

# Ecuador: Leftist Luisa Gonzalez rejects election results and claims fraud

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 15, 2025



Luisa Gonzalez calls fraud in Ecuadorian elections.

Today Ecuadorians were called to the polls for the runoff elections, which pitted leftist candidate Luisa Gonzalez against incumbent President and Trump supported Daniel Noboa. The election day was marked by a series of setbacks, including complaints of irregularities, violations of democracy and the activation of a new state of emergency which allowed the most extreme militarization the country has ever experienced. In addition, the arrival of international observers was prohibited, which generated even more doubts about the transparency of the process.

Despite this complicated context, at the end of the day, the National Electoral Council (CNE) announced the victory of right-wing billionaire Daniel Noboa, which has raised questions about the veracity of the results. According to the CNE, with more than 90% of the ballots counted, Noboa would have obtained 55.94% of the votes, while Revolucion Ciudadana movement, candidate Luisa Gonzalez had received 44.06%.

Just on the surface those numbers are hard to believe considering the backing Gonzalez received after the first election in February from a number of other parties including the left leaning indigenous Pachakutik Plurinational Unity Movement; and yet her numbers went down in this round of voting.

Shortly after this announcement, Luisa Gonzalez, presidential candidate for the political movement Revolucion Ciudadana, expressed her rejection of the results. In a strong statement, she affirmed that she does not recognize the electoral result and denounced a fraud in the registration of votes, designed to benefit President Noboa.

"Ecuador is living a dictatorship. I refuse to recognize these results. I refuse to believe that a country chooses violence over change. How can these results they are showing be credible, in the midst of so many irregularities?" questioned Gonzalez. "Ecuador cannot continue to be governed by a president who only thinks about the enrichment of his family, and not about the path towards the definitive peace of the country. We must be united now more than ever".

Gonzalez also made a call to the population, stating: "I refuse to believe that people prefer lies instead of the truth. We are going to ask for a recount of the votes and for the polls to be opened".

Yesterday Noboa issued a presidential decree to close the borders making it impossible for international observers to attend. As if that was not enough Noboa ordered 45,000 of soldiers to be posted in the streets and in the polling stations themselves as a way of intimidation to voters who already live in a climate of violence. A delegation from the U.S. based Black Alliance for Peace (BAP) delegation that had arrived earlier confirmed this overwhelming presence of the military during voting in Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city, especially in poor and AfroEcuadorian communities.

The situation in Ecuador remains tense, and the response of the international community and citizens will be crucial in the coming days. The demand for transparency and justice in the electoral process has become a clamor throughout the country, while Ecuadorians await a resolution that guarantees the integrity of their democracy.

## **How Ecuador reached this runoff election**

Last time Ecuador held elections, in 2023, the country's national assembly had been dissolved and then-President Guillermo Lasso had faced potential impeachment for a corruption scandal involving embezzlement of public oil transport funds.

This led to a political crisis that saw snap presidential elections usher in Daniel Noboa, a multi-millionaire with a direct lineage to Ecuador's encrusted oligarchy, mainly through his father, Alvaro Noboa, a billionaire, the richest man in Ecuador who controls the Noboa Group of Companies, and also Noboa Corporation, which has more than 128 companies in Ecuador and around the world. Up to that point, his political experience amounted to one term in the National Assembly.

## **Rooted violence**

Ecuador faces the 2025 elections in a context of violence and insecurity that has escalated alarmingly in recent years. The country closed 2024 with a rate of 38.76 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, which places it among the most violent in the world. In total, 6,964 violent deaths were recorded, an average of one every hour and 15 minutes.

Although this figure represents a slight decrease compared to 2023, the most violent year in the country's history, it still reflects a security crisis resulting from the growth of organized crime, prison massacres and institutional fragility.

Since 2020, starting with Lenin Moreno's administration, at least 16 prison massacres have left hundreds of victims, many of them dismembered or burned, exposing the state's inability to contain violence.

## **A country under constant “states of exceptions”**

The government of Daniel Noboa, like his predecessors Lenín Moreno and Guillermo

Lasso, has resorted to states of exception as a response to insecurity. In 2024, Ecuador lived more than 250 days under this measure, including the declaration of an “internal armed conflict” to confront gangs such as Los Choneros and Los Lobos, linked to international drug trafficking.

This decree allowed the Armed Forces to take control of prisons and public security, but also generated complaints of human rights abuses and violations. Cases such as that of four minors, Steven, Josué, Ismael and Saúl, detained, beaten and murdered in the custody of the Armed Forces, whose bodies were later found burned in the surroundings of the Taura Air Base, where they were taken after being arbitrarily detained, without evidence, after leaving a soccer game a short distance from their homes, according to what their parents later declared; have exacerbated criticism of the use of military forces in civilian functions.

## **Energy crisis and its origins**

Ecuador is facing one of the worst energy crises in its recent history, a situation that has not only transformed the daily lives of its citizens, but has also marked the political, economic and social situation of the country on the threshold of the 2025 general elections. With power outages of up to 14 hours a day, economic losses in the millions and a government struggling to regain control, uncertainty dominates the national scene.

The current crisis has multiple causes, among them, the lack of maintenance and investment in the country's hydroelectric power plants, a problem that has been dragging on since the government of Lenín Moreno.

Added to this is a severe drought which, according to the government, is the worst in 60 years, and which has significantly reduced the generation capacity of hydroelectric power plants, the main energy suppliers in the country.

However, experts point out that the drought is not the only determining factor. While other countries in the region have faced similar scenarios, Ecuador is the only one that has experienced such prolonged daily blackouts. This, according to analysts, is due to poor government management, insufficient planning and the lack of implementation of alternative energy projects.

