

Citing War in Israel, Florida Governor DeSantis Suspends Habeas Corpus, Begins Mass Arrests

Andrew Anglin · November 6, 2023



Citing the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas, Governor Ron DeSantis has suspended habeas corpus in Florida and begun the mass arrest of federal and state officials accused of being sympathetic to Hamas.

The move drew praise from fellow Republicans, while being condemned by several Democrats, including those who were arrested.

“The State of Florida will not tolerate sedition, especially in a time of war,” DeSantis declared in a televised speech early Monday, where he appeared in front of an Israeli flag and flanked by armed members of the Florida National Guard and the Israeli Defense Forces. During the impassioned speech, DeSantis was joined by Shmuley Schwartz, the head of Florida’s Supreme Council of Rabbis, and Chaim Golan, a commander in the Israeli Defense Forces. DeSantis has appointed Golan as his chief military advisor.

The speech followed a series of events in Florida that culminated just after midnight on Monday with the IDF carrying out strikes against a Florida university.

Last week, DeSantis ordered the mass arrest of students and professors at the University of South Florida he accused of “working with Hamas to undermine the security of Israel,” claiming the pro-Palestine protests had violated Florida law against the criticism of Israel.

After DeSantis ordered that over 3,000 people be held without bail on various charges including sedition and hate speech, the Saint Petersburg jail system was overwhelmed and Golan ordered the protesters be held in a makeshift internment camp established in the parking lot of a shuttered Walmart near the St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport.

Following reports by the Associated Press on Friday that Golan had begun using IDF aircraft to transfer leaders of the protests to Israel to face a military tribunal, a federal judge ordered that the flights be stopped and that all interned at the Walmart camp be released.

Less than an hour after the order was released, Commander Golan issued a statement declaring U.S. District Judge John McDougal a “ Hamas judge.” Hours later, DeSantis appeared at a press conference and explained that the federal judge had been arrested without incident at his home in Tallahassee in a joint operation by the Florida National Guard and the Israeli Defense Forces.

Responding to reports that Judge McDougal had been transferred to Israel, DeSantis told reporters that “the judge’s whereabouts are a matter of national security,” before adding: “I doubt you’re going to be seeing him any time soon.” DeSantis further claimed that “ Hamas paraphernalia” had been discovered at the judge’s home, though he refused to offer further details.

Reports from Israel later claimed that the federal judge had been interned at Hatzetim Airbase in the Negev Desert in southern Israel. Reports added that the judge was “marched off the plane in shackles, fully nude save for the black canvas bag covering his head,” and that the details of his trial and sentencing by a military tribunal would remain secret.

Judge McDougal’s wife Sarah and his two daughters were later arrested at their Tallahassee home, while his 92-year-old mother, Jane, was taken by IDF soldiers from a city nursing home. Their whereabouts remain unknown.

On Saturday, further pro-Palestine demonstrations across the state led to mass arrests by Florida National Guard and Israeli Special Forces. Following what he declared a “terrorist uprising,” Commander Golan ordered 57 other shuttered big-box stores across the state to be turned into detention facilities under his direct command. Golan further stated that transfers of protesters to Israel would continue “as long as there remained a presence of Hamas in the state of Florida.”

Sunday morning, DeSantis’ office declared a suspension of habeas corpus, while seven Florida state senators and nearly half of the Florida general assembly were arrested. No specific charges were offered, but speaking to the press, Golan claimed that all of the detained state officials were “directly linked to Hamas,” citing intelligence from the Mossad.

Late Sunday night, Golan appeared at an emergency press briefing where the governor was not present, stating that the IDF fighter jets taking off from St. Pete-Clearwater International had begun carrying out “targeted strikes” against “ Hamas forces” on the University of South Florida campus. While Golan claimed that Mossad intelligence had confirmed the presence of a Hamas base in one of the university’s dorm buildings, university officials later stated that along with the dorm building, the school’s hospital and care center for the mentally infirm were also “leveled” by the IDF strikes.

Officials at the university said that students and staff were still sorting through the rubble, but that over 400 people have been confirmed dead. Golan issued a threat of further bombings against any “municipal or state authorities found engaging in rescue operations” at the school, so students and staff are being forced to dig up the rubble themselves.

Students had mixed opinions on the strikes. One dental student, Ari Shelman, said that although some of his classmates died in the bombing, he understands that such actions are necessary to ensure the security of Israel.

Meanwhile, in Washington, Ted Cruz issued a statement praising DeSantis’ “bold and brave moves against the Hamas infiltration of America.”

President Joe Biden refused to comment on recent events in Florida. When asked about DeSantis’ seizing of various wartime powers, Biden simply said that he is “urging that man to please, please respect the dignity of LGBTQ+ kids, and make sure people have access to the Covid vaccine.”

Congressman Ilhan Omar released a statement accusing DeSantis of being a “Jewish shill.” Her office later issued a retraction, claiming that the statement had been issued in error by a “rogue aide.”

Attorney General Merrick Garland’s office issued a statement saying that the Justice Department will not be interfering with IDF operations in Florida, stating that DeSantis was “acting within his rights as governor to keep the people of Florida safe in wartime.”

Speaking from his office in Jerusalem on Monday morning, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said: “I have not heard about these events you mention in Florida, so I will have to get back to you on the specifics, but I want to stress that America’s support for Israel’s war against Hamas is unconditional.”

Observers noted that Blinken appeared to be indicating that IDF military action in America, including IDF strikes on American soil, could not violate conditions of support for Israel’s international military operations, because no such conditions exist.

Editor’s Note: *This is fake news. I know it’s funnier not to add this note, because boomers will repost this to their blogs and then it will go viral on Facebook and Snopes will have to write about it. However, when it comes to some of these sensitive satire pieces, it’s better just to leave the note here. Sorry. If anyone wants to repost this without the note, that’s none of my business. I don’t claim any copyright on the material on this website.*