

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article9044>



USA

The battle of Los Angeles

- IV Online magazine - 2025 - IVP605 - June 2025 -

Publication date: Saturday 14 June 2025

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As the mass ICE raids began on Friday, June 6 in Los Angeles, members of Tempest's LA branch participated in rapid response and other protest efforts with mass organizations into the weekend. The Community Self-Defense Coalition, in which Tempest members participate, is a key formation that coordinates LA's rapid response efforts. Branch members were actively involved in defense efforts during skirmishes across downtown LA, the pitched battle in the city of Paramount, and rapid response efforts to repel ICE in the city of Pasadena. They compile and record their experiences in this report throughout the weekend, covering the first days of mobilization.

FRIDAY JUNE 6

The first day involved nearly a dozen raids near downtown Los Angeles, Sun Valley and North Hollywood neighborhoods, and LA County suburbs, including Pomona. Emergency rallies were called and converged around the downtown Metropolitan Detention Center. After dispersing protesters there, different law enforcement officers went over to the adjacent district of Chinatown to stage late night around 9pm. There was lots of contradictory and confusing information spread across different protest chats throughout the night. At first, we were told that they were setting up for a night raid; later, word on the block was that they were setting up for Trump's 'border czar' Tom Homan's press conference at 7 am the next morning. Dozens of FBI agents stationed in a parking lot in Chinatown on Hill St., later joined by Border Patrol, LAPD, and Homeland Security. Protesters quickly gathered to monitor and heckle them, soon outnumbering law enforcement, which also reinforced their numbers. Know Your Rights information was blasted on megaphones in English, Spanish, and Cantonese, as protesters informed local residents of their rights.

Things became more intense as armored personnel carriers and additional law enforcement personnel poured in, although it was still unclear why they were staging in Chinatown. Some protesters, including bikers, tried to block vehicles from entering the lot. Some identified undercover officers and their vehicles on the protesters' side and successfully heckled them to leave. Others followed various vehicles exiting the lot to figure out where they were going. Soon, law enforcement occupied the whole street beyond the lot to pressure the protesters out. Loud popping sounds started, with some claiming that they were sound cannons being blasted by the police. The pressure from protesters continued into midnight, after which all law enforcement retreated without explanation. There were no further reports of mass raids and Homan's press conference the next day. (Homan later appeared on television the next afternoon to announce the deployment of the National Guard.)

SATURDAY JUNE 7

On the second day, rapid responders rushed to the city of Paramount in the morning, located about a half hour drive south of LA, upon reports of an ICE raid at a Home Depot. Paramount developed into a war zone throughout the day. Paramount is a majority low-income and Latinx area, and one of LA's key industrial regions. The organized left has little presence in this area, but the militancy seen on June 7 demonstrates the spontaneous power of Brown working-class youth in defending their communities. ICE cars were seen burning. Hundreds of law enforcement officers were deployed throughout Paramount, throwing tear gas and flash bombs as protesters fought back and the Home Depot barricaded itself for safety.

As the Paramount battle stretched on, supporters continued to respond to different reports of ICE raids across LA, as some continued to support detainees at the downtown detention center. More people began gathering back at the

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detention center early in the evening. Around 100-150 protesters were there around 7pm. LAPD gathered en masse to use tear gas and shoot pellets at protesters in this area between 8-10pm. Most of the street around the detention center was cleared out and occupied by hundreds of LAPD officers. In the meantime, Homan confirms on national television that he'll be federalizing the California National Guard for deployment in LA, against Governor Gavin Newsom's dissent. It was unclear that night what this meant or when exactly the Guard would arrive. The day-long battles in Paramount stretched west into the city of Compton, which was one of the last sites where militant mobilization continued that day.

There were reported ICE sightings at probably six other locations throughout southern California but the majority of protest and state activity occurred primarily in the vicinity of the Home Depot in Paramount and Compton that went into the early morning Sunday, and again at the Downtown LA Metropolitan Detention Center where protesters had been gathered the entire day.

SUNDAY JUNE 8

LOS ANGELES

On June 8, Angelenos woke to the news that over 2000 National Guard had been deployed. A protest in the predominantly Latinx working-class Boyle Heights neighborhood was planned by Centro CSO and other immigrant rights and local groups for the morning. Crowds had also already begun to gather back at the detention center downtown.

Activists gathered at Mariachi Plaza to protest the ICE raids of the previous two days. Speakers included labor movement icon Dolores Huerta. Speakers generally emphasized not only the rights of immigrants but also applauded the courage and rapid response of the activists gathered, as well as the importance of showing the Trump administration that people will continue to fight back against his draconian methods. The gathering mobilized to march down 1st Street for 1.5 miles to the Federal Metropolitan Detention Center on Alameda Street where they met a larger crowd of activists that had been gathering from the previous two days. Within minutes of arrival, the authorities fired upon the crowd of protesters, presumably with only tear gas, and the front of the crowd began to disperse. There did not appear to be any serious injuries, though many seemed unprepared for tear gas, and some were adversely affected. The Centro CSO organizers, worried about crowd safety, encouraged those remaining from the Mariachi Plaza rally to return to Boyle Heights. Many of us stayed to record the events, in particular the fully militarized presence of local, state, and federal authorities, including the National Guard. I left soon afterward when the tear gas became too overwhelming.

The crowd at the detention center remained at about 100-300 people for the next two hours and had not yet encountered further violence. Protesters stood off with the 20 California National Guard members stationed at the rear of the building. Eventually, a squadron of 15 LAPD cars arrived further down the road, prepositioned to block one exit along the walled-in road. A large portion of the crowd then moved around the guarded door and went around the corner, escaping a potential kettle. The police formed a line around their vehicles and appeared to fully surround a portion of the protesters, but did not make arrests.

Around this time, a rally called by the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) at the city hall nearby began to march toward the detention center. It was unclear whether the march was part of the original rally plan or if the crowd spontaneously decided to march. This mass contingent arrived just in time to reinforce the surrounded protesters near the detention center. As they arrived, the police were forced to retreat promptly. Thousands of protesters continued to flood the streets outside the Detention Center throughout the afternoon and occupied the nearby intersection at Alameda and Temple. Some remained around the intersection while others continued to march. This contingent went through Little Tokyo back to the Federal Building.

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At this point, the crowd was too large to be effectively organized. Some remained at the Detention Center, others continued to march, while a smaller group occupied the freeway.

A formation of LAPD officers opposed the crowd of 200 protesters, who kept a close distance from the line. The police continued to shoot volleys of less-lethal weapons into these different sites, though protesters remained steadfast for hours. Pro-Palestine slogans and clothing were not only ubiquitous, but many of those furthest in the front defending the protests from the police were wearing keffiyehs. We witnessed multiple people around us injured. Street medics helped many protesters tend to their injuries. The police soon declared unlawful assembly but were unable to fully sweep the intersection for hours. At one point, the police declared that they would begin arrests in a minute, but were halted by a protester's car that slowly rolled through the intersection with a child sitting at the window, raising a Mexican flag with his fist up. The crowd protected them, and the sweeps were delayed for another half an hour.

After another stand-off, the protesters crossed over the median of the freeway, stopping the flow of traffic in the opposite direction. As soon as this happened, the police widened their line and began shooting flash bangs in the sky above the protesters on the freeway. Peaceful protesters were met with disproportionate state violence that increased with time, including being fired on with less-lethal guns from rooftops. Several Waymo automated cars were burned. Significant numbers of protesters remained in the streets at various points around downtown LA into the evening and after nightfall. They were forced off the freeway but continued to march to other locations. As the protesters' numbers grew thinner, police aggression increased. By sunset, the remaining protesters were forced to construct makeshift barricades using benches and signs.

PASADENA

In Pasadena, word got out early in the morning across rapid response chats that ICE and DHS agents were staying at three local hotels: the Westin, Dena Hotel, and the new AC Hotel. There were reports of ICE agents questioning hotel workers who were servicing the rooms. By noon, Unite Here and the National Day Laborers Organizing Network brought out more than one hundred people from Pasadena and Altadena to inquire about and protest ICE's presence. Faith leaders, community organizations and politicians, including Mayor Victor Gordo, showed up afterwards, and the crowd swelled to several hundred. Speakers at the rally denounced the intimidation and the hotel's collaboration with ICE as they profit from family separation.

Throughout the day, protesters marched and circled the block, vowing to stay until ICE left. Some of the ICE vehicles' tires were damaged. The protest served as a rallying point for the community. Community organizations like AUSAIME and the pro-immigrant band Los Jornaleros del Norte kept spirits high throughout the day with chants, cumbia, and anti-ICE songs. After several hours of protests, local politicians who had been intermediating with management announced that ICE had been asked to leave the hotel, and the crowd erupted in jubilation. Still, protesters did not leave until the agents had checked out and continued waiting, anticipating any movement. Since the morning, workers had been informing the rally of potential ICE movements, and everyone anticipated the humiliating exit from the hotel. After fixing their popped tires under the hot sun, ICE agents began to exit swiftly from the parking structure where protesters waited for them at all exits. As vehicles swerved through the parking structure, they were chased out by triumphant protesters who celebrated their victory, chanting "Si se pudo!" — (We did it!).

MONDAY JUNE 9

Early in the morning, families of several workers (mostly women and youth) who were detained in Friday's mass raid at Ambiance garment factory, gathered for a press conference, assisted by the Garment Workers Center and other community organizations. A Tempest member assisted with security. The detained workers were the main providers in their families, and the families shared that they have not been able to hear from them yet. They called on ICE to

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free them, and to leave our communities. A group of over 100 people gathered to support them, including Palestinian and Palestine solidarity organizations, Indigenous organizations, progressive clergy, and other community nonprofits. The families also shared that Ambiance has still not released the workers' owed wages to them, and a delegation of them went to the company offices after the press conference to demand these wages. There was no visible police presence or counter-protests, but many of us were informed throughout the event that ICE activity was beginning again in other parts of LA, including in Huntington Park, and the Fashion District again just a mile away from us. Many attendees went directly to the Grand Park rally to support David Huerta and SEIU right after.

Later that morning at 11 am, there was a rally at Grand Park in downtown led by SEIU in support of SEIU California President David Huerta, who was detained for participating in the protest against the mass raids at the detention center on Friday. There was curiously light police presence at first, despite the clashes over the weekend. In addition to SEIU International and various locals, many other major unions were present, including AFSCME, UHW, LULAC, Teamsters, UNITE HERE!, ILWU, LIUNA, IBEW, and IATSE. There were also representatives of various civic and community organizations, like Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE), LAUSD, CARECEN, UCLA Labor Studies, and LA County. The DSA-endorsed City Councilmember Ysabel Jurado was also present and spoke.

The general theme was that David Huerta's arrest is also an injury to all of us. It was a demonstration of around two to three thousand people that affirmed courage in the face of the federal presence sent by Trump. A band, Las Cafeteras, performed some songs like "La Bamba," "If I Was President," "Stand By Me," which also asked the audience what they would change if they were president for a day. Prominent labor leaders spoke and affirmed labor's role in the fight against fascism, including SEIU president April Verrett, Dolores Huerta, NAACP president David Johnson (who connected workers' and civil rights, drawing on the Black struggle). Johnson powerfully declared that the Black struggle has taught him that saying nothing about the oppression of the most vulnerable would be an invitation for more abuses against everyone. Representatives from Justice for Janitors USWW, like Luis Fuentes, spoke about David Huerta's labor bona fides.

But there was little emphasis on the need to build a resistance outside of the Democratic Party. Dolores Huerta emphasized nonviolence and the need for electoral strategies during the midterms, which was reaffirmed by the SEIU Political Policy director. Another policy representative spoke about the importance of forming coalitions with allies in other movements, emphasizing the need for strength in numbers and solidarity.

Police presence and pressure began to ramp up toward the end of the rally, as a student walkout that morning converged at the nearby Federal Building. Hundreds of students and other community members began to join, and police vehicles from other cities, such as Vernon, Torrance, and San Marino, appeared.

The Trump administration announced the deployment of Marines into LA around this time, as mass raids ramped up targeting many cities across Orange County, south of LA.

The situation remains highly fluid, and more protests are sure to occur in the coming days and weeks. There have already been reports of heightened ICE activity for the next 30 days. Tempest LA branch members will continue to participate and report on any resistance activities.

9 June 2025

Source: [Tempest](#).

PS:

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