



NEW YORK WILL SEND NATIONAL GUARD TO SUBWAYS AFTER A STRING OF VIOLENT CRIMES - ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Photo: Members of the Armed Forces including the National Guard wait in the lobby of the New York City Mass Transit Authority Rail Control Center before the start of a news conference

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul announced plans Wednesday to send the National Guard to the New York City subway system to help police search passengers' bags for weapons, following a series of high-profile crimes on city trains.

Hochul, a Democrat, said she will deploy 750 members of the National Guard to the subways to assist the New York Police Department with bag searches at entrances to busy train stations.

"For people who are thinking about bringing a gun or knife on the subway, at least this creates a deterrent effect. They might be thinking, 'You know what, it just may just not be worth it because I listened to the mayor and I listened to the governor and they have a lot more people who are going to be checking my bags,'" Hochul said at a news conference in New York City.

The move came as part of a larger effort from the governor's office to address crime in the subway, which included a legislative proposal to ban people from trains for three years if they are convicted of assaulting a subway passenger and the installation of cameras in conductor cabins to protect transit workers.

The deployment of the National Guard would bolster an enhanced presence of NYPD officers in the subway system. The governor said she will also send 250 state troopers and police officers from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, a state agency, to help with the bag searches.

Hochul has tried to mount a more aggressive public safety messaging strategy after Republicans campaigned on crime concerns and performed well in House races around New York City in the 2022 elections.

Her subway plan is "another unfortunate example of policymaking through overreaction and overreach," Donna Lieberman, the executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union, said in a statement.

"Sound policy making will not come from overreacting to incidents that, while horrible and tragic, should not be misrepresented as a crime wave and certainly don't call for a reversion to failed broken windows policies of the past," she said, referring to the policing theory that going after smaller crimes can help stem greater disorder.

Overall, crime has dropped in New York City since a spike during the COVID-19 pandemic, and killings are down on the subway system. But rare fatal shootings and shovings on the subway can put residents on edge. Just last week, a passenger slashed a subway conductor

in the neck, delaying trains.

Police in New York have long conducted random bag checks at subway entrances, though passengers are free to refuse and leave the station, raising questions of whether the searches are an effective policing tactic in a subway system that serves over 3 million riders per day.

