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Two West Virginia Guardsmen Critically Wounded in Targeted Shooting Near the White House

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US / **Published On November 27, 2025 07:48 AM /**

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National Guard members secure the scene in downtown Washington, D.C., after two West Virginia Guardsmen were critically wounded in a targeted shooting near the White House. By. GETTY IMAGES.

Two West Virginia National Guardsmen were critically wounded in a targeted shooting near the White House on Wednesday, an attack that triggered an immediate law enforcement response and

tightened security across downtown Washington, D.C. The incident took place only blocks from the presidential residence, according to statements from D.C. Police Chief Pamela Smith and West Virginia Gov. Patrick Morrisey. Both victims, who were deployed as part of an ongoing operation addressing illegal immigration and crime, were transported to a local hospital and remain in critical condition.

Authorities identified the suspect as 29-year-old Rahmanullah Lakanwal, described as an Afghan national who entered the United States in 2021 and received asylum approval in April 2025. Officials said he was arrested shortly after the shooting, characterizing the attack as brazen and premeditated. Lakanwal, who has a wife and five children, reportedly opened fire immediately after approaching the guardsmen, though investigators have not yet determined a motive.

In a White House address that evening, President Donald Trump condemned the incident, calling it “an act of evil, an act of hatred, and an act of terror.” He attributed the vulnerability to what he described as lax immigration policies under the Biden administration. The president also announced the deployment of an additional 500 National Guard troops to the capital and ordered a review of immigrants admitted during the previous term, citing national security and concerns about vetting procedures.

The administration has halted processing of Afghan immigration cases indefinitely, saying enhanced security protocols are needed. Stephen Miller, a senior adviser to the president, echoed Trump’s position in media appearances and defended the call for a broad review of immigrant statuses. Miller pointed to Lakanwal’s background as a former member of a CIA-backed Afghan paramilitary unit, the Kandahar Strike Force, saying it highlighted gaps in current screening measures. He also urged accelerated deportations for individuals deemed risks, framing the attack as justification for stricter enforcement.

The shooting has intensified debate over the National Guard’s continued deployment in Washington, D.C. A federal appeals court recently ruled that the prolonged presence of the Guard in the capital was unlawful and ordered their withdrawal. The Trump administration has sought an emergency stay of that ruling, arguing that the attack underscores the need for the deployment to remain in place.

Local and federal officials continued to respond throughout the day. D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser described the assault as “heinous” and targeted, while FBI Director Kash Patel confirmed the victims’ critical condition and committed to a thorough investigation. The case is being handled jointly by local law enforcement and federal agencies, and while no charges have been formally announced, authorities have begun coordinating their review.

The attack has drawn bipartisan condolences, with Vice President J.D. Vance and others expressing support for the wounded troops and their families. Analysts have noted that the shooting is already influencing ongoing immigration debates. Right-wing narratives have pointed to the incident as evidence of broader security lapses, while critics have cautioned against politicizing the situation before more information becomes available.