

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 17, 2025

Don R. Berthiaume
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

Joseph Cuffari
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane SW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Acting Inspector General Berthiaume and Inspector General Cuffari:

I am writing to express outrage and alarm over recent use of force incidents involving Federal law enforcement officers performing activities associated with *Operation Midway Blitz* in the City of Chicago and surrounding communities.

A Federal district judge has already issued a temporary restraining order restricting how the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), along with all supporting Federal officers, agents, assigns and persons supporting DHS, may use riot control weapons in Illinois, after determining that certain actions by Federal agents participating in *Operation Midway Blitz* “clearly violate the constitution.”

These incidents raise serious questions about U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and DHS compliance with agency policies and regulations, along with Federal law and constitutional protections. In reviewing recent *Operation Midway Blitz* use of force incidents, there appears to be troubling patterns and practices emerging:

- **Excessive Force at Protests:** On September 26, 2025, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents deployed tear gas, pepper balls, and flash-bang grenades against peaceful protesters outside the Broadview ICE facility, leaving demonstrators gasping for air and likely violating First Amendment rights.
- **Rough Arrests Captured on Video:** Cell phone footage from October 2, 2025, captured Federal agents in Chicago surrounding and forcefully subduing an individual during an arrest, with bystanders describing the tactics as unnecessarily violent and disproportionate.
- **Improper Use of Deadly Force:** On September 12, 2025, security camera footage captured an ICE officer discharging his firearm in a street with oncoming traffic and killing an individual attempting to flee a traffic stop. ICE claimed the officer was dragged by the vehicle for a long time, but this is unclear from the footage and the ICE officer referred to his own injuries as “nothing major.”

- **Unlawful Arrests and Detentions:** Civil rights groups have alleged that ICE officers conducted dozens of arrests without warrants or probable cause, including the detention of at least three U.S. citizens, in violation of constitutional protections against unlawful seizure.
- **Unreasonable Force Against Minors:** During a September 30, 2025, raid at a 130-unit apartment building in Chicago's South Shore neighborhood, Federal agents reportedly entered nearly every apartment, throwing flashbangs, busting down doors and restraining residents, including children, with zip ties and placing them in vans for hours, with some children held separately from their parents for the duration of the operation.
- **Border Patrol and Federal Officer Conduct:** Reports suggest that Border Patrol agents and other Federal law enforcement officers deployed under *Operation Midway Blitz* have engaged in actions that may exceed their lawful authority, including aggressive crowd control tactics and questionable vehicle stops.

As you know, the DOJ Office of Inspector General (OIG) and DHS OIG maintain oversight responsibilities for the conduct of DOJ and DHS law enforcement components, respectively. Given the interagency nature of *Operation Midway Blitz*, heightened public concern in Chicago and the troubling trend—cited in Federal judicial opinions—of DHS losing credibility by issuing public statements describing officer involved use of force incidents that diverge from facts on the ground, I believe a coordinated, independent joint DOJ OIG-DHS OIG investigative task force is necessary to ensure accountability and restore public trust.

Accordingly, I respectfully request that your offices establish and deploy a **joint investigative task force** to:

- Conduct independent investigations of all reported officer-involved use of force incidents related to *Operation Midway Blitz* in Illinois;
- Assess whether Federal officers complied with applicable laws, regulations and departmental use-of-force policies;
- Evaluate the adequacy of training, supervision and command oversight provided to deployed personnel; and
- Recommend corrective actions, including policy reforms, disciplinary measures and—when appropriate—referrals to the appropriate law enforcement authorities for criminal prosecution.

The people of Chicago, and the United States, deserve transparency and accountability when Federal officers operate in their neighborhoods. A joint effort by your offices will help ensure that investigations are impartial, comprehensive and not hindered by jurisdictional silos, conflicts of interest or improper interference.

I request that you provide my office with a briefing on your plans to establish this task force within 14 days of receipt of this letter. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter and for your continued commitment to independent oversight.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Tammy Duckworth", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator