



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

U.S. military ship's supplies for Israel stalled by protest at berth in Oakland, Calif.

written by Lallan Schoenstein
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Protesters at the Port of Oakland blocked Berth 20, where U.S. military ship Cape Orlando was scheduled to leave for Israel. Others breached a barrier and locked themselves to the ship. Photo: Arab Resource and Organizing Center

As the sun rose on Nov. 3, protesters began to pour into a site near Berth 20 in the Port of Oakland in California, where the U.S. military vessel [MV Cape Orlando was](#)

[preparing for departure](#). It is a roll-on/roll-off ship, part of the U.S. fleet that is replenishing military stockpiles in Israel.

After leaving Oakland, the ship's next destination was the Port of Tacoma, in Washington state, where there is a power projection platform* located close to the McChord Air Force Base. The Cape Orlando will be prepared to deliver tanks, armored personnel, carriers, and mobile rocket launchers, as well as troop trucks, cargo trucks, and Humvees.

Swelling ranks of protesters occupied Berth 20 and shut it down. The departure of the ship was delayed for more than nine hours.

A group of young Palestinians, their energy fueled by the loss of family and community, breached the Homeland Security Department's MARSEC security perimeter. While they scaled the fence, they must have thought of their siblings shot dead by Israeli forces when they approached the walls bounding Gaza.

Protesters lashed the boat back to its mooring lines on the bollards. Three locked themselves to the ladder leading onto the ship, adding significant delay. They are currently being held in custody by the police.

The protest was called by the Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC) less than 24 hours after the U.S. House of Representatives passed a \$14.3-billion aid package to Israel. Merchant marine workers told AROC about the ship.

"We know that the ship is destined as a military ship to Israel because of the courage of workers," [says Lara Kiswani](#), AROC executive director.

"We're hoping that when it reaches Tacoma, the workers will not load that military cargo, that people of Tacoma will show up to protest this genocide, and that workers around the world will continue to stop ships like this anywhere they may be found," she said.

“We are simply trying to call for an immediate ceasefire and stop the aiding of the genocide of my people.”

The protest grew quickly even though there had been little time to organize the action. Speakers denounced President Biden’s cruel hypocrisy of talking about a “humanitarian pause” to the epic massacre of Palestinians in Gaza.

Kiswani said: “Today we showed the world: No business as usual while Israel commits genocide against the Palestinian people. This genocide is being funded by our government and they’re sending weapons starting from our city.”

ILWU solidarity with Palestine

Clarence Thomas, a retired longshore worker and former secretary-treasurer of International Longshore Workers Union (ILWU) Local 10, spoke to the rally. He called out to the merchant marine crew of the military cargo ship to let them know that longshore and maritime workers in Gaza could not get work.

As an African American worker, he said he had experienced the scourge of apartheid in the U.S. — the inability to find a job, the theft of land and homes, as well as genocide.

Bishop Tutu, Nobel laureate, criticized Israeli policies toward the Palestinians as “humiliating,” and said those policies were familiar to all Black South Africans under apartheid.

“ILWU Local 10 has had a long record of solidarity with the Palestinians. In 2014 they blocked an Israeli ship after Israeli commandos launched a murderous attack on a flotilla bringing aid to Palestine. During another assault on Gaza in 2021, longshore workers refused to unload Israeli cargo in Oakland, Seattle, Tacoma, and Vancouver, British Columbia.”

Thomas added that he wasn't surprised to see this demonstration just a week after dockworkers in Belgium pledged not to work any ships destined for Israel.

Sharif Zakout, speaking for AROC, said: "Israel's ability to commit genocide against the people of Gaza is entirely dependent on U.S. military aid. We are here to sound the alarm on this U.S. military ship bound to Israel, to disrupt this war machine, and to do whatever we can to stop the killing of our loved ones in Gaza."

AROC reported that as many as a thousand people joined in the demonstration against U.S. military support for Israel. Communities in the Pacific Northwest have already called for more protests to block the military supply vessel.

** A power projection platform is an Army installation set up to mobilize and generate forces and project those forces anywhere in the world at any time.*