## **Economic and social impact**

The effects of the blackouts, which commonly last for 14 hours a day, have been devastating. According to data from the Quito Chamber of Commerce, in just two months of outages, the industrial sector lost U.S.D 4 billion, while the commercial sector reported a decrease of U.S.D 3.5 billion. In total, economic losses amount to more than U.S.D 9.5 billion since the rationing began in 2023.

The social impact has been no less alarming. Uncertainty about the timing of power cuts, unfulfilled government promises and the lack of clear information have generated an atmosphere of distrust. In addition, the energy crisis has led to massive layoffs, affecting key sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture and commerce. According to the Ministry of Labor, in September 2024, 3,647 termination notices were registered, 40% of them due to untimely dismissals.

## **The political management of the crisis**

The government of President Daniel Noboa has been at the center of the debate. After assuming power in a context of energy instability, his administration promised to solve the crisis by January 2025. However, experts assure that there are no technical figures to back up this claim. The president's credibility has also been affected by the resignations of high-ranking officials, such as the Minister of Production and the Minister of Energy, who left their posts in the midst of the crisis. The lack of effective communication and the improvisation in the planning of the cuts have increased the perception of citizen discontent.

## **Migration, unemployment and insecurity: the other faces of the crisis**

The lack of employment and deteriorating economic conditions have driven an unprecedented wave of migration. Between January and July 2024, there was a migration deficit of almost 100,000 people who left the country and did not return, reflecting widespread discontent. This trend comes on top of a climate of insecurity exacerbated by drug trafficking, which has impacted both communities and the productive sector. According to the latest estimates by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility, there are already more than 2.4 million Ecuadorians living outside the country, which represents about 10% of the population.

In an ominous sign of the increasing U.S. backed militarization of Ecuador CNN has reported that mercenary military contractor and Blackwater founder Erik Prince joined in law enforcement operations on Saturday that included raids on homes in Guayaquil.

Source: [Resumen Latinoamericano - English](#)



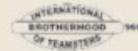
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# LA's Community Self-Defense fights ICE fascism

By John Parker

Los Angeles — There is an urgent need to build principled unity to confront the rising threat of fascism, a threat that spreads relentlessly like a virus, intensifying attacks on Black, Brown, and working-class communities at record levels.

While figures like Donald Trump and Elon Musk may be the loudest voices advancing this agenda, the Democratic Party under Joe Biden and Kamala Harris were complicit — funding and supporting Israeli genocide and deportations at home as tools of political control.

Barack Obama, despite his progressive reputation, oversaw more than 3 million formal deportations during his presidency — the highest number under any administration. That brutal legacy of “formal removals,” in which individuals are forcibly expelled from the U.S. under court order, set the stage. Biden and Harris continued down this path, even as they publicly claimed to support immigrant rights and racial justice.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass has likewise failed to live up to her rhetoric. Despite claims of prioritizing safety, she has remained silent on the LAPD’s long-standing cooperation with ICE, which continues to terrorize immigrant and migrant communities. The label “sanctuary city” becomes a cruel oxymoron when families are ripped apart in

*Continued on page 2*

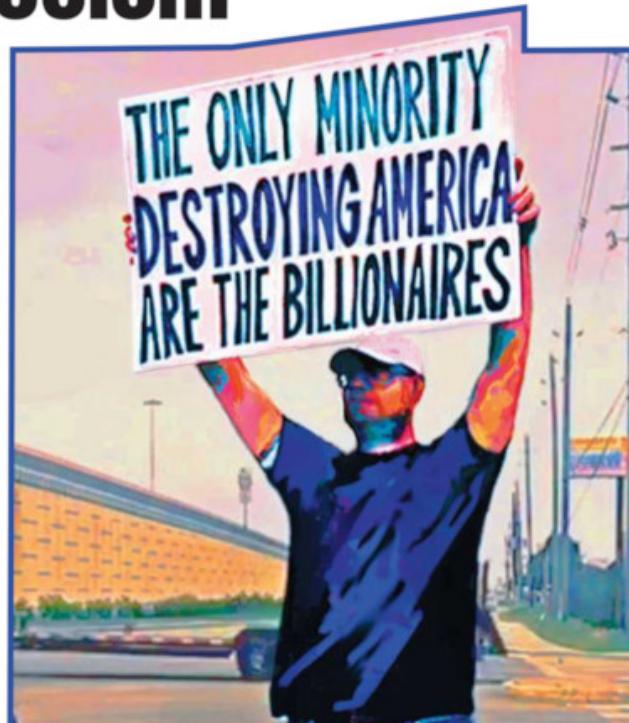
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Baltimore’s segregation law

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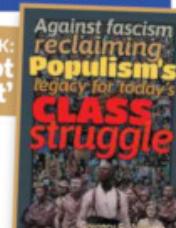
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PALESTINE LAND DAY:  
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- LA's Community Self-Defense fights ICE fascism
- Postal workers rally against privatization
- Billionaires are the problem, not im/migrants
- The camouflaged U.S. invasion of Panama
- Melinda Butterfield links trans justice to global struggles
- Honoring courageous women
- LA activists rally for Palestine, trans rights, against ICE and fascism
- Baltimore's Urban Reads Bookstore, activist faces white supremacist attacks
- Baltimore's long history of racist redlining
- New book challenges Trump's 'populist' label
- Put People First campaign launched in Louisiana with 'stop the cuts' rally
- What actually reduced opioid deaths?
- Trump's tax breaks vs. public health: HHS layoffs could deepen opioid crisis
- 'Netanyahu bombs Gaza hospitals, Musk shuts them down'
- Protest in Los Angeles commemorates Palestinian Land Day
- Massive D.C. protest targets U.S. role in Gaza genocide
- Gaza solidarity clinic defies crackdown at Wayne State University
- 50501 rallies vs. Trump but not Democrats or imperialism
- Pentagon downplays Elon Musk visit for secret China war plans
- Profit over peace: European capitalists push for war
- Trump's escalating trade wars and military ambitions
- Trump wants a super bigot to be ambassador to South Africa
- Fifty years after reunification, Vietnam's struggle still inspires
- Jubilados de la Industria Eléctrica de PR, en riesgo de perder sus pensiones
- Gobierno local arrodillado ante compañías de gas estadounidense



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# The camouflaged U.S. invasion of Panama

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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Panama's opposition parties accused the U.S. of launching a "camouflaged invasion" amid escalating tensions over the U.S. military presence in the country. Following U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's recent visit, President Donald Trump confirmed troop deployments, stating, "We've moved a lot of troops to Panama."

Hegseth cited the need to "secure" the Panama Canal from Chinese influence, announcing increased U.S. military activities at four former bases vacated in 1999 under the Torrijos-Carter treaties, which stipulated the canal's neutrality and prohibited foreign (i.e., U.S.) military installations.

## **'Without firing a shot'**

Opposition leader Ricardo Lombana condemned the U.S. actions as an invasion "without firing a shot."

On April 4, the National Front for the Defense of Economic and Social Rights (FRENADESO) denounced the large-scale operation in Panama that the U.S. is orchestrating.

The week before Hegseth's arrival, military forces from Panama and the United States began conducting the joint exercise Panamax 2025, with "protection" drills for the interoceanic canal "against possible threats."

### **Memories of 1989 U.S. invasion**

The military exercise involves the arrival of members of the U.S. Armed Forces, who participate in joint tactical and operational training activities. This U.S. military operation evokes painful memories of the 1989 U.S. invasion, Operation Just Cause, causing widespread concern among Panamanians. A separate agreement granting preferential canal fee reimbursements to U.S. Navy vessels has raised further controversy, seemingly violating neutrality provisions.

Demonstrations across the country against both U.S. policies and Mulino's administration are expected on April 12, highlighting widespread discontent and the deepening crisis surrounding Panama's sovereignty.

The U.S. operation is meant to reassert control over the Panama Canal with a military occupation at four bases in strategic locations: Colón's Coco Solo and Rodman, Balboa, Howard, and the Darién Gap — a critical migration route.

### **FRENADESO condemns concessions**

FRENADESO says Mulino's administration has capitulated to U.S. demands, citing concessions such as migrant detention policies, the sale of Balboa and Cristóbal ports to U.S.-based firm BlackRock, cybersecurity collaboration with U.S. Southern Command, and the withdrawal from China-linked agreements like the Belt and Road Initiative. The group also warns of a classified U.S.-drafted defense pact, written

exclusively in English, bypassing Panama's constitutional requirement for legislative approval.

"This government has subordinated itself to U.S. interests, from immigration to infrastructure," FRENADESO stated, condemning the incremental arrival of U.S. troops and equipment, including advanced weaponry and aircraft.

### **Protests against austerity**

Hegseth's visit followed a 48-hour teachers' strike and construction worker protests against austerity measures, with unions now vowing to rally against the "sell-out" to "U.S. imperialism."

The United People's Alliance of Panama stated: "The country is being handed over with the four military bases that have been talked about. We cannot accept that. In this country, several generations of Panamanians fought for the sovereignty of the country, and today the dictator [Mulino] wants to hand over the sovereignty of this country and that cannot go unnoticed."

"We request international solidarity from peoples around the world and progressive, democratic, and revolutionary governments. We call for struggle and popular mobilization in defense of our national sovereignty. We reject Pete Hegseth's presence in Panama."



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# Judge says Trump can deport Mahmoud Khalil over his political beliefs

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 15, 2025

The Trump administration's push to deport Palestine activist and former Columbia University student Mahmoud Khalil is based on an accusation of "antisemitism," according to a [source](#) who saw the government's filing.

Facing a court deadline to hand over evidence justifying Khalil's, the Department of Homeland Security submitted a two-page memo from Secretary of State Marco Rubio citing the Trump administration's authority to expel noncitizens that have the potential to damage the foreign policy interests of the United States.

A day after the memo was submitted, Louisiana Judge Jamee Comans [said](#) she had no authority to question Rubio's decision.

"I would like to quote what you said last time that there's nothing that's more important to this court than due process rights and fundamental fairness," Khalil told the judge. "Clearly what we witnessed today, neither of these principles were present today or in this whole process."

"This is exactly why the Trump administration has sent me to this court, 1,000 miles away from my family," he continued. "I just hope that the urgency that you deemed fit for me are afforded to the hundreds of others who have been here without hearing for months."

## Rubio's memo

Rubio's memo, which was obtained by the Associated Press, concedes that Khalil's time in the United States has been "otherwise lawful," but that allowing him to stay in the country would hinder the U.S. government's "policy to combat anti-Semitism around the world and in the United States, in addition to efforts to protect Jewish students from harassment and violence in the United States."

"Condoning anti-Semitic conduct and disruptive protests in the United States would severely undermine that significant foreign policy objective," Rubio added.

A Department of Homeland Security spokesperson initially accused Khalil of being connected to Hamas, but the administration has never provided any proof of this accusation. The political organization is not mentioned at all in the memo.

Court documents filed at the beginning of the trial suggest that the Trump administration might rely on a provision from the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), which was used to target Holocaust survivors suspected of being Soviet agents.

"An alien whose presence or activities in the United States the Secretary of State

has reasonable grounds to believe would have potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences for the United States is deportable,” [reads](#) that provision.

Rubio also calls for the deportation of another permanent resident in the filing, but their name is redacted.

“This document shows that the Secretary of State’s determination that Mr. Khalil is deportable is based solely on his free speech activities as he has alleged in his habeas litigation,” said the Center for Constitutional Rights’s Samah Sissay, who is one of Khalil’s attorneys. “The government has not stated any legitimate foreign policy interest that is negatively impacted by Mr. Khalil but instead erroneously attributes prejudiced views to him for participating in the student encampment at Columbia University and speaking out against the United State’s support of Israel’s genocide in Gaza. The government has not met its burden and Mr. Khalil should be released.”

“The only argument that they have for deporting Mahmoud Khalil is that he engaged in ‘thoughtcrime’,” [tweeted](#) journalist Hannah Gais.

Mahmoud Khalil was [arrested](#) by ICE agents outside his home in New York on March 8, after the State Department revoked his student visa and green card. He has spent the past month in an immigration detention center in Louisiana.

A federal judge blocked Trump’s deportation order and the case has been proceeding in a New Jersey court.

Khalil’s arrest kicked off a wave of [repression](#) against students, many of them connected to the Gaza solidarity protests of last spring. Some self-deported to avoid arrest, while others face court proceedings. Last month Rubio estimated that he [revoked](#) at least 300 visas.

Additionally, the Trump administration has [blocked](#) billions of dollars in government

funding to schools as part of its alleged campaign to combat antisemitism. The government has implied that universities can regain the congressionally approved funding by cracking down on Palestine activism across their campuses. Some schools, like Columbia and Harvard, have already begun to comply with Trump's recommendations.

Last week, Khalil dictated an op-ed that was published in the *Columbia Spectator*.

"The student movement will continue to carry the mantle of a free Palestine," he wrote. "History will redeem us, while those who were content to wait on the sidelines will be forever remembered for their silence."

Judge Comans has given Khalil's attorneys until April 23 to request a stay of his deportation. If they don't meet that deadline, she will order him to be deported to his birthplace of Syria, or Algeria, where he is a citizen.

Source: [Mondoweiss](#)



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Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass has likewise failed to live up to her rhetoric. Despite claims of prioritizing safety, she has remained silent on the LAPD’s long-standing cooperation with ICE, which continues to terrorize immigrant and migrant communities. The label “sanctuary city” becomes a cruel oxymoron when families are ripped apart in churches, schools, or their homes, while city leaders look the other way.

This hypocrisy has not gone unnoticed. The growing anger and disillusionment

across the country is fueling the rise of grassroots resistance — nowhere more powerfully than in Los Angeles County, where the Community for Self-Defense Coalition (CSDC) is taking bold steps to protect vulnerable communities.

### **Community Self-Defense in action**

Formed in February, the CSDC is already a force to be reckoned with. Over 60 organizations have joined this coalition, with the Steering Committee comprising *Unión Del Barrio* (which initiated the project), *People's Struggle - San Fernando Valley*, the *Association of Raza Educators*, *Santee MEChA*, *Centro CSO*, *Stop LAPD Spying Coalition*, and the *Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice*.

The coalition's central mission is to inform the public of their rights during ICE raids, conduct community patrols, and disrupt deportation operations through rapid response. Their outreach includes flyers, door-to-door engagement, and workplace visits, empowering residents to demand that agents produce signed warrants before entering homes or places of business.

These actions have made a difference. On Feb. 23, in the city of Alhambra in Los Angeles County, 12 ICE vehicles were forced to leave empty-handed after community defense patrols showed up. In another instance, as Ron Gochez of *Unión Del Barrio* described it to the *LA Times*, multiple LAPD vehicles were seen alongside federal agents during a raid in South Central. Using a megaphone, Gochez warned residents not to engage, not to open doors, and not to sign anything.

Such patrols are a form of organized resistance, not just against ICE but against the systemic violence carried out by both Democratic and Republican administrations. The U.S. is home to over 50 million immigrants, most of whom are workers contributing significantly to the economy. And yet, they are repaid with fear, detention, dehumanization and deportation — sometimes in countries they've never lived in.

A recent [“60 Minutes”](#) report on the torture of deported immigrants highlighted just how far this system has rotted. While Trump intensified the cruelty, the roots go much deeper. California politicians like Gavin Newsom and Karen Bass have prioritized police budgets over housing, health care, and community safety. LAPD funding now tops \$1 billion, even as the death toll from police violence continues to climb — disproportionately affecting Black and Brown residents.

### **Naming the violence: this is genocide**

What we are witnessing must be named for what it is: genocide. According to the United Nations Convention on Genocide, the term includes not only mass killings, but also actions intended to cause serious harm, impose life-threatening conditions, and destroy families and cultures. By these standards, the U.S. government’s actions — at home and abroad — meet the definition.

This is not a new argument. On Dec. 17, 1951, legendary figures Paul Robeson and William Patterson submitted a historic petition to the United Nations: “We Charge Genocide: The Crime of Government Against the Negro People.” Nearly a century later, the conditions they described persist and in many ways have worsened.

Police killings of Black and Brown youth continue to break records annually. Immigrant children are separated from their families, deported, or left to languish in detention centers. In Gaza, over 100 children are now killed or injured by U.S.-supplied weapons every day in a genocidal war enabled by U.S. foreign policy. The silence of mainstream politicians and media is deafening — and damning.

### **The legacy of self-defense**

In the face of such violence, the right to self-defense becomes not just moral but essential. The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, inspired by Malcolm X and rooted in the struggles of oppressed peoples worldwide, offers a historic model.

## On the Black Panther Party:

"The practices of the late Malcolm X were deeply rooted in the theoretical foundations of the Black Panther Party. Malcolm had represented both a militant revolutionary, with the dignity and self-respect to stand up and fight to win equality for all oppressed minorities; while also being an outstanding role model, someone who sought to bring about positive social services; something the Black Panthers would take to new heights. The Panthers followed Malcolm's belief of international working class unity across the spectrum of color and gender ... From the tenets of Maoism they set the role of their Party as the vanguard of the revolution and worked to establish a united front, while from Marxism they addressed the capitalist economic system, embraced the theory of dialectical materialism, and represented the need for all workers to forcefully take over the means of production."

Their 10-point program of Panthers remains deeply relevant today — especially these demands:

**Point 5:** We Want Education for Our People That Exposes the True Nature of This Decadent American Society.

Education must teach true history, not sanitized narratives. Ethnic studies are under attack for a reason — they awaken resistance.

**Point 6:** We Want All Black Men To Be Exempt From Military Service.

We believe that Black people should not be forced to fight in the military service to defend a racist government that does not protect us. We will not fight and kill other people of color in the world who, like Black people, are being victimized by the White racist government of America. We will protect ourselves from the force and violence of the racist police and the racist military by whatever means necessary.

The Trump Administration and the Democratic Party would like us to fall in line with U.S. wars and proxy wars. Imperialist wars rob us of basic social services and push austerity and the killing of our international community, even those that share our ethnicity. Self-defense means protecting our international multi-national community.

**Point 7:** We Want An Immediate End to Police Brutality and the Murder of Black People.

We believe we can end police brutality in our Black community by organizing Black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our Black community from racist police oppression and brutality. The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives a right to bear arms. We therefore believe that all Black people should arm themselves for self-defense.

Last Monday, the Supreme Court greenlit the Trump administration's plan to resume mass deportations of Venezuelan migrants, using 1798-era war powers. In dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor warned that the decision allows for people to be "taken off the streets, forced onto planes and confined to foreign prisons with no opportunity for redress."

This is the legal foundation of fascism — and it is here.

We may not yet be ready to meet this threat with armed resistance. But we can begin by building movements strong enough to dismantle the institutions that enable it. We must continue organizing for police to be disarmed and replaced.

Right now the Community Self-Defense Coalition is the primary opponent of fascism here in Los Angeles. On May 1, it will take to the streets again, with even more strength, in defiance of state terror and in defense of the people.

*John Parker is the Coordinator of the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice - LA*



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# **Jubilados de la Industria Eléctrica de PR, en riesgo de perder sus pensiones**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
April 15, 2025



En Puerto Rico, hay varios sindicatos valientes y combativos que no están aliados a sindicatos estadounidenses que muchas veces vienen aquí solo para ampliar su matrícula e imponer sus intereses a los nuestros a expensas de las exigencias locales. Uno de éstos, el que ha sido más militante y fuerte, ha sido la UTIER. La Unión de las y los Trabajadores de la Industria Eléctrica y Riego de Puerto Rico.

Sin embargo, por haber sido tan enérgico y exitoso en la defensa de los derechos de su matrícula y también en la solidaridad con las luchas del pueblo, ha sido objeto de campañas de difamación por parte de las diferentes administraciones del gobierno local y sus aliados que tienen una agenda neoliberal y anti sindical.

Trabajadores jubilados ya, que construyeron y mantuvieron nuestro sistema de energía, muchos a costo de sus vidas, ahora están a punto de perder sus pensiones porque los gobiernos de turno dejaron de aportar a su Sistema de Retiro. Un sistema que era robusto y bien administrado, ahora está quebrado a propósito como parte de

la corrupción del gobierno y su campaña en contra de la unión.

Y esta semana, la Junta de Control Fiscal impuesta por el Congreso estadounidense, quien realmente gobierna aquí, ha ordenado que se aumente la tarifa básica de la luz para pagar sus pensiones. Una afrenta al pueblo que ya ni puede pagar los 8 aumentos de luz desde que fue privatizada. También una malévolas maniobra, parte de su campaña antisindical para poner al pueblo en contra de los pensionados.

A pesar de que la unión ha presentado propuestas para atajar la situación, la gobernadora ni siquiera les ha recibido para dialogar. Pero esta semana se sabrá cuál será la decisión del gobierno y mientras tanto, los y las jubiladas seguirán marchando, algunos hasta con sus tanques de oxígeno, con muletas o andadores, cada miércoles de 10 a 12 del día para exigir que se cumpla su contrato de jubilación.

Desde Puerto Rico, para Radio Clarín de Colombia, les habló, Berta Joubert-Ceci



# Naval blockade of Cuba

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 15, 2025

An African country with coastlines on the eastern Atlantic decided to donate 3,000 tons of horse mackerel to Cuba, the delicious oily fish that swims in shoals from the Canary Islands and Senegal to the Gulf of Guinea and Baía dos Tigres, in Angola. As 2024 began, and since the island has no merchant ships, the nation that made the donation asked a local company to take charge of processing and transporting the cargo.

No shipping company was willing to make the direct voyage to the port of Mariel in Cuba for fear of US sanctions, according to a report published by the daily *Granma* which addressed [specific examples of the US blockade](#) of the island. A test container was sent to evaluate the costs, via a much longer itinerary, which included several stops at ports in China. The voyage began on February 18, 2024, and ended on May 3, 75 days later. According to estimates, transporting the full cargo along this route would cost \$9.7 million.

The African country, in solidarity, could not afford such a sum and decided to sell the 3,000 tons of horse mackerel and use the money to buy frozen fish in a port near Cuba. "The money raised was only enough to buy 386 tons in nearby waters," says *Granma*.

The sophistication of the blockade has reached indescribable levels, with measures to frighten shipping companies and make it increasingly difficult for cargo to arrive by sea in Cuba, which, after all, has no other means of regular trade for large containers of food and fuel. What was previously prevented by warships patrolling territorial waters is now made impossible by sanctions, regulations and legal threats that turn every Cuban port into a risk zone for any shipping company.

In 2024, an amendment to the US National Defense Authorization Act established that any port under the jurisdiction of a government considered to be a state sponsor of terrorism, as is the case of Cuba according to Washington's unfounded accusations, will be evaluated as a port with insufficient security measures. Therefore, US customs controls, which were already very strict (any ship arriving on the island had to wait six months to travel to the US), were tightened. The 2024 regulations apply to all commercial vessels arriving in US territory after having visited Cuban ports, with the exception of those that have docked at the Guantanamo Naval Base.

Last week another bombshell went under the media radar, a common practice of the US administration, which has the world turned upside down with the tariff war, while the State Department's little wars are carried out with equal perfidy but greater stealth. Thus they established special conditions for all [commercial ships that have visited Cuban ports](#) on their last five stopovers before reaching US territory. Even those that comply with this requirement will be subject to special surveillance, they will be guarded by coastguards and the guards must have total visibility of the exterior of the ship, both on the land and sea sides.

Apart from the new blow aimed at shipping companies that dared to trade with the island and carry a test container with horse mackerel, the new measure nips in the bud the transportation from the US of food, electrical appliances and cars that were allowed during the Biden administration, under one-sided conditions and operated by the private sector in Cuba. The measures are aimed at further deteriorating cooperative ties on security issues and increasing the extraterritoriality of the blockade.

The difference between the direct naval blockade and this one is purely formal: if before a military vessel was enough to prevent trade, today the threat induced through a sanctions system that suffocates as much or more is enough, without the

need for a single gunboat.

This week the White House special envoy for Latin America, Mauricio Claver-Carone, acknowledged in Miami that the Trump administration is taking a “more surgical” approach against the government of Miguel Díaz-Canel, with the aim of strangling the Cuban economy. What he does not say is that this cruelty has a direct impact on the civilian population and leaves unbearable images linked to an increasingly precarious daily life in Cuba, where not even the horse mackerel escapes.

Source: [La Jornada](#), Resumen Latinoamericano -English



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## China's response to Trump's escalating trade war

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
April 15, 2025

Since U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order in February to impose a 10% tariff on all imports, the world has witnessed a confounding series of unilateral tariffs placed on both friends and foes of the U.S.. On self-declared 'Liberation Day', on 2 April 2025, Trump unleashed a series of 'reciprocal' tariffs on 57 countries, with China being amongst the hardest hit with an additional 34% tariff. A week later, Trump abruptly announced in a Truth Social post a 90-day reprieve of tariffs on countries that 'have not, at my strong suggestion, retaliated in any way', while those on Chinese goods soared to 125%. The tariff on China was then raised to 145% on 10 April 2025.

These developments represent the most sweeping escalation of the U.S. trade war against China to date and have injected significant instability into the global economic and political scenario. The justifications behind the tariff hikes are on multiple grounds, including China's alleged unfair trade practices and failure to meet commitments under an agreement to purchase U.S. goods, as well as an effort to 'level the playing field'. These thinly veil the United States' broader strategy aimed at containing China's rise as a geopolitical and economic actor. The trade measures also come amid broader Trump's stated aims of reducing trade deficits, revitalising domestic manufacturing, addressing perceived unfair trade practices, enhancing national security, and generating revenue. How the broad waves of tariffs will achieve those aims remains to be seen.

### **China 'will by no means sit by'**

China responded swiftly and determinedly to the wave of tariffs by announcing a symmetrical 34% tariff on nearly all U.S. goods. These retaliatory measures represent a significant escalation from China to Trump's initiation of the trade war [in 2018 and 2019](#), when China had gradually increased duties on about \$110 billion worth of U.S. goods. Now, virtually every category of U.S. goods - agriculture, energy, manufactured products, and consumer goods - faces extra import taxes at

the Chinese border. China has focused its response on some of the sensitive sectors of the bilateral trade, with hefty tariffs on soybeans, grains, and meat to reduce China's reliance on U.S. agricultural goods. Beijing also raised duties on U.S.-made automobiles and auto parts. Likewise, machinery, chemicals, aircraft, and other high-value manufactured goods are on China's tariff lists. In addition to tariffs, China also introduced a series of other measures, from renewing intellectual property investigations into U.S. firms operating in the Chinese market, new restrictions on Hollywood film releases, and a suspension of cooperation on the regulation of fentanyl.

In its official discourse, Beijing has stood firmly in indicating it has 'abundant means' to retaliate and 'will by no means sit by' if its interests are harmed. It has consistently emphasised the need to oppose economic coercion and protect national sovereignty. China has been increasingly put in a position to defend the very international norms and multilateral frameworks that the U.S. has built in its own favour. This is highlighted by China's complaint filed to the World Trade Organisation, arguing that the U.S.'s 'reciprocal tariffs' violate the international trading system.

### **Patriotism is not just a feeling - it is an action**

Domestically, the trade war has generated widespread public attention, including on China's social media platforms. From 4 to 11 April, the hashtag 'China's countermeasures are here' accumulated over 180 million posts on the Weibo platform in less than a week. Chinese social media platforms such as Weibo, Xiaohongshu, and Zhihu have been filled with patriotic expressions of support for the government's strong stance, represented by posts such as, 'Patriotism is not just a feeling - it is an action'. Meanwhile, the increased price of imported goods has also motivated Chinese consumers to move to domestic alternatives, with one user writing, 'Who needs Starbucks when we have Luckin Coffee? Why buy an iPhone

when you can get a Huawei? Forget Tesla, go with BYD'. Others expressed scepticism of the effectiveness of the U.S. tariffs in protecting its economy and its people's interests, and confidence that China can withstand these escalations. Echoing this view, one user wrote, 'Congratulations to the U.S.A for receiving a 34% tariff on all its products! Fortunately, very few of the things that ordinary Chinese people eat or use come from the U.S.A'. With every escalation from the U.S., the voices that may have initially called for negotiation have also given way to the overwhelming unity among the Chinese people that the tariffs have provoked.

