

Palestine solidarity spreads across New York metro area

written by Struggle-La Lucha New York bureau

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The Bronx marches for Palestine, May 31.

The long war between the native people of Palestine and the brutal Western

colonial-settler project called Israel is more than a local battle. Like the Black Lives Matter uprising that swept the U.S. and the world after the murder of George Floyd, it is part of the global struggle between oppressor and oppressed, exploiter and exploited, colonizer and colonized.

Pentagon brass routinely refer to the Israeli occupation regime as “our unsinkable aircraft carrier,” a term Israeli leaders embrace. To Wall Street bankers and their military and political servants, the Zionist state is a vital weapon in their long war to monopolize the world’s energy reserves and keep the world’s petrodollars flowing into their coffers. Control of the region they call the Middle East is key to their wealth and power.

While the corporate agents in Washington pour arms and money into the Israeli war machine, oppressed people around the world stand with the people of Palestine. That solidarity has been loud and clear in cities across the United States in the weeks since Israel’s latest assault on the imprisoned people of Gaza.

In the New York metropolitan area, tens of thousands have taken to the streets of every borough and such neighboring cities as Paterson and Teaneck, N.J., and Yonkers and White Plains, N.Y., to support Palestinian resistance and demand an end to U.S. aid to the occupation regime.

Those who marched were overwhelmingly young. Many were Palestinian or from other Arab communities. But the crowds reflected the diversity of New York City’s working class and oppressed communities.

The December 12 Movement and other Black liberation organizations mobilized in solidarity. Flags of Bangladesh, Colombia, Haiti, Mexico, Morocco, Pakistan, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Senegal, Yemen and the Black liberation flag were among those that flew alongside the red, black, green and white colors of Palestine.

On May 4 and May 11, protesters took over the streets of midtown Manhattan. On May 15, Nakba Day, 50,000 people packed the streets of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, home to New York's largest Arab community. On May 13, young people confronted a Zionist hate rally in Times Square. Police attacked and arrested several people when they defended themselves against anti-Arab bigots.

The following Saturday, May 22, 20,000 people shut down Queens Boulevard and marched for hours through the streets of the city's second-largest borough, from Sunnyside through Astoria to Jackson Heights.

On May 29, thousands traveled to Washington, D.C., for a rally and march called by American Muslims for Palestine.

On Memorial Day, May 31, thousands marched through the streets of the Bronx. While cops in riot gear tried to intimidate the marchers, the people of the borough greeted the marchers with cheers and horns honked in solidarity. Black Liberation Army veteran and 33-year political prisoner Sekou Odinga was among those who addressed the crowd.

Police arrested three young people for the "crime" of raising the Palestinian flag atop a railroad bridge. Cops later attacked a crowd that had gathered outside the 41st precinct to await their release and arrested and brutalized three more people.

Most of the protests were organized by NY4Palestine, a coalition comprising Al Awda NY: The Palestine Right to Return Coalition, Within Our Lifetime-United for Palestine, American Muslims for Palestine, Existence is Resistance, Jews for the Palestinian Right to Return, Labor for Palestine and Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network. Within Our Lifetime has taken the lead in organizing protests in every borough.

Early on Sunday, June 6, several hundred people blocked the gate of Maher

Terminal in Elizabeth, N.J., where an Israeli ship, ZIM Tarragona, was being unloaded. Two days earlier, Port Authority police detained two activists for giving flyers to workers at the port.

It was the first action of the newly formed NY-NJ Block the Boat Coalition as part of the International Week of Action to Block the Boat called by the Arab Resource and Organizing Center in the Bay Area.

Members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union refused to cross AROC-led picket lines in Oakland, Calif., forcing the Israeli ship ZIM Voltan to leave without unloading.

Later that day hundreds of community members confronted a “salute to Israel” anti-Palestinian hate parade in Teaneck, N.J.

On June 9, a WOL-led car caravan started at the Zim shipping offices and drove across Staten Island.



Thousands shut down Queens Boulevard for Palestine, May 22.



'Day and night, Brooklyn marches for Palestine,' May 15.



Former Black Panther Sekou Odinga speaks at Bronx march for Palestine.



Young Ali and Within Our Lifetime chair Nerdeen Kiswani lead chants in the Bronx.



Block the Boat action protests unloading of Israeli ship in Elizabeth, N.J., June 6.

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