

# L.A. fights back: Mass resistance erupts against ICE raids and military occupation

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Confronting the National Guard in Los Angeles. SLL photos: Maggie Vascassenno

Los Angeles, June 9 — For three straight days, furious protests rocked Los Angeles

as federal ICE gangs terrorized working-class communities. Sunday saw the largest crowds yet, reflecting mounting outrage among broader layers of the population.

President Donald Trump branded Los Angeles a city in “state of rebellion” and federalized the National Guard, ordering 2,000 troops into the city. Within 24 hours, he escalated further — announcing the deployment of 700 Marines to LA’s oppressed communities. The country’s second-largest city now sits under military occupation.

ICE has been rampaging across L.A., snatching up workers in mass raids — and this may only be the beginning of what is to come throughout the country.

Sources say the raids are expected to continue for a month — at least that may be the plan by the fascists in the White House. But, as has happened so many times throughout history, the capitalist rulers seem to have underestimated the resolve of the working class.

This began last week, when Trump’s fascist Deputy Chief of Staff, Stephen Miller, ordered ICE gangs to carry out Trump’s demands and triple the number of detentions of undocumented workers compared to earlier this year.

In response, ICE shifted from mainly kidnapping smaller numbers from their homes or on the streets to raiding workplaces and waiting outside immigration courts. They are now kidnapping much larger numbers at a time.

Families are being ripped apart as the raids and arrests have spiked, and entire neighborhoods have hit the streets in a courageous defense against the escalating workplace invasions.



## **Community resistance erupts across the city**

The anger throughout the city is palpable, and the protests over the last several days have drawn throngs of people, both from L.A.'s migrant communities and their supporters. On Friday, June 6, thousands faced off against ICE agents aided by Los Angeles cops for hours, enduring tear gas, rubber bullets and flash bang grenades as the new Gestapo tried to break up a protest at the downtown L.A. Federal Detention Center. The LAPD is, by law, prohibited from assisting ICE in any of its activities, a law they've blatantly defied.

Another standoff lasted all day long near a Home Depot in the town of Paramount and also in Compton on Saturday. In Paramount, the sky was filled with tear gas and



smoke from fires lit in the street by protesters. Late in the day, ICE vehicles were pelted with rocks as their caravan was chased out.

On Sunday, the Detention Center became the epicenter again, with tens of thousands in a standoff with ICE and the police agencies that are illegally aiding the racist attacks. Many thousands marched and blocked the 101 freeway in a spectacular demonstration of solidarity with the victims of this reactionary rampage.

For three days now, protesters have been sprayed with tear gas, and some have been seriously injured by projectiles from the gas canisters and flash bang grenades, but they've kept coming back. They've hurled debris back at the secret federal police agents who had plenty of protective gear. They've yelled and chanted, refusing LAPD orders to disperse. Anti-ICE and anti-Trump graffiti are now visible on the walls of numerous government buildings in the Civic Center area of downtown Los Angeles.

The brave responses of people in L.A.'s communities have been similar to those in the Boston area, Minneapolis, San Diego, Chicago, Seattle, and other communities in recent weeks. Now, the anger has simply exploded on a much larger scale.

### **Trump declares 'state of rebellion'**

The repressive forces of the capitalist state are momentarily caught off guard by widespread anger and by the people's determination to stop the fascist abductions and deportations. The U.S. ruling class appears to be confused and possibly even at odds with each other over how to respond.

L.A. is supposed to be a sanctuary city - the claim is that none of the local police agencies are supposed to aid ICE operations. But, L.A. County Sheriffs and LAPD have been conducting a war against the community to try to clear out protesters

from the communities.

The brass from both agencies say that they're not helping ICE operations, but if ICE agents claim to be in danger, the LAPD joins in attacking the communities. Clearly, sanctuary claims are a smokescreen. Local police forces arrested nearly 60 people on Friday and Saturday.

ICE detained 118 workers on immigration charges over the same two days, including SEIU California President David Huerta. He required hospitalization after being knocked to the ground by ICE agents and hitting his head on a curb. Huerta faces federal charges of obstructing access to a worksite.

As important Democratic Party figures, California Governor Newsom and Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass are saying they are in opposition to Trump and his fascist gangs. Both raised objections to the raids in the press. Newsom went so far as to dare DHS leader Tom Homan to arrest him.

But as Ron Gochez pointed out on "[Democracy Now](#)" on June 9, Newsom is still ostensibly in charge of the state's National Guard.

Gochez told listeners, "Talk is cheap. Gov. Newsom can order the National Guard to stand down and has not done so. Here in Los Angeles, Mayor Karen Bass is saying she is against the raids, well, why are her police officers aiding and collaborating with ICE to attack the community? ... Those rubber bullets and the gas they're shooting are aimed at the wrong people. They should be aimed at the agents who are trying to kidnap the people in our community."



John Parker, pictured above in red at the Federal Detention Center, facing off with National Guard and ICE HSI. Parker is the coordinator of the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice and a member of the steering committee for the Community Self-Defense Coalition.

### **Coalition builds community defense network**

Gochez is a leading member of Unión del Barrio, which initiated the broad Community Self-Defense Coalition. Over 80 organizations participate in weekly meetings to strategize, help to organize protests, and importantly, patrol the streets to spot ICE agents preparing for raids.

When community patrols spot ICE vehicles, they go to work warning workers and handing out literature to advise people of their legal rights, which may help them step away from being abducted by ICE. When they encounter an ICE operation as it is happening, they use sound equipment to project their voices and let would-be victims know that, without a warrant, ICE is not legally allowed to enter a home or a workplace.

The reach of the coalition's strategy is expanding week by week. A group of activists from Ventura County - 60 miles to the north of L.A. - that has been in touch with CSDC leaders, prevented deportations when a factory worker they had been in touch with refused to let ICE agents into the Oxnard, California, factory and turned them away.

Much of the U.S. media is now clucking its collective tongue to shame protesters over "violent" protests. They may be referring to several self-driving taxis that were torched, harming no one. So far, the violence has been from ICE and the police.

Gochez ended the Democracy Now interview with an answer to the self-righteous condemnations when he closed the show by saying, "The Trump administration is trying to make an example of Los Angeles, which is the heart of the Mexican and Central American community in the U.S. We cannot afford to fail. The resistance will continue. We will be peaceful when we can, but when we face violence, we have every right to defend ourselves."

