

Police evict Occupy Oakland demonstrators

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Hundreds of armed police officers in riot gear descended on Oscar Grant Plaza in Oakland, California at approximately 5:00 am Monday morning to evict dozens of peaceful protesters. The show of force was consistent with similar crackdowns on Occupy Wall Street encampments nationwide, including last week in nearby Berkeley.

The crackdown, orchestrated by Democratic Party Mayor Jean Quan, was carried out by hundreds of police in riot gear, made up of forces from the Alameda County, Santa Clara County, and San Mateo County Sheriffs Departments, along with the San Francisco, Hayward, Fremont and Oakland Police Departments.

“We have to bring the camp to an end,” Quan proclaimed at a press conference Monday morning.

Thirty-three protesters were arrested as the immense police force swept through the camp, ripping apart tents and throwing away protesters’ belongings. The tally of Occupy protesters arrested nationwide has passed the 3,000 mark and continues to grow on a daily basis.

Previous police attacks on protesters involved the use of tear gas and flash grenades, leading to the severe injury of at least one protester, sparking mass demonstrations and further police actions.

In a further sign of Mayor Quan’s political troubles in the wake of her violent handling of the Occupy Oakland protestors, her senior legal aide and longtime supporter, Dan Siegel, resigned from his position hours before the raid.

Occupy Oakland responded to the eviction with a call for a convergence at the Oakland Public Library Monday evening at 4:00 pm. Thousands of people

gathered for the demonstration.

The police, meanwhile, have threatened to use force again. They ironically declared the park a “crime scene” and promised a heavy police presence at the demonstrations planned for Monday evening.

“Anyone attempting to lodge should know that this will not be allowed and that tents or lodging equipment will be removed,” Interim Police Chief Howard Jordan said. Jordan had previously defended the use of tear gas against protesters last month.

Also on Monday, civil liberties groups, including the ACLU, filed a lawsuit seeking an injunction to prevent police from using tear gas and other crowd-control weapons against protesters.

In a further attempt to criminalize the Occupy Oakland protesters, Mayor Quan tried to place the blame on the protesters for a recent homicide that took place near Oscar Grant Plaza.

“We had to bring the camp to an end before more people are hurt,” Quan said, ignoring the dozens of injuries inflicted upon protesters by the police.

She failed to mention, however, that an Occupy Oakland medic was the first to arrive on the scene to treat the victim after the homicide took place.

Moreover, Quan and Chief Jordan tried to highlight the financial and physical impact that the Occupy Oakland encampment has had on the City of Oakland.

City Administrator Deanna Santana estimated that between \$300,000 and \$500,000 were spent on Monday morning’s raid alone. Mayor Quan also claimed that in

recent days 179 emergency 911 calls were not answered “because police were downtown monitoring demonstrations.”

By attempting to spin the cost of the demonstrations in their favor, however, Quan and the Oakland Police are making clear where their priorities lie. Though Oakland recently closed five public elementary schools, laid off teachers and city employees, and is threatening deeper cuts to social services, it can “find” hundreds of thousands of dollars to evict peaceful protests.

Though Oakland and Alameda County suffer from some of the nation's highest poverty, foreclosure, and infant mortality rates, and although the Democratic Party-dominated government claims it cannot afford to provide services, homes or jobs for its citizens, local leadership is more than willing to call together law enforcement from across the Bay Area to violently break up peaceful protesters demonstrating against these very problems.



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