

# Protests, police repression continue in Anaheim, California

Kimie Saito  
26 July 2012

Twenty-four people were arrested in violent clashes with police Tuesday night and early Wednesday morning in Anaheim, California at a protest that grew to over 1,000 people in front of the City Hall and downtown area. At least six people, including two members of the media, were injured during the fourth night of angry demonstrations against two fatal police killings last weekend.

Protests against the killing of 25-year-old Manuel Diaz on Saturday continued Wednesday. The eruption of protests—including as many as 1,000 people on Tuesday night—reflects both mass opposition to police brutality as well as anger over unemployment and social inequality in Anaheim.

About 300 officers were mobilized by the Anaheim Police Department and six other Orange County agencies, as well as the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. Phalanxes of riot gear police were stationed outside the City Hall that deployed bean bags, pepper-spray projectiles and rubber bullets against protesters refusing to disperse.

According to the police, 20 adults and four minors were arrested. Charges included assault with a deadly weapon, failure to disperse, interfering with an officer, resisting arrest, and battery.

The two killings that provoked the protests occurred last weekend. On Saturday, Diaz, who was unarmed, was shot by Anaheim police in the back of his head and back after a foot pursuit. On the following night, only a few miles away, police shot and killed 21-year-old Joel Acevedo, one of two men and a woman who fled from an SUV.

At 4:00 Tuesday afternoon protesters began to fill the City Council chamber to address city officials about the police shootings. Later, when the room had become overcrowded, police began preventing people from

entering.

By 9:00 p.m., about 500 people had gathered, and the police then issued a dispersal order. Some of the protesters were seen shouting at the police, kicking police cars, and throwing objects. Then police began firing pepper-spray projectiles and rubber bullets. Crowds set trash can fires, broke windows at about 20 downtown businesses and threw rocks and other objects at officers. The Police Department and City Hall buildings were damaged. The protests continued until 2:00 a.m.

At a press conference Wednesday morning at police headquarters, Republican Mayor Tom Tait praised the police response at the protest as “swift and appropriate.” He called for an “independent” investigation. At least four agencies are expected to join the investigation, including the US Attorney's office, the State Attorney General, the Anaheim Police Department's Office of Internal Affairs, and the Orange County District Attorney's Office.

These investigations will be a whitewash of the role of the police. The recent killings now bring the total officer-involved shootings to eight this year, outnumbering the total homicides in Anaheim.

The Anaheim police officers union defended the actions of its police in the two killings last weekend, describing Manuel Diaz and Joel Acevedo as active members of two of the city's notorious and violent street gangs.

Officials are seeking to pin blame for the unrest on the population of Anaheim, rather than the police killing of an unarmed man. Police Chief John Welter declared that they would “not allow riotous, dangerous violations of the law by anyone.”

Welter threatened further crackdowns on protesters. “We are continuing to examine various videos that

were taken by many individuals in order to identify specific law breakers in the crowd. We'll continue to make arrests whenever possible and those arrested will be prosecuted.”

Blaming the victims for their own deaths, Kerry Condon, president of the Anaheim Police Association, said, “We live in a dangerous world where there are too many violent gang members like Manuel ‘Stomper’ Diaz and Joel ‘Yogi’ Acevedo who spent their young lives wreaking havoc on their neighborhoods and the law-abiding citizens who live there. It was the actions of these gang members, not the police officers, who set these unfortunate events in motion.”

On Wednesday, Diaz’s mother, Genevieve Huizar, countered the claims of police that her son was a gang member. Diaz was “killed, murdered” by the police, she said. Eyewitnesses say that Diaz was shot first in the back, and then in the head.

Huizar also opposed acts of vandalism, which have been used by police as a pretext for cracking down on protests. “I don’t want anyone else killed,” she said. “More than [anything] I want justice for my son.”

She stood with her attorneys, Dana Douglas and James Rumm, explaining that she was suing the city and police department for \$50 million in damages.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**