

ICE raids intensify in San Diego as Democrats, trade unions do nothing

Edmundo Beltran**15 August 2025**

Seven months into the second presidential term of the fascist President Donald Trump the massive assault on immigrants continues to escalate.

The coastal city of San Diego, California, with its standing as one of the nation's prominent urban military hubs and its close proximity to the Mexican border, has been a target in Trump's nationwide deportation campaign.

Since the start of the year, the city has experienced multiple militarized raids that have sparked widespread outrage in a community where over a quarter—344,000 of out a total population of 1,386,932—are foreign-born residents.

To enforce this mass deportation campaign, the administration is using not only Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) but all the armed reserves of the capitalist state, including various federal agencies such as Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), along with the California National Guard and the FBI.

Over the past month the raids have increasingly escalated in their violent and criminal character. Deportation police are under immense pressure from Trump administration officials to meet daily arrest quotas. The administration has abandoned the pretense of fighting "criminal" and "terrorist" elements by targeting areas where workers, students, parents and residents congregate, such as worksites and schools.

On August 7, a parent was arrested in a blatant show of force in the South Bay during a routine morning drop-off of her child near the Chula Vista Elementary School. Kyungjin Yu, an immigrant from South Korea with no criminal history, was separated from her children, as ICE officers removed her from her vehicle and arrested her for the civil offense of overstaying her visa.

Kyungjin is one of at least 30 people taken by ICE in Chula Vista so far. She is one many residents who have

been seized by agents in previously "off limit" areas, such as hospitals and churches.

In late July, masked federal agents seized several workers at a Home Depot in Encinitas provoking outrage in the community. In a video that went viral online, a local resident, who wished to not be named, angrily confronted the immigration Gestapo. The woman told NBC 7 that she and other residents confronted the agents due to their concern over the fact that they were arresting workers, stating, "when masked, armed, unidentified gunmen are standing in the parking lot of our local shopping centers, this is not how we lawfully and ethically enforce our laws."

On July 8, 71-year-old US citizen Barbara Stone was injured when she was handcuffed and detained for eight hours by masked ICE agents at the San Diego Immigration Courthouse. She was detained for allegedly pushing an ICE agent as she was documenting the courthouse arrests.

On June 12, two masked ICE agents detained and handcuffed an Afghan translator with no criminal record and has an active asylum case, including service with the US Army. He was detained as he was waiting for a routine immigration hearing at the San Diego Immigration Courthouse.

The policy of conducting arrests at courthouses came into effect in late May, in an attempt to speed up the 3,000 per day arrest quota demanded by Trump's fascist senior adviser Stephen Miller. In line with this policy, on May 22, some 20 ICE agents swarmed an immigration courthouse in San Diego and arrested at least eight people, according to KPBS.

The most explosive confrontation in San Diego so far between residents and immigration thugs occurred on May 30, when heavily armed agents in military-style tactical gear detained and arrested four workers from an Italian restaurant in the South Park area. The operation

immediately sparked outrage.

San Diegans and asylum seekers seized from their workplaces and homes by the immigration Gestapo are eventually confined at the for-profit Otay Mesa Detention Center. Operated by the private corporation CoreCivic, the facility often holds detainees incommunicado for weeks at a time.

The denial of democratic rights for immigrants and their unlawful detention has generated massive increase in profits for these private prison corporations. CoreCivic, in its second quarter financial reporting for 2025, listed a total revenue of \$538.2 million, up from 9.8 percent from the prior year's quarter.

CoreCivic's Chief Executive Officer Damon T. Hininger openly recognized the company's mutual interest with the mass deportation campaign. He explained that "increasing demand for the solutions we provide, particularly from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), contributed to a strong second quarter, as nationwide detention populations under ICE custody reached an all-time high."

He cynically continued, "We expect the substantial increase in government funding approved during July to result in further increases in the utilization of our existing capacity. Based on the strength of our second quarter financial results and outlook for our business during the second half of 2025, we are increasing our 2025 financial guidance."

The facility, plagued by unsanitary conditions, is essentially a windowless prison. Detainees report being forced into overcrowded holding cells, sleeping on the floor and having medical care deferred that has resulted in hospitalizations. Detainees are under constant surveillance, surrounded by barbed wire fences and armed guards.

Far from being filled with "criminals" and "rapists," ICE data shows 954 of the 1,104 men and 241 of the 258 women held at the Otay facility currently are labeled as "noncriminal detainees."

The developments in San Diego are only a microcosm of a much larger process that is taking place all across the United States. In a measure of the explosive social anger against Trump's attacks on immigrants and plans for dictatorship, on June 14 in San Diego, two weeks after the South Park raid, over 60,000 people marched downtown for the "No Kings" protest.

San Diego, like the state of California as a whole, is a major stronghold of the Democratic Party, yet the most brutal anti-immigrant crackdowns have been held there

with virtually no opposition organized by Democrats at either the state or local levels.

The complicity of the Democrats in these attacks is matched by the trade unions, who have done nothing in response to these violent attacks on workers. Despite the fact that more than 2.3 million California workers are unionized, not a single trade union has called for a work stoppage in opposition to the raids even though they have specifically targeted workers.

This has been particularly evident in the cases of the arrest of David Huerta, the president of SEIU California, during an immigration raid in LA, and the violent raids on farms in Southern California which led to the death of one worker. Even as masked agents viciously target workers, alleged union "leaders" refuse to mobilize the working class in defense of democratic rights.

Rhetorically, the response of union bureaucracies to the immigration raids has been a mixture of empty condemnations of Trump's dictatorial enforcement tactics and empty appeals to the Democratic Party.

Following the May 30 raid outside of the Buona Forchetta restaurant, Christian Ramirez, the policy director of SEIU Local 221, implored "elected leaders who are in Congress ... to do more than just have a press conference about it."

Ramirez concluded by saying "this show of power is meant to send a message, but our message is clear: We will fight back with everything that we have." Since the raid, however, the SEIU bureaucracy has consciously refused to mobilize its workforce to engage in any serious labor action to oppose this crisis.

Instead, the SEIU has held symbolic protests in collaboration with the Democratic Party in order to corral the growing opposition by promoting illusions into the dead end politics of pressuring the Democrats into defending the working class.

The defense of immigrants is fundamentally and unavoidably a class question. The current attacks will be expanded and used against all sections of the working class who resist the dictatorship of capital. The refusal of the trade unions and Democratic Party to meaningfully resist these raids is not a mistake but a reflection of their class interests.



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