
Trump Signs Executive Orders Giving More Power to Police

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Just days earlier, Trump said the crime rate in the U.S. was at its highest in 47 years, a claim contradicted by the FBI.

U.S. President Donald Trump signed three executive orders Thursday that he claims will result in a crackdown on the “threat of rising crime” in the United States and give more power to federal and local police, but legal experts argue that his claims about the crime rate contradict reality.

Shortly after the swearing-in ceremony for the now Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who has been accused of racism in the past, Trump signed the orders by saying they were “designed to restore safety in America.”

One of the directives calls for tackling crimes against police officers, which right-wing groups claim is a growing problem and have used the issue to discredit groups like Black Lives Matter who are fighting and protesting against the continued police killings of Black people.

“I am directing the Department of Justice to reduce crimes and crimes of violence against law enforcement officers,” the president told reporters as he signed the orders. “It’s a shame, what has been happening to our great, our truly great, law enforcement officers. That is going to stop today.”

The executive order seeks to “define new federal crimes, and increase penalties for existing federal crimes, in order to prevent violence” against state and federal police.

Just days earlier Trump repeated a false statement that he issued during his campaign that the crime rate in the U.S. is at its highest in 47 years. Figures from the Federal Bureau of Investigation contradict that claim.

According to the FBI, current data shows that crime is in fact at its lowest rate in decades. In 2015, there were 372.6 cases of violent crime reported per 100,000 people.

In 2008, the year before Barack Obama took office, the violent crime rate was 458.6 cases per 100,000 people. In 1992, there were 758.2 cases per 100,000 people.

"President Trump intends to build task forces to investigate and stop national trends that don't exist," Jeffery Robinson, deputy legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union, said in a statement.

"We have seen historic lows in the country's crime rate and a downward trend in killings against police officers since the 1980s. The president not only doesn't acknowledge these facts about our nation's safety, he persists in ignoring the all-too-real deaths of Black and brown people at the hands of law enforcement."
