

Standing together against ICE and police brutality in Baltimore

written by Penny Pinotti
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The phrase “juntos somos más fuertes,” meaning “together we are stronger,” encapsulates the message of the Peoples Power Assembly’s car caravan held on July 12.

The caravan of approximately 17 vehicles traversed Baltimore's deeply segregated city, passing through predominantly Black neighborhoods like Sandtown-Winchester and predominantly Latine neighborhoods like Highlandtown.

The cars in the caravan led chants and played protest songs in both Spanish and English. As the cars drove past, residents of Baltimore peered out their windows and stopped on the sidewalks to wave or raise a fist in solidarity.

The chants of the caravan echoed the sentiments of the talks given at the parking lot before the procession: With solidarity, we can stand up to the violence used by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and police that terrorize our community.

The struggles of the Black and Brown communities are not separate; the police brutality against the Black community and the violence that ICE uses to abduct and deport members of the migrant community are the same tactics.

The speech from an organizer with the Peoples Power Assembly that kicked off the event is presented here:

I want to thank you all for coming out and showing up for the community. Today, I will be providing a brief update on Kilmar Ábrego García as well as speaking about the other racist actions the government has taken against the Latinx community.

As you may know, Kilmar Ábrego García was wrongfully arrested by ICE and deported to CECOT, the mega-prison in El Salvador that is notorious for human rights violations. His deportation was hasty and did not allow time for any sort of due process. After the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the U.S. government needed to facilitate Mr. Ábrego Garcia's release from CECOT and his return to the States, the Trump administration claimed it had no power to do so.

However, the federal government magically found the authority to bring Kilmar back

to the U.S. in June so they could put him on trial for alleged human trafficking, based on a traffic stop in Tennessee in 2022. Mr. Ábrego Garcia pleaded not guilty to these charges.

An assistant director of ICE, Thomas Giles, testified that if Kilmar is released on bond from Tennessee, he will be detained by ICE and deported to a third country: either Mexico or South Sudan. Ábrego Garcia's legal team is asking for a 72-hour notice before deportation if he is released from jail and detained by ICE. Right now, we are awaiting the Judge's ruling.

Let's be clear: ICE arrested and deported Kilmar to what is essentially a torture facility because of his skin color, and they have him awaiting a criminal trial now to cover up their mistakes. We need to act and make our voices heard for Kilmar and for the members of our community targeted.

Speaking of deportations to South Sudan, ICE deported eight men there: seven of the men are from Cuba, Laos, Myanmar, and Mexico, while only one is from South Sudan. These men were held in a shipping container in Djibouti before being sent to South Sudan, where they are now in the custody of the government in South Sudan.

As seen by the mass arrests and deportations by ICE, Kilmar's story is not an exception. ICE is targeting people based on skin color and has arrested citizens and people with residency. The racist arrests and deportations are not stopping; this "Big Beautiful Bill," which should be called the "Big BS Bill," expands funding for immigration enforcement to \$170 billion.

This includes \$45 billion to build new detention facilities, like the facility known as "Alligator Alcatraz," \$47 billion for "border wall construction," and increases ICE's yearly budget to \$30 billion. Trump has also promised 10,000 new ICE agents, making a total of 30,000 ICE agents. That makes one ICE agent per 11,000 people in this country.

The new detention facilities planned will be like the inhumane facility known as Alligator Alcatraz, which is a concentration camp made of tents in the Florida Everglades and is not fit for human beings. This horrific facility has already flooded, serves spoiled food, has fluorescent lights on 24/7, and lacks water for bathing. We need to continue to be out in the streets and keep our voices loud until our community members are no longer abducted and sent to inhumane camps to wait for deportation.



I don't know if you guys have seen the new music video Bad Bunny released on the 4th of July, but the video ended with a black screen and the phrase, "juntos somos más fuertes," meaning, "together we are stronger."

This phrase is true. I know what's happening now is demoralizing, but we need to remember that together, we are strong and have the power to fight for our community. We need to keep talking about what's happening. Do not let Kilmar be forgotten. We must keep raising our voices until these racist attacks on community members end.

To get our energy going for our demo today, we're going to do a classic chant where we say, "el pueblo unido, jamás será vencido, " which roughly translates to "the people united will never be defeated."

