

Fact check: Trump makes multiple false claims to the troops at Fort Bragg

Daniel Dale, CNN
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President Donald Trump arrives to speak at Fort Bragg on June 10, 2025, in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. - Alex Brandon/AP

President Donald Trump made a series of false claims to members of the military on Tuesday in a partisan and combative speech at Fort Bragg in North Carolina.

Trump lied again about the 2020 election. He repeated a long-debunked story about a Minnesota National Guard deployment in 2020. He again distorted the history of his first administration's fight against the ISIS terror group. He revived a fictional tale about immigration during former President Joe Biden's administration. And he exaggerated the military's recruiting challenges under Biden.

In addition, Trump made a series of vague assertions about the protests in Los Angeles for which he presented no evidence. Here is a fact check of some of his checkable false claims from the speech – plus a false claim he made in remarks about California at the White House earlier in the day.

The 2020 election: Trump repeated his long-debunked lie that the 2020 election “was rigged and stolen.” Trump legitimately lost a free and fair election to Biden.

The National Guard and Minneapolis: While bashing Democratic Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, Trump revived a false story that CNN [debunked](#) nearly five years ago. Trump wrongly claimed that it was him, not Walz, who sent the National Guard to Minneapolis in 2020 amid the civil unrest that followed the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer.

Trump said: “I’ll never forget in Minnesota: that city was burning down, Minneapolis, it was burning down, it was gonna burn to the ground, and he wouldn’t call the guard. And I waited for a long time, and I called the guard, and I saved it.”

In reality, [publicly available evidence](#) proves that Walz first deployed the Minnesota National guard more than seven hours before Trump publicly threatened to deploy the guard himself. While Walz was criticized by many Republicans and some Democrats for not sending in the guard faster, it is indisputable that Walz, not Trump, was the person who deployed the guard. You can read more [here](#).

Trump and the battle against ISIS: Trump repeated his regular false claim that even though “they said it would take five years to defeat ISIS, we did in four weeks, four weeks.” The so-called ISIS “caliphate” was declared fully liberated more than two years into Trump’s presidency, [in 2019](#), not “in four weeks.”

Military recruiting under Biden: Trump, boasting of the military’s recruiting performance during his second administration, falsely claimed, “Just think of this: six months ago, we couldn’t recruit anybody to join the military. Nobody wanted to join. That was six months ago.”

Even granting that words like “nobody” can be used less than literally, it’s simply not true that “nobody wanted to join” the military at the end of the Biden administration. The ongoing uptick in recruiting [actually began](#) under the Biden administration. The Defense Department [announced](#) in October 2024, before Trump’s second victory, that recruitment was up more than 12% in the 2024 fiscal year compared with the previous fiscal year; Military.com [reported](#) in October 2024: “After years of negative recruiting news and headlines, all the military branches managed to eke out wins this year and meet their recruiting goals – largely aided by new programs and policies that allowed them to sign up recruits who would have been disqualified in previous years.” The Army, for example, [added](#) just over 55,000 recruits, up substantially from [just under 45,000](#) in fiscal year 2022.

Migrants, prisons and mental institutions: Trump made his frequent assertion that foreign countries deliberately placed prisoners and people with mental illnesses in the US as migrants during Biden’s presidency.

“Many of them came out of prisons and jails – the most heinous people, they came from all over the world. They came from the Congo in Africa, they came from Asia, they came from the prisons of these places, they were put into the United States and allowed to stay here,” Trump said at one point. At another, he said, “Their countries would bus them or drive them right to our border and say, ‘Go in there. If you ever come back, we’re going to kill you.’”

Trump has never presented any evidence of any foreign government transporting their criminals to the US border under Biden. Nor has he corroborated his stories about foreign governments deliberately emptying prisons and [mental health facilities](#) to somehow facilitate migration to the US, which even his 2024 presidential campaign could not prove. His allegations about prisons in “the Congo” have been [rejected as baseless](#) by independent experts, human rights organizations, and the governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo.

California, fires and water: At the White House earlier on Tuesday, Trump again wrongly [asserted](#) that the January wildfires in Los Angeles “started because they wouldn’t allow water into LA, they wouldn’t allow water into California” – and added that he then turned water “around,” and “now we have billions of gallons of water flowing down.”

None of this is true.

First, nobody has broadly refused to allow water into Los Angeles or into California as a whole. Second, experts on California water policy and firefighting have repeatedly [explained](#) that there is no basis for Trump’s claims that the January wildfires were caused by water being used for environmental protection in northern California rather than being sent to Los Angeles. Third, Trump did not actually send water to Los Angeles earlier this year. Rather, in what experts widely [described](#) as a waste and a stunt, he had about two billion gallons of fresh water sent from one part of California’s Central Valley [to another](#) part of the valley in late January and early February.