

MS NOW's *Money, Power, Politics* with Stephanie Ruhle

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6 minutes and 17 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: AP: Federal Agents Search Rep. Omar's House as Part of Criminal Investigation]

ERIELLE RESHEF: And as we come on the air today, we are following some breaking news. The Associated Press is reporting that federal agents searched the home of Democratic Congresswoman Ilhan Omar this morning. That's according to people familiar with the matter. The Justice Department says that Homeland Security carried out the search as part of a criminal investigation. We are still waiting to hear more details about this. Omar, of course, has been a prominent critic of Donald Trump since she joined Congress in 2018. She's been a constant target of both Trump and the Republican Party. I want to bring in our leadoff panel: Jeff Mason, White House and Washington correspondent for Bloomberg, Susan Glasser, staff writer for *The New Yorker*. Jacob Rubashkin, deputy editor of Inside Elections. And Ron Insana here with me, MSNBC business analyst and publisher of the Message of the Markets on Substack. Susan, I just want to get your reaction. Of course, Ilhan Omar, as we mentioned, has been a critic of President Trump. Now, there's a criminal investigation.

SUSAN GLASSER: Yeah. That's right. I mean, you know, look, we'll have to wait and see more information as it emerges. I thought it was interesting that the initial report said that it was the Department of Homeland Security that was pursuing this investigation. And again, to your point, Trump has consistently demonized both Omar and the community of Somali immigrants in which she comes from. And I think, you know, we'll have to see. But this is not going to be that big of a surprise to people that Trump's using the machinery of government to go after opponents. This has happened in a very, very concerted way. But again, we'll have to see more information. The fact that it's happening so close to the election, I think is — is also very notable.

RESHEF: I want to bring in Ken Dilanian, Justice and intelligence reporter for MS NOW. Ken, of course, we need to let the facts of this investigation bear out. But what can you tell us so far?

KEN DILANIAN: Good morning. Good morning. Yeah, this is a fast-breaking story, but I've got a statement from a DOJ official acknowledging this law enforcement activity by Homeland Security Investigations, which is a part of DHS in the Washington, DC area. This was in response to my inquiry about what's happening at Representative Omar's home, so they're saying that this was a judicially authorized search warrant pursued by the Department of Justice being executed by agents of Homeland Security Investigations, which is a part of DHS, and we're continuing to report this out. Fox News is reporting that this that this investigation stems from a question about paperwork filled out — immigration paperwork filled out by her father when she was a child. As everyone knows, there's been a long-standing controversy, mostly in right-wing circles, about Ilhan Omar's immigration provenance and whether she's in the country legally, whether the steps she took when she arrived here as a refugee, as a child, whether all the

paperwork was proper. That's been simmering in right-wing media and conservative circles for years. But it appears that somehow the Department of Justice has secured a warrant to conduct this search. That's a big step that requires a judge to — to — to determine that there's probable cause, to believe that there's evidence of a crime at this location, which would be her home in the D.C. area. It doesn't mean that it's definitive, but it means that there was enough that they showed a judge. I mean, we saw in the past when the Justice Department secured a warrant for the FBI to go and seize ballots in Fulton County. When we look at the affidavit for the search warrant, we saw that it was based largely on debunked conspiracy theories. We will not see this affidavit for some time. Likely, it's been it's under seal. That's the standard procedure for these kinds of things. So we don't know exactly what this is based on, what facts they have, but — but that's what we're being told by officials that it's related to an immigration-related investigation into her status in the country, guys.

RESEHEF: Ken, thank you as always, for getting up to speed so quickly on this breaking news. Jeff, you know, as Ken alluded to, a warrant was authorized by a judge, so clearly evidence was presented in some form or fashion to a judge, and — and that was granted. But can you just remind us of the history between Ilhan Omar and President Trump and the larger Republican Party?

JEFF MASON: Sure. It's a — it's not an uplifting history. The President has also been very critical of Omar, along with her fellow "Squad" members over the years, starting during his first term, and has often disparaged her and disparaged her representation from Minnesota, and I think that gives me an opportunity to mention again, like Ken was just talking about immigration and paperwork, going back to when she was a child, that — that has stirred up conspiracies in right-wing circles. But let's not forget that this is a sitting member of Congress, so that underscores how significant this is in a moment when we don't have a whole lot of facts. I think it's important to note, again, that she was an elected congresswoman from the state of Minnesota by her district, who the President has clearly had as a target for some time.

RESEHF: As we talk, Jacob, about getting closer and closer to the midterms, I'm curious to know from you, you know, we have seen the Trump administration be pretty open about going after perceived adversaries. Ilhan Omar may be the next one. How does this play out with the electorate right now?

JACOB RUBASHKIN: Well, it's an excellent question, and I actually was just in Ilhan Omar's district for the last couple of days in Minneapolis, and look, I think there's still a lot that remains to be seen. We're in a breaking news situation, and I think it's probably inappropriate to speculate too far ahead, but I do think that there's a potential, certainly in Minnesota, for this to be a rallying point for Democrats who, at least in that Senate race, have been a little bit on their back feet ever since the fraud scandal first came to national prominence earlier this year. Look, I think there's a real possibility that this could be a moment for Democrats to get their act together in Minnesota and rally behind their nominee for Senate, Peggy Flanagan, their nominee for governor, Amy Klobuchar. Of course, if this investigation proceeds and something truly damning comes out, it could have the opposite effect here. By and large, though, I don't really think voters are looking at, you know, 20-year-old or 30-year-old immigration paperwork as the defining

issue of this midterm in Minnesota or elsewhere.

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10:00:34 a.m.

1 minute and 51 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking News; Federal Agents Search Rep. Omar's House as Part of Criminal Investigation]

RESHEF: And we begin this hour with breaking news that we've been following. We're learning federal agents searched the Washington, D.C.-area home of Democratic Congresswoman Ilhan Omar earlier this morning. The Department of Justice said in a statement that the search was part of an ongoing federal criminal investigation. Let's bring in MS NOW's Ken Dilanian, who has been following this story for us. Ken, what more do we know at this point in the morning?

DILANIAN: Good morning, Erielle. As you mentioned, the Justice Department is confirming that this search was pursuant to a court order, so that means that the Department of Homeland Security, which carried out the search, had to present evidence to a judge suggesting that there was evidence of a crime at this location at Representative Omar's home in Washington, D.C., or at least that there was probable cause to believe that there was such evidence. And so, the agents came in, and they searched the home, as we understand it. Now, we've not been able to get any details on what exactly this criminal investigation is about. Other outlets are reporting that investigators are examining paperwork pursuant to Omar's citizenship. She acquired citizenship in 2000, and one of the questions it's been reported that investigators are examining is whether she was 18 at the time that that happened, because the law would be different whether she was a child or whether she was 18. That seems like it would be an issue easily cleared up, but nonetheless, you know, these federal agents are combing or were combing through her personal property in a very, very intrusive search. Obviously, this raises a lot of questions because Representative Omar is a long-standing opponent of President Trump, has been targeted on the right for a long period of time. She's a sitting member of Congress with certain privileges around the Speech and Debate Clause. So, there's a lot we don't know here. A lot of questions have been raised, but what we do know is the Justice Department is saying that this was a search pursuant to a court order, Erielle.

RESHEF: All right. Ken Dilanian, thank you so much for keeping an eye on that. We will continue to check in with you.