

Mobilize the working class to stop ICE murder and bring Lorenzo Salgado Araujo's killers to justice!

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Nearly a week after Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents murdered Lorenzo Salgado Araujo on his way to work in Houston, the perpetrators remain at large.

Salgado and his coworkers were pursued in the early morning by unmarked vehicles that gave no indication they belonged to federal agents. An officer ran alongside their van and opened fire through the passenger side. Witnesses said agents continued shooting after Salgado stopped. They dragged him onto the pavement, shackled him and taunted the other workers as he lay bleeding in the street.

The agents wore no body cameras. ICE immediately issued a false statement portraying the victim as the aggressor, took custody of the witnesses and removed the agents involved from Houston. These actions expose an organized state cover-up of the killing.

This was a state-sponsored extrajudicial murder. The government is trying to cover it up by imprisoning and threatening to deport his co-workers who witnessed the shooting. Surveillance footage and their independent accounts have demolished the government's claim that Salgado "weaponized his vehicle" when ICE agents surrounded him in unmarked cars.

The Socialist Equality Party and *World Socialist Web Site* demand that Salgado's killers be brought to justice. This includes the officers who carried out the murder, the ICE administrators who organized and covered it up, and the Trump officials responsible for the nationwide campaign of terror, up to and including Trump himself. The apparatus of police and paramilitary terror that produced this crime must be dismantled.

This fight must be taken up by the working class, uniting immigrant and native-born workers in an independent movement against ICE and the drive to dictatorship. A mass movement must be built to defend the democratic rights of every worker. It must mobilize the immense economic and social power of the working class through independent workplace and neighborhood committees capable of monitoring and responding to state violence and preparing industrial action.

Salgado was only the latest in a series of state murders against workers of all races and nationalities. Two days earlier,

National Guard soldiers participating in the military-police occupation of Memphis shot and killed 20-year-old Tyrin Johnson. Even the official account does not allege that Johnson fired at them.

In Minneapolis, the federal agents who killed Renée Nicole Good and Alex Pretti remain uncharged. The two were murdered because they opposed the ICE occupation of Minneapolis ordered by Trump.

The state reserves its most savage punishments for those who oppose its crimes. Federal courts sentenced 15 Prairieland defendants in Texas to a combined 556 years in prison under the government's "domestic terrorism" framework. Fifteen Minneapolis residents face federal conspiracy charges arising from resistance to Operation Metro Surge, including neighborhood alerts and blockades of ICE headquarters. Salgado's coworkers are imprisoned while the man who shot him is protected.

The same forces being mobilized against immigrants are being prepared against the entire working class. A government that claims the right to seize people without warrants, deport them without due process and kill those who resist is establishing methods that will be used against strikes, demonstrations and political opposition.

Salgado spent nearly 35 years building homes in Houston and was murdered while collecting a construction crew. Magnolia Park, the neighborhood in which he was murdered, is over 90 percent Hispanic and was built by generations of Mexican workers who laid railroad tracks, dredged Buffalo Bayou, loaded ships and constructed the Houston Ship Channel.

Today, more than 1.2 million foreign-born workers comprise nearly one-third of the Houston metropolitan workforce. They include 175,785 construction workers, 128,505 manufacturing workers and 93,348 workers in transportation, warehousing and utilities.

Houston's working class occupies a strategic position in the national and world economy. The city is a center of American refining, petrochemical production and logistics. The Houston Ship Channel, with more than 200 private and eight public terminals, is the largest American port by waterborne tonnage

and a critical center of world shipping, oil and petrochemical production.

In Minneapolis at the start of this year, the demand for a general strike against ICE won broad support among the tens of thousands who marched against ICE. This was a crucial development, testifying to the central role of the working class in the defense of democratic rights.

But the union bureaucracy, which functions as an extension of management and the government, refused to organize a shutdown of production. Instead, they endorsed a “day of action” while keeping workers on the job. The Democrats directed opposition toward the courts, investigations and the midterm elections.

Trump used the time and space they provided to redeploy federal forces, continue the offensive elsewhere and prepare prosecutions against those who resisted. When the ICE surge in Minnesota ended, union officials and the Democratic Party declared a “victory” in order to lull the public to sleep. Salgado’s murder shows that the offensive had only been redeployed.

National Democratic leaders have largely ignored Salgado’s murder and treated it as a local issue. Texas representatives Sylvia Garcia, Al Green, Christian Menefee and Lizzie Fletcher demand an “independent” investigation, body-camera footage and congressional hearings. Green proposes articles of impeachment. Their answer is to tell workers to vote for Democrats in November.

These proposals are designed to whitewash the crime and contain popular anger while leaving the apparatus untouched. The Democrats support the basic framework of mass deportation and state repression: The Obama administration deported 2.7 million people. In fiscal year 2024, the Biden administration carried out 271,484 ICE removals, the highest annual total in a decade. Trump is expanding the machinery built by both parties and transforming it into an instrument of presidential dictatorship.

The critical question is how the immense and decisive power of the working class can be brought to bear. Workers must establish independent rank-and-file committees answerable to the rank and file itself.

The Socialist Equality Party and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) advocate for the development of independent workplace and neighborhood committees to prepare mass action against ICE violence and dictatorship. The IWA-RFC advocates this strategy and assists workers seeking to establish committees and develop links across industries and borders. Its call must now be taken up throughout Houston and the country.

A working-class movement must fight for the following demands:

- Identify, arrest and prosecute the ICE agent who murdered Salgado, the commanders and administrators responsible for the operation and cover-up, and the DHS and Trump

administration officials directing these crimes.

- Release all surveillance footage, operational orders, communications and other evidence.

- Immediately release Salgado’s coworkers and protect them and their families against deportation, prosecution and retaliation.

- Withdraw and dismantle ICE and CBP, end the raids and deportations, release all immigrant detainees and guarantee full legal and democratic rights for every immigrant.

- Withdraw National Guard troops and federal paramilitary forces from American cities.

- Drop the charges against the Minnesota 15 and all those prosecuted for opposing ICE, and release the Prairieland defendants.

To fight for this program, the working class must prepare now for a nationwide political general strike against ICE terror and dictatorship. A general strike means the organized shutdown of factories, ports, warehouses, transportation networks, schools and other critical workplaces by the working class acting as an independent political force.

Preparation begins with emergency meetings and rank-and-file committees in every workplace and neighborhood. They must include union and nonunion workers, documented and undocumented workers, and residents of every racial and ethnic composition. They should elect trusted and recallable representatives, establish multilingual communications, organize defense against arrest and workplace retaliation, build strike and legal-defense funds and send delegations to other workplaces and communities.

Through these efforts, workers can coordinate demonstrations, workplace actions and political strikes across industries and regions, developing the organization and confidence required for a nationwide general strike. Workers seeking assistance in establishing committees should contact the IWA-RFC.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact