

# Movement forces the release of Chicago police torture survivors

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
August 2, 2022



Chicago — A series of victories were won in the past month by the movement to free survivors of torture and wrongful conviction at the hands of the Chicago Police Department. Clayborn Smith, Marcellous Pittman, Juan Hernandez, Rosendo Hernandez, Arthur Almendarez, John Galvan, Eruby Abrego, Jeremiah Cain, David Gecht and David Colon have all had historic judgments in their cases.

In the case of Clayborn Smith, a decision by the Illinois Appellate Court authored by Justice Cynthia Cobbs reversed the decision of Circuit Court Judge Alfredo

Maldonado, finding that Detectives Kenneth Boudreau, John Halloran and James O'Brien had tortured Clayborn Smith into his confession. They granted him a new trial.

In turn, Judge Maldonado found, in the case of Marcellous Pittman, that his tortured confession at the hands of Halloran and O'Brien was inadmissible. Marcellous Pittman also had the charges against him dropped by the state's attorney's office. Within the written decisions by each of these judges, it was laid out plainly that these detectives with a history of torture are not credible and should not be called as witnesses.

Justice Cynthia Cobbs in the Clayborn Smith case stated in her decision "the defendant has produced sufficient evidence of a pattern of physical abuse by the detectives in question" referring to Detectives Boudreau, Halloran, and O'Brien. And Judge Roberto Maldonado stated in his decision in the Marcellous Pittman case that his ruling called into question the credibility of Halloran and O'Brien's denials.

These decisions come after years of campaigning by the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression (CAARPR)'s Campaign to Free Incarcerated Survivors of Police Torture, Mothers Activating Movements for Abolition and Solidarity (MAMAS), and the Chicago Torture Justice Center to free survivors of police torture and wrongful convictions and hold torturing officers accountable.

In October 2021, CAARPR began to pressure the Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO) to take action on 409 cases of torture and wrongful conviction, detailed in a comprehensive report that can be found on the Chicago Alliance website.

CAARPR presented the CCSAO with nine demands. These included that their office move to vacate convictions for all those framed, tortured and wrongfully convicted, especially in cases involving detectives with a pattern and practice of torture; that

cases involving Jon Burge's Midnight Crew, of which Boudreau, Halloran, and O'Brien were a part, be reviewed and the related convictions vacated; and that the CCSAO publicly state that they will cease calling detectives with established records of torture as witnesses. These recent rulings directly reflect the campaign's demands.

Another demand of this campaign was for the CCSAO to "Provide information on the status of their promised comprehensive review of Guevara's cases. Rapidly complete the review and vacate all convictions in which Detectives Reynaldo Guevara, Joseph Miedzianowski, or Ronald Watts were involved."

Reynaldo Guevara is a former homicide detective who secured dozens of convictions by framing mostly Puerto Rican and Black young people. According to the report, "Over 50 individuals have accused him of coercing confessions through physical or psychological torture or through manipulating witnesses to obtain convictions. Many of them were juveniles at the time of their arrest."

Cook County Judge Obbish said Guevara "has now eliminated the possibility of being considered a credible witness in any proceeding" due to the evidence against him and his refusal to testify. This is a judgment that is now being applied to other torturer cops such as Boudreau, Halloran and O' Brien.

The leading force behind the effort to free survivors of Detective Guevara has been the organization Innocent Demand Justice(IDJ), which is led by Guevara survivors themselves as well as family members like Esther Hernandez, who has been fighting for the freedom of her two sons, Juan "Poochie" Hernandez and Rosendo Hernandez since their wrongful imprisonment in 1997.

Alongside MAMAS, CAARPR and CTJC, IDJ mobilized rallies for court dates, hosted phone zaps, pressured elected officials, met with the state's attorney's office, researched Guevara thoroughly, and spoke out in the media. These organizations

demanded justice for all of Guevara's victims, meaning immediate release, charges against Guevara, and reparations for those tortured.

On Friday July 15, the Hernandez brothers were released with all charges dropped against them. This came as part of a wave of exonerations of Guevara survivors, including Eruby Abrego, Jeremiah Cain, David Colon and David Gecht. The release of these survivors, and the decision by the state's attorney's office to not re-try them for these baseless charges, are a result of the movement to free torture survivors and the wrongfully convicted.

Esther Hernandez, responding to her son's release, saying, "I can't even explain how I feel right now, I'm so joyful." She added, "As I come to these other cases, I see them come home, I'm like 'Oh my God, our day is coming.' I get happy every time I see somebody come out, an innocent man coming out of prison."

In addition to survivors of Boudreau, Halloran, O'Brien and Guevara being released, two survivors of Detectives Victor Switski and John Hanrahan were released the following day. John Galvan and Arthur Almendarez were wrongfully convicted in 1986 after Hanrahan and Switski tortured them into signing confession statements to a crime they didn't commit. The detectives told them that they would be able to go home after signing these confessions. They made many attempts to file motions for their witness confessions to be suppressed and quash the arrest. They were sentenced for life without parole with Galvan being sent to Stateville and Almendarez to Hill prisons. New evidence emerged of police coercion, and after 35 years, their case was finally vacated by a Cook County judge.

Detectives Hanrahan and Switski were also mentioned in CAARPR's CFIST Report on the Pattern and Practice of Torture within the Chicago Police Department. The CFIST report not only clearly demonstrates a long pattern of abuse by crooked officers, but how innocent lives will continue to be lost and harmed, the victims and their families.

“This long pattern of abuse will not stop unless community control of the police is established and all wrongfully convicted prisoners are given immediate release,” said Kobi Guillory, at a rally outside the Cook County Jail in response to this wave of decisions. These victories in the Campaign to Free Incarcerated Survivors of Police Torture and Wrongful Conviction are a sign that the powers that be are responding to the demands of the survivors, families and activists who continue the fight for justice.

Source: [FightBack! News](#)



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## **Biden and the U.S.-Israel-GCC axis: It's not the oil, it's the money**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
August 2, 2022

Joe Biden didn't go to Arabia in July to beg for oil. That's not the nature of the U.S.-Saudi relationship.

He didn't go to Palestine to promote peace. The U.S.-Israeli relationship is based on endless war. And war is what Biden's trip was about.

He went on a mission for his corporate masters. His job: To cement a military alliance of U.S.-armed states for a proxy war against Iran.

Since 1991, when the Soviet bloc fell, the U.S. has been bombing, invading and sanctioning energy-producing countries. That 30-year war is a desperate effort to regain the stranglehold U.S. corporations once held on the world's energy reserves.

In the 1960s, most of the region's oil was owned directly by Western monopolies. Half of the overseas profits of U.S. corporations came from Arab and Iranian oil. Revolutions in Iraq, Libya, Syria and Iran took much of that wealth out of their hands. They want it back.

War and destruction in Iraq, Libya, Syria, Somalia, Yemen, Afghanistan and now Ukraine saved U.S. oil monopolies and their bankers from financial disaster. In fact, it brought them their biggest profits ever. And it made the U.S. the world's top oil and gas producer.

### **How to really tame inflation**

If Biden seriously wanted to bring down fuel costs, he would order those monopolies to roll back prices. If he wanted to expand the global energy supply, he would lift sanctions on Iran, Syria and Venezuela, not to mention Russia.

If Biden wanted to promote peace in the "Middle East," he would stop sending \$3.8 billion worth of arms to the Israeli war machine every year. He would end massive U.S. arms sales to the Saudis and other royal tyrants of the Arabian peninsula. He would get U.S. troops out of Iraq and Syria, get the Sixth Fleet out of the Mediterranean, and the Fifth Fleet out of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea.

Those actions would also crush inflation. But taking them would mean standing up to Big Oil, the military-industrial complex and Wall Street. Biden didn't go to the "Middle East" to oppose their interests. He went to serve them.

### **'Normalization' means war**

In Jerusalem, Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid issued a "strategic partnership joint declaration." Biden pledged the U.S. to maintain Israel's "qualitative military edge" and to continue the 2016 memorandum of understanding (MOU), signed by Barack Obama's administration when Biden was vice president, that went into effect in 2018. That's a \$38 billion arms transfer to the Zionist state over 10 years. The U.S. provided an additional \$1 billion over MOU levels in supplemental missile defense funding in 2021.

Biden promised the Israeli occupation regime even more money if it launches a war. And that another 10-year MOU would follow.

In 2021 Israel borrowed \$2.5 billion from Citibank for arms purchases over and above the \$38 billion. It used the next U.S. MOU as collateral.

### **The "Abraham Accords" is a military pact**

Biden and Lapid also said they would "broaden and strengthen" the Trump regime's vaunted Abraham Accords between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and the U.S. That so-called "normalization" deal is in reality a war pact aimed at the Palestinian and Lebanese Resistance and countries like Iran and Syria that don't pay tribute to "Corporate America."

### **Palestine, petrodollars and pipelines**

There is another aspect to the accords: Washington and Wall Street want to use the region's natural gas to battle Russia for Europe's energy market. Since the 1980s

the U.S. has been trying to take that market over. "Normalization" would allow gas and oil from the Gulf states to flow across occupied Palestine to the Mediterranean and Europe.

That's on top of the natural gas U.S. oil giant Chevron already plunders from the stolen waters off Palestine. Chevron and other U.S. firms are exploring and drilling in Palestinian, Egyptian and Cypriot waters. Their Israeli agent now seeks to steal Lebanon's gas as well.

Meanwhile, U.S. troops occupy Syria's oil fields. And U.S.- Israeli military operations in Syria block a planned pipeline to bring natural gas from Iran to the Mediterranean.

In 2020, when the Abraham Accords were signed, Washington and Tel Aviv wanted Saudi Arabia and Qatar to openly join the alliance. The House of Saud has long collaborated covertly with the Zionist state, including in its war against Yemen.

### **Biden leaves, Israel's murder spree continues**

On July 15, Biden left Jerusalem for Jeddah. That night Israel's U.S.-made planes again rained U.S.-made missiles on the besieged Palestinian enclave of Gaza. Israeli troops resumed their murderous terror raids, cruel home demolitions and killings in towns and refugee camps on the West Bank.

Six West Bank Palestinians have been murdered by U.S.-paid Israeli troops in the 12 days since Biden's visit. On July 29, Amjad Abu Alia, 16, was shot to death by occupation soldiers in the village of Al Mughir near Ramallah.

Within days of Biden's visit, Israeli forces also launched new airstrikes on Syria, killing at least three people.

### **A summit of tribute states**



In Saudi-ruled Arabia, Biden addressed a summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The presidents of Egypt and Iraq and the king of Jordan attended. Along with Israel, those nine countries account for half of U.S. arms sales in the past decade.

The GCC is a gang of oil-rich monarchies that pay tribute to the United States. That is, they fork over their oil and gas revenues to U.S. oil companies, arms contractors and Wall Street banks.

Sixty percent of the private wealth of the GCC countries is invested in the U.S. Lockheed Martin [opened a new production plant](#) in 2021 to supply F16s to GCC states. Bahrain is the home base for the U.S. Fifth Fleet.

Before the 1979 Revolution, the Shah made Iran a cash cow for Wall Street. When the new Islamic Republic of Iran stopped paying tribute, it became a target of Washington's wrath.

In his speech to the GCC +3 (the Gulf Cooperation Council plus Egypt, Iraq, and Jordan), Biden warned of threats to the "rules-based international order" — the one under which the U.S., Israel and Saudi Arabia bomb and kill with impunity.

He lied that U.S. troops are no longer "engaged in combat" in the region. What are they doing in Iraq and Syria against those countries' wishes?

There are 65,000 U.S. troops in Southwest Asia, including air and naval forces. There are 5,500 in Iraq and 600 in Syria, where they deny Syrians access to their own oil. They have no business being there.

Biden praised the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which he helped engineer. He rambled about "energy security" and "regional cooperation" and "economic integration."

Then he got to the main point: War. He invoked the oldest pretext in the imperialist box of lies: “The free flow of commerce.”

Biden claimed the U.S. had to defend “freedom of navigation” through the Bab el Mandeb and the Straits of Hormuz, which he implied is under threat by Iran. Not a word about the Saudi blockade of Yemen, Israeli attacks on Iranian tankers and U.S. sanctions on Iran, Syria, Eritrea and Yemen.

“We’ve established a new naval task force to work in partnership with many of your navies to help secure the Red Sea,” the president said. “That includes the first naval task force to use [un-manned] surface vessels and artificial intelligence technology to enhance marine — maritime awareness. ... We’re also integrating air defenses and early warning systems to ensure that we can defeat airborne threats.”

He didn’t explain what business the U.S. Navy has “securing” the Red Sea, 7,413 miles from U.S. shores. But control of that waterway would allow the U.S. and Israel to choke off access to the Suez Canal.

### **Shirin Abu Akleh and Breonna Taylor**

Palestinian journalist Shirin Abu Akleh could not report on Joe Biden’s visit to her occupied homeland. She was among 70 Palestinian civilians murdered by U.S.-armed Israeli occupation troops so far this year.

Akleh was a U.S. citizen and reporter for Al Jazeera. On May 11 she was covering an Israeli army attack on the Jenin refugee camp. An Israeli sniper shot her in the head with a rifle made in Connecticut.

The murder weapon was one of hundreds of thousands of rifles the U.S. has given the Israeli army for free. The bullet that took her life was a standard U.S. Army issue.

Shirin Abu Akleh was a household name in the Arab world. The Israeli army wouldn't assassinate a U.S. citizen working for an international news agency without approval from the top. The White House and State Department said they would demand "accountability."

Biden forgot all about that when he landed in Israeli-occupied Palestine on July 13. Just like he forgot about Black medical worker Breonna Taylor, murdered in her bed on March 13, 2020, by Louisville cops.

On the campaign trail, Biden promised justice for Taylor. Since taking office he has refused to order the Justice Department to act against her killers in blue.

When Biden arrived in Palestine, he smiled and shook hands with rightwing Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid, alternate PM Naftali Bennet, former PM Benjamin Netanyahu and war minister Benny Gantz. Gantz gave him a "video tour" of Israel's "cutting edge" missile technology, developed with U.S. funds.

Biden accepted the settler state's Medal of Honor from its president, Isaac Herzog. He refused to meet with the family of Shirin Abu Akleh.

### **Genocide in Yemen and a murder in Istanbul**

On July 15, Biden flew to Saudi Arabia. Exiled Arabian journalist Jamal Khashoggi was not alive to write about it.

On October 2, 2019, the U.S. resident was lured into the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. His fiancé waited for him on the sidewalk outside. He never came out.

A hit team sent by Saudi crown prince Muhamad Bin Salman awaited Khashoggi inside the consulate. They strangled him and dismembered his body with a bone saw.

Donald Trump, then President, protected the Saudi prince. “I wouldn’t let Congress touch him,” he bragged. Earlier that year Trump had also vetoed a bill restricting U.S. involvement in the genocidal Saudi war against Yemen.

Joe Biden said in his campaign speeches that he would make the Saudi kingdom a “pariah.” He also condemned the kingdom’s genocidal war against neighboring Yemen. “I would end the ... sale of materials to the Saudis where they’re going in and murdering children,” the future President said.

### **The war on Yemen continues; so do U.S. arms sales**

When Biden took office last year, he did declare a “freeze” on “offensive weapons sales” to the Saudi regime. But in November, the White House approved a \$650 million sale of “defensive” air-to-air missiles and launchers to the kingdom.

On July 11, four days before Biden’s visit, U.S.-armed Saudi troops opened fire on a village in Yemen, killing 17 people. That same day Reuters reported that “the Biden administration is discussing the possible lifting of its ban on U.S. sales of offensive weapons to Saudi Arabia.”

Although there is supposedly a truce in Yemen, the Saudi Navy’s U.S.-made ships continue to blockade the impoverished country, where 17 million people face starvation.

Eighty-five thousand Yemeni children have starved to death since the Saudi blockade began. Over 10,000 children have been killed by the Saudi Kingdom’s U.S.-made bombs.

The Trump regime imposed sanctions on Yemen in 2020. Biden has not lifted them.

There was talk that Biden would refuse to shake hands with Prince Bin Salman. When he arrived in Jeddah, he gave the butcher of Yemen a fist bump. The next day

he warmly shook hands with his father, King Salman bin Abdulaziz.

All U.S. presidents, without exception, serve the U.S. corporate war machine. The point of this article is not to expose Biden's dishonesty and corruption. It's to point out the real nature of the U.S.-Israel-Saudi-GCC relationship, which the corporate media conceals.

It is a bloody protection racket. It has brought trillions of dollars in profits to U.S. corporations over the past 75 years at a cost of millions of lives. It depends on endless war.

Since its creation on stolen Palestinian land, the racist state of Israel has acted as enforcer in this protection racket. Pentagon officials routinely call the Zionist state "our unsinkable aircraft carrier."

### **The only solution: 'U.S. Out' and a 'Free Palestine'**

Peace and cooperation in Southwest Asia, the region they call the "Middle East," demands that the U.S. get out, with all its troops, planes, warships, weapons and spies. That includes an end to the flow of arms and dollars to the Israeli occupation regime and arms sales to the GCC.

It demands that the settler state U.S. generals call "our unsinkable aircraft carrier" be replaced with a democratic state in all of Palestine. It demands that Palestinian refugees have the right to return and that every Palestinian has the right to live in peace and freedom in every corner of the land of Palestine.



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# Bad Bunny

written by Struggle - La Lucha

August 2, 2022

Bad Bunny's three concert series in Puerto Rico took place this week. The first day he performed at the Coliseo Agrelot, he filled it to capacity and broadcasted simultaneously in 13 venues across the island, in addition to a local TV station.

And, why do I touch on this subject, what political importance does this have?

Although Benito Antonio Martinez Ocasio, the Bad Bunny, has been an international sensation, it is here, in his homeland, where his influence on the youth has more relevance. And also the most diverse and even hateful opinions of those who cannot get out of their stultified and hypocritical concepts about language and sexuality.

The fact that one might not agree with his language full of obscene words, does not hide the power of his denunciations. Here it is not a question of analyzing his musical qualities, but of evaluating the depth of his message about the current reality. He uses the colloquial language of the Puerto Rican streets, without ambiguity, and goes straight to the point. It contrasts with the obscenity in the

performance of the colonial governments and in particular the current failed government of Pierluisi, and the Fiscal Control Board, who with their finer words are committing genocide against the people.

The defiant words and attire of Bad Bunny resonate with a youth fed up with government corruption and oppression and a society spiraling into a colonial abyss. This generation of young people is the one that is trying, with tooth and nail to defend our beaches, our lands, developing agricultural sustainability. Defending their rights of gender expression.

And as Bad Bunny has said, “We have to break up with the idea that gringos are gods... No, papi”.

For Radio Clarín of Colombia, speaking Berta Joubert-Ceci.



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## Protest high cost of housing, food, fuel Inflation = wage theft!

By Sharon Black

Today the federal minimum wage is \$7.25! Let that sad fact sink in. Right now you can barely buy a gallon of gas in some parts of the country with that little cash.

July 24 will mark the anniversary of the last increase that took place in 2009. In 13 years the capitalist government in the United States has not raised the minimum wage even a nickel. And this is in the wealthiest

country in the world. Well, wealthiest for the wealthy!

Labor Department data for 2021 shows that approximately 250,000 people still earned \$7.25 and, to add insult to injury, domestic, farm, student, disabled, and restaurant workers can be paid less than \$7.25 an hour. It's called a "subminimum wage" — it's legal and it implies that these workers are considered subhuman by their bosses.

The majority of low wage workers

are Black, Brown, immigrant, women and young.

It is such a disgrace that some states and local municipalities have been forced to pass minimum wage increases on their own — but only as a result of concerted struggle by groups like "Fight for \$15," labor unions and community groups.

But still close to 52 million workers — 32% of the workforce — earn less than \$15. And when you factor in the large number of workers who can

only find part-time work, or do gig work, the situation is even more dire.

Of course, any worker can tell you that \$15 is a barely, barely, barely enough to get by wage.

A September 2021 broadcast on CBS Money Watch reports that the "minimum wage would be \$26 an hour if it had grown in line with productivity."

What the broadcast says in plain language is that workers are work-

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## Behind the escalating attacks on trans people

By Melinda Butterfield

Thirty-one members of the white supremacist Patriot Front from across the U.S. were detained after preparing an assault on a Pride festival in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, June 12.

On the July 4 weekend in Camden, Ohio, Noah Ruiz, a trans man, was beaten by four men after being forced to use a women's restroom at a campsite. The victim was arrested by the police and spent the night in jail. It took legal action by Ruiz to force the cops to arrest one of his attackers on July 18; the other three have not been charged.

In Pensacola, Florida, July 18, Alisabeth Lancaster, a candidate for the Santa Rosa County School Board declared that doctors who provide gender-affirming care to trans youth "should be hanging from the nearest tree," to applause from the audience. The video of Lancaster's lynching threat went viral on social media.

Lancaster was echoing Florida's state government, headed by notorious homophobe Ron DeSantis, which is preparing to ban gender-affirming care for minors and deinstitution adult Medicaid recipients while laying the groundwork for a complete ban on trans health care. Activists around the state are organizing to intervene at a hearing on the proposed ban Aug. 5.

During Pride month in Baltimore, four houses burned and three people were hospitalized after bigots set fire to a rainbow flag on a resident's porch. In Boston, the construction site of an LGBTQ2S-friendly affordable housing project was vandalized with hate speech and threats on the weekend of July 9.



LGBTQ2S activists and anti-fascists defend a drag brunch from neo-nazis, July 10.

In Texas, where the governor has ordered child protective services to investigate parents and health-care providers for "abuse" if they support trans children, families are uprooting their lives and fleeing to other states. That includes Kai Shappley, an 11-year-old trans girl who in 2021 testified about the importance of gender-affirming care at the state capitol in Austin.

From the San Francisco Bay area to Chicago, drag queen story hours and drag shows have been threatened and attacked by Proud Boys and other neo-nazis, often aided and abetted by local cops. Increasingly, communities are organizing to resist these attacks, as they did in Houston July 10, where defenders shouted down the bigots.

(Drag performers and trans peo-

ple are not the same, though the ultra-right conflates the two groups and smears both with false claims of being "groomers" and "pedophiles.")

These are just a few examples of what are now daily attacks on queer communities from coast to coast, especially targeting and scapegoating trans people.

SCOTUS, gov't, cops & nazis

These vicious assaults — some spontaneous, but often planned and organized — cannot be separated from the nationwide political attack on trans rights and abortion rights.

From the dozens of state legislatures that have enacted or plan to enact restrictions on trans lives and women's lives, to the highest court in the land, the right to control one's

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Tent City, Maricopa County, Arizona in 1997 stood 10 minutes south of downtown Phoenix.



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