recognise that at present the worst characteristics of concentration camps of the type that we most commonly associate the term with are not to be found in these detention facilities, at least as yet. However, the fundamental characteristic of mass detention without trial, right of appeal, or facility to object to the sentence, is common to other facilities to which this term has been applied, including those operated by British authorities in Africa during the course of the last century.

So, why suggest the use of the term now? There are three good reasons.

Firstly, I think it is fair to do so.

Secondly, it makes clear what the issue around this activity is.

Thirdly, it concentrates the mind on the repugnance of the assumption of power by a state over people against whom it is prejudiced, which hatred is inherent in the policies that Trump and his lackeys are promoting.

This is a moment for plain speaking. We should describe what we see as we see it. How else can our revulsion be made clear?