While the U.S. is a major trading partner, it's not China's only trading partner. Learning from the trade war launched during Trump 1.0, China has been steadily strengthening its domestic production and consumption while diversifying its trade in recent years, strategies which are beginning to bear results. [Chinese exports](#) to the U.S. in 2023 constituted about 2.9% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), falling from 3.5% just five years ago. The combined value of exports and imports between China and the U.S. is about \$688.3 billion in 2024, representing about 3.7% of China's GDP, which, although significant, is not decisive to the Chinese economy. Meanwhile, Belt and Road Initiative countries [accounted for 50%](#) of China's total foreign trade in 2024, up from 44% in 2021. Trade within the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which includes ASEAN members Japan and South Korea, as well as others, [represents 30% of China's total trade](#), growing 6.3% from 2021 to 2023.

Despite these gains, structural challenges remain. High-tech industries are still dependent on U.S.-aligned supply chains for critical components, including advanced semiconductors and specialised software. Meanwhile, foreign direct investment inflows have shown signs of slowing amid geopolitical tensions and concerns over regulatory risk.

## **The Global South in an uncertain landscape**

Trump's trade measures have not been limited to China. Countries across Asia and Latin America, including Vietnam, Cambodia, Mexico, and Brazil, have also seen higher tariffs on goods ranging from textiles to steel and agricultural products. Smaller economies may have less means and political willingness to retaliate against these punitive unilateral measures, especially in the face of Trump administration strongarm tactics, which U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent summarised, 'Do not retaliate and you will be rewarded'. Within this context, South-South cooperation frameworks are receiving increased attention, together with renewed calls to strengthen trade within the BRICS, RCEP, and other multilateral platforms.

The trajectory of the trade war remains uncertain. On the one hand, Trump's administration appears committed to an aggressive strategy of economic decoupling, regardless of the costs to global supply chains. On the other hand, China is likely to double down on domestic economic strengthening and continue building ties with trade partners outside the U.S. orbit, especially prioritising Global South countries. What is increasingly evident is that the old assumptions of global economic integration are eroding; meanwhile, U.S. imperialist aggression is on full display.

On April 8, recalling the words of President Xi Jinping from 2018, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning posted the following quote on her social media: A storm may churn a pond, but it cannot rattle the ocean. The ocean has weathered countless tempests – this time is no different.

That China has stood firmly against this storm, characterised by U.S. belligerence and bullying, is something of political significance, not only for the Chinese people but for countries of the Global South.

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*This article was produced by [Globetrotter](#).*



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# **50501 rallies vs. Trump but not Democrats or imperialism**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
April 15, 2025



Los Angeles — 50501 is a relatively new organization, having emerged only a few months ago, yet it claims to have already organized 50 protests across all 50 states. Its mission, as stated on its website, is to confront what it sees as the Trump administration's ongoing attacks on constitutional rights and the expansion of executive power at the expense of legislative democracy.

In Los Angeles County, the group has gained traction, drawing significant crowds. On April 5, thousands joined a march from Pershing Square to City Hall, signaling a growing base of support.

Looking ahead, 50501 is planning further actions that include appearances by prominent Democratic politicians, with particular focus on figures like Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who are expected to arrive in Los Angeles in mid-April.

However, the enthusiastic participation of the Democratic Party in these events

raises important questions. While it's true that Trump-era policies incited widespread anger, the Democratic Party itself has long-standing contradictions that complicate its role in any genuine anti-war or anti-imperialist movement. Historically, both Democratic and Republican administrations have supported the expansion of NATO and U.S. military interventions abroad. Under President Obama, for example, the United States carried out mass deportations — more than any other administration — and participated in NATO-led operations that devastated countries like Libya.

These contradictions were apparent on April 5 in Los Angeles. The Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice had endorsed the protest and planned to send a speaker, this writer. However, the center's representative was removed from the speakers list after refusing to support continued U.S. military aid to Ukraine and voicing opposition to NATO.

And the exclusion came as a surprise. But then a flyer was circulated with the event's materials that included "Hands Off NATO" as one of the rallying demands. Had the Harriet Tubman Center been aware of this, it might not have endorsed the event at all. Given that the disinvited speaker was Black and representing an organization named after a person embodying the fight against slavery, the irony was difficult to ignore. NATO, after all, played a key role in the 2011 destruction of Libya — once Africa's most prosperous nation — leading to mass poverty and even the return of open-air slave markets.

When questioned, organizers claimed they could not platform a speaker who wasn't in solidarity with Ukrainian refugees. Yet this narrow definition of solidarity excluded the Russian-speaking population of the Donbass region, many of whom opposed the 2014 U.S.-backed coup in Ukraine.

In 2022, as a Senate candidate and writer for Struggle-La Lucha, I traveled to Ukraine and Russia between May 1 and May 12 on a fact-finding mission organized

by what is now known as the Struggle for Socialism Party and the Harriet Tubman Center. We sought to uncover stories suppressed by Western media — stories that challenged the prevailing NATO narrative of the war in Ukraine.

In the Lugansk People's Republic, I was guided by Alexey Albu, a leader of the socialist organization Borotba (Struggle) and a survivor of the May 2014 massacre in Odessa. During the [Maidan coup](#), which installed a far-right regime aligned with Western imperialist interests, violence erupted across the country. In Odessa, neo-Nazi mobs firebombed the House of Trade Unions, killing nearly 50 anti-fascists — some burned alive, others beaten or shot while fleeing the flames. Alexey narrowly escaped and later fled to Crimea for safety.

In March 2024, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Ukraine was responsible in this massacre, yet Western media barely covered the verdict. The court's findings confirmed the Ukrainian government's complicity, through inaction, in enabling these atrocities.

While in Lugansk, I visited [the Rubizhne shelter](#) and the villages of Sokilnyky and Krymske, where recent fighting had driven out extremist militias like the Right Sector and Azov Battalion. Swastikas scrawled across walls, shell fragments, and testimonies from civilians painted a grim picture of life under these ultra-nationalist forces.

The people of Donbass responded to the 2014 coup by declaring independence, forming the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. In referenda, 89% of Donetsk and 96% of Lugansk residents voted for self-rule. Rather than honoring this, the Ukrainian government, backed by the U.S., labeled them terrorists and launched brutal military operations.

By early 2022, 150,000 Ukrainian troops were massed on the Donbass border. The death toll since 2014 had already reached 14,000. In desperation, the breakaway

republics called for Russian assistance to protect their people.

If we want to understand what could have happened without that intervention, we need only look at Gaza. With U.S. support, Israel's military continues to devastate the region, killing or injuring 100 children per day. That same U.S. military-industrial complex fuels Ukraine's war machine.

Consider Andriy Biletsky, the founder of the Azov Battalion and current commander of Ukraine's 3rd Army Corps. In 2010, Biletsky infamously stated that Ukraine's mission was to lead the "white race" in a crusade against "Semite-led Untermenschen." Untermenschen is an unscientific term used by Nazi Germany, implying an ethnic designation. They are supposedly inferior people who fall into a category of basically anyone not "accepted" by the German Nazis.

White supremacy morphs to serve the interests of U.S. imperialism. NATO and U.S. wars are never about democracy or freedom. They are about maintaining global dominance, fascism, poverty, and the subjugation of our international working class – starting with the Global South, Black and Brown, Palestinian, and anyone getting in the way of U.S. imperialism and its IMF and World Bank.

We must be wary of progressives who sidestep these issues, especially those who avoid discussing Palestine, minimize police brutality, or demonize countries like Iran, Cuba, China, Venezuela, Nicaragua, the DPRK, and Russia. Of course, no state is without contradictions — but we must focus on the largest contradiction of all: the unchecked violence of U.S. imperialism.

As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "The greatest purveyor of violence in the world today is my own government." To vilify nations resisting U.S. hegemony while ignoring our own country's war crimes is not just hypocritical — it's dangerous and the greatest contradiction. That cannot be tolerated.



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# **Billionaires are the problem, not im/migrants**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
April 15, 2025







## Here are the facts

**"Im/migrants are taking our jobs" is a huge lie**

Immigrants do not have the power to hire and fire. Bosses and billionaires are laying off workers. This year alone, bosses announced 497,052 cuts to workers' jobs.

This year has marked the highest number of job cuts since the first quarter of 2009, when 578,510 layoffs were announced. The lion's share of these losses — approximately 60,000 — has resulted from firings and layoffs within the public sector ordered by Elon Musk and Donald Trump.

As reported by the Challenger Report, "It is up 93% from [the 257,254 cuts](#)

[announced during the same period in 2024](#) and an increase of 227% from the 152,116 cuts announced in the previous quarter."

Not a single im/migrant is responsible for job or service cuts; they are not stripping and dismantling Social Security or Medicaid, or announcing mass layoffs in the high-tech and retail industries.

### **'Im/migrants don't pay taxes,' another lie**

Every time any worker, regardless of their citizenship status, buys clothing, gas, and other necessities, they can be taxed. Every paycheck is taxed. Who doesn't pay taxes: the richest man on the earth, Elon Musk, and a bunch of other crooks who depend on government handouts like Amazon's Jeff Bezos, Silicon Valley oligarch Peter Thiel, BlackRock's Larry Fink, the Waltons who own Walmart, and dozens of other billionaires..

Not a word is muttered about the war profiteers who have sucked tax payers dry or the bottomless giveaways of bombs and military equipment to Israel to commit genocide of the Palestinian people.

There are so many more lies and half-truths to debunk, like why does anyone leave their beloved home and familiar life behind to take a death-threatening trip to migrate? We will save that for another time, but let's get to the big question.

### **Why is Donald Trump, and for that matter, a lot of others, whipping up anti-immigrant fear?**

The reason isn't that different from the reason that racism and anti-transgender bigotry are being pushed and trumpeted.

Of course, Donald Trump, his MAGA supporters, and most of the billionaires and bankers, even if it's behind closed doors, actually believe the most vehemently racist

things about Black and Brown people. And this includes their personal views of immigrants.

However, the deeper reason, and the reason that none of their ultra-rich so-called elite colleagues object, is that it is profitable for their bottom line. The game is to distract, shift the blame, and scapegoat groups with the least power.

By dividing and distracting workers, they can rob the entire working class, cut services, destroy our unions, and make it difficult to fight back. The end game is to create a pool of desperate and poor workers willing to work for the lowest possible wage, foregoing benefits.

This is profitable for big business and banks, especially during a recession, whether they are willing to declare a recession or not, and during a general capitalist contraction. The capitalist system and the capitalists themselves are driven to increase exploitation or toward destruction through war.

The result of the terror war on im/migrants is already apparent in Florida, where the legislature is proposing rolling back child labor laws to push younger workers into undocumented workers' jobs.

In the final analysis, all of us are im/migrants with the exception of Indigenous people whose land was stolen and Black people whose ancestors were ripped from Africa and enslaved. The antidote for hate and division is unity and solidarity. Reject the anti-immigrant propaganda and unite to stop capitalist robbery. Defend all of our lives.

