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Updates for May 12th

26 Apr - Dimitra Zarafeta and Marianna Manoura Sentenced

Greece: Dimitra was convicted for her stance in court, for not renouncing her ideology, and for developing her thoughts without weighing up whether this would work against her.

MORE:

via *Abolition Media*

The court must be based on objective criteria, not ideology, and based on this, conversion should be evaluated.

For Marianna, the court did not accept the mitigating circumstances.

For Dimitra, the majority only accepted the paragraph concerning good conduct after the act was committed, that is, inside prison.

Marianna M. and Dimitra Z. were convicted of the following acts: criminal organization; aggravated manufacture of explosive devices; possession of explosive materials, explosive devices, pistols and ammunition; supply and possession of explosive materials; explosion using explosive materials; damage to another's property.

Total penalties...

19 years for comrade Marianna

8 years for comrade Dimitra

29 Apr - 'Flailing' Georgia attorney general condemned over charges for Cop City protesters

Republican Chris Carr accused of trying to revive bid for governor with indictment – 'the last gasp of a dying man'

MORE:

by Timothy Pratt (*The Guardian*)

Georgia's top law enforcement official has drawn accusations of using the weight of his office to lift his own political fortunes by bringing a new indictment against protesters of the Atlanta police training center known as Cop City.

Amid bluster about "holding the line against antifa", Georgia's attorney general, Chris Carr, announced charges against three activists late last week even as his bid to become Georgia's Republican nominee for governor limps along, with less than double-digit support in polling ahead of a 19 May primary.

The move has caused some to question Carr's timing and motives in his bid for political power.

"Carr's gubernatorial campaign is flailing," said Paul Glaze, a veteran of Democratic political campaigns in Georgia. "It's the last gasp of a dying man."

The three protesters have been charged in suburban Cobb County with criminal damage to property and arson, just weeks before the statute of limitations on the charges expired, since the alleged actions occurred four years ago.

In addition, defendants Katie Marie Kloth, Tyler John Norman and Hannah Kass are already named among the 61 people indicted in Carr's 2023 racketeering, or Rico case filed in neighboring Fulton county – the largest use of a law associated with the mafia against a protest movement in US history.

A Fulton judge dismissed that indictment in December on the technical grounds of Governor Brian Kemp not having authorized the prosecution. The state has appealed the judge's decision and Carr's office shared with the *Guardian* a signed letter from Kemp dated 31 December authorizing the attorney general to continue prosecuting such cases.

"Carr didn't file this indictment until after he lost the Rico case," said Matt Scott, editor at the Atlanta Community Press Collective, a digital outlet that launched to report on the movement against the training center and has since expanded its coverage.

"It's an open attempt to bring some sort of punishment against Cop City protesters, nicely timed with the primary next month," he said.

"[But] if his tough on crime narrative were working, he probably wouldn't be in the spot he's in, polling as poorly as he is," Scott added.

Kloth, Norman and Kass now face felony charges that could bring up to five years in prison in connection with actions on 12 May 2022, when they allegedly "intentionally damage[d]" the Smyrna headquarters of Brasfield & Gorrie, one of the lead construction companies on the \$109m training center, by spray-painting windows and walls and allegedly causing a fire in "brush and straw" outside.

Elizabeth Taxel, a clinical professor at the University of Georgia school of law, expects defense attorneys might raise due process concerns of fairness. The new indictment "asks defendants to defend themselves in two jurisdictions for the same conduct, against the same prosecuting entity", she said.

Opposition to the \$109m police training center, which opened last spring, came from a wide range of local and national organizations and protesters, centered on concerns around police militarization and clearing forests in an era of climate crisis. Atlanta police have said the center is needed for "world-class" training and to attract new officers.

The attorney general has been the driving force in the years-long effort to prosecute protesters against the training center. Several of the state's efforts have faltered to date – including dismissal of the Rico case and withdrawal of money laundering charges against the Atlanta Solidarity Fund, a bail fund.

But Carr has persisted. "We are not Oregon. We are not New York. We are not California," he told reporters at a recent press conference. He also underlined that all three defendants were from out of state.

Such criticisms have been hammered by Kemp and assorted officials since the movement against Cop City began forming in 2021, to "name white outsiders, or antifa, as the villain", said Glaze. Activists say this approach ignored a multi-racial groundswell of popular local opposition to the project, including record-breaking attendance of about a thousand at an Atlanta city council meeting.

Kemp has stayed out of the current governor's race and declined to endorse. Carr's effort to continue putting Cop City protesters in the spotlight "has potency in middle and south Georgia", Glaze said. "[But] it's all political posturing ... it's what he's got to work off of."

Xavier de Janon, a defense attorney in the Rico case, said Carr's talking points in bringing the new indictment "match the federal government's obsession with a non-existent antifa".

"I've been saying for years that this is political theater, a political prosecution," De Janon said.

May 5th - Latest Cop City Indictment Drags Former RICO Defendants into New Legal Battle

by Sean Summers (*Unicorn Riot*)

Attorney General Chris Carr has charged three people for a protest that took place nearly four years ago during the movement to stop Cop City in Atlanta. That's according to a new grand jury indictment announced on April 23, which accuses the activists of property destruction and arson.

The charges are the latest in a years-long saga that has seen the state try, and fail, repeatedly to convict protesters and activists who organized against the city's now finished \$190 million police training complex.

All three of the people named in the latest indictment were previously charged as part of a wide-reaching conspiracy case wherein the state attempted to prosecute opponents of the police training facility as a criminal conspiracy. The Racketeering Influenced Corrupt Organization, or RICO, charges brought against 61 activists were dismissed earlier this year when a judge ruled Carr lacked the authority to bring the charges without permission from the Governor.

But in late April, three of the 61 people named in that 2023 indictment were charged with new crimes in an overtly political move by the state's legal representative. Last month, Republican Attorney General Chris Carr announced the charges had been filed as part of his commitment to "fighting Antifa."

Hannah Kass was shocked, if not surprised, when she heard her name mentioned during a press conference Carr held to announce the indictment. Though the RICO charges were dismissed, and Kass was hopeful the ordeal was over, she was braced for more backlash from Georgia's courts.

"I sort of had a gut feeling that it wasn't over," she told *Unicorn Riot*.

A recent Ph.D. graduate, Dr. Kass has long been entangled in legal battles in Georgia. For three years she's been subjected to court hearings, delayed trials, and the threat of long prison sentences if convicted as one of the dozens named in the state's RICO case that attempted to portray activists as domestic terrorists.

Since 2023 she's had to balance school, work, and other responsibilities while living under the persistent threat of being convicted for domestic terrorism.

But even without a conviction Kass has felt the impacts of being labeled as a domestic terrorist — the fear and trauma of the day she was arrested hang heavy on her day-to-day life, and she worries these drawn-out legal battles may impact her ability to find work and lead a regular life moving forward, she said.

The latest indictment says Kass and others participating in a protest outside the office of Brasfield & Gorrie, the contracting company that oversaw much of the construction for Cop City, spray painted a building, damaged a fence and set some shrubs on fire. Carr has accused Kass and two codefendants of two counts of criminal damage to property and arson.

Brasfield & Gorrie and its leadership were frequent targets for activists organizing against the project. Opponents regularly showed up at the company's offices and worksites demanding that they drop the contract the city had granted them to oversee Cop City's construction.

Fireworks and other noisemakers, alongside chanting, yelling and speaker systems, were common at these events. On May 12, 2022, a crowd rallied outside the company's regional office in Smyrna, Georgia with these same tactics.

Some shot fireworks toward the building while others spray painted their opposition to Cop City on the office's concrete facade. After a short rally, the crowd left. But in the process five people were arrested. They were originally charged with Riot, Criminal Damage to Property, and Terroristic Threats and Acts, among other offenses.

Three of those arrested were indicted by a grand jury in April, days before the statute of limitations would have expired. The indictment accuses Kass, alongside Katie Kloth, Tyler Norman of two counts of Criminal Damage to Property and Arson of Lands. If convicted on all counts, each defