

San Diego protests condemn abuse of refugees

written by Mary Lou Finley
January 19, 2019



Photo: San Diego Migrant and Refugee Solidarity Coalition

On Jan. 11, the San Diego Migrant and Refugee Solidarity Coalition protested the treatment of refugees at the U.S.-Mexico border, which has recently resulted in the deaths of at least three children and one woman from Central America. The coalition was joined by members of the International Migrant Alliance (IMA) Border Solidarity Mission with participants from New York, New Jersey, the San Francisco Bay Area and San Diego.

At an opening rally at the Mexican Consulate, speakers demanded that refugees be treated with dignity and respect; be provided adequate shelter, legal and medical assistance; and that the U.S. government honor the internationally recognized right of refugees to request asylum.

The U.S. must stop trying to criminalize children and adults fleeing violence and extreme poverty in their home countries, exacerbated by authoritarian governments supported by Washington, the protesters insisted. There must be an immediate stop to incarcerating asylum seekers and to the militarization of the border.

Then, at least 80 protesters began the march to the U.S. Federal Building, where the Department of Homeland Security, Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement offices are located. They carried banners and signs and spiritedly chanted: “¡Trump! ¡Escucha! ¡Estamos en la lucha!” (“Trump, listen, we are in the struggle!”), “The people united will never be defeated!” and “We didn’t cross the border! The border crossed us!” At the Federal Building there were several more excellent and passionate speakers.

The following day, Jan. 12, about 120 protesters, including many from the same groups, gathered near a Border Patrol station a few miles from the border. After an opening rally presenting the coalition’s demands, people marched through the surrounding residential streets, drawing support from some residents.

Among the signs that protesters carried were four large cardboard gravestones with drawings and the names of the Central American woman and three Central American children who were killed by the Border Patrol’s mistreatment: Claudia Patricia Gómez González, Mariee Juárez, Jakelin Caal Maquín and Felipe Alonzo-Gómez.

About 10 Trump supporters staged a puny counterprotest, chanting “USA! USA!” as if they thought they were at a sports competition instead of addressing life and

death matters.

The coalition's speakers and chants dealt with the unity of the workers and the oppressed people, who are the primary targets of the racist, anti-migrant and anti-refugee policies of the U.S. ruling class.



Photo: San Diego Migrant and Refugee Solidarity Coalition

