

Trump calls Somali immigrants ‘garbage’ as US reportedly targets Minnesota community

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Donald Trump at the White House on Tuesday in Washington DC. Photograph: Julia Demaree Nikhinson/AP

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US president's xenophobic rant comes amid reports of ramped-up deportation efforts in Ilhan Omar's district

[Donald Trump](#) on Tuesday called Somali immigrants “garbage” and said they should be sent back home in a rant that came as the administration is reportedly increasing immigration enforcement against undocumented Somalis in Minnesota.

In a xenophobic rant during a cabinet meeting, Trump went off on Somalis and Ilhan Omar, the congressional representative who is from [Somalia](#) and is a US citizen. He said Somalia “stinks” and is “no good for a reason”.

“They contribute nothing. I don’t want them in our country, I’ll be honest with you,” he said. He called Omar “garbage” and said “we’re going to go the wrong way if we keep taking in garbage into our country”.

“These are people who do nothing but complain,” he said. “They complain, and from where they came from, they got nothing … When they come from hell and they complain and do nothing but bitch, we don’t want them in our country. Let them go back to where they came from and fix it.”

The New York Times [reported](#) on Tuesday that the Minneapolis-St Paul metro area, where most Somalis reside, would see stepped-up deportation efforts this week, focusing primarily on Somalis who have final deportation orders. It would use “strike teams” of ICE agents and other federal officers, bringing in about 100 agents from across the country, the Times reported. Other media outlets, including the Associated Press, have confirmed the reporting.

The move comes after the right has seized on several fraud cases, spanning multiple years, that involve dozens of Somali residents who prosecutors allege lied to the state to receive reimbursements for meal disbursements, medical care, housing and autism services. The Trump administration [previously](#) threatened to revoke temporary protected status for Somalis in Minnesota, citing the state as a “hub of fraudulent money laundering activity”.

Scott Bessent, the treasury secretary, also announced on Monday that his agency would be investigating whether taxpayer dollars from Minnesotans had “been diverted to the terrorist organization Al-Shabaab”, sharing a recent story from a rightwing outlet that made such claims.

Jacob Frey, the mayor of Minneapolis, and other city leaders held a press conference on Tuesday to respond to the “credible reports” of increased enforcement. Frey said the city stands with the Somali community. Minneapolis police do not assist with immigration enforcement, and the police chief said the department does not receive advanced notice of any operations.

“To our Somali community, we love you and we stand with you,” Frey said. “That commitment is rock solid.”

Minneapolis is home to the country’s largest Somali population, with about 80,000 living in the state. Most are US citizens or legal residents.

“Targeting Somali people means that due process will be violated, mistakes will be made, and let’s be clear, it means that American citizens will be detained for no other reason than they look Somali,” Frey said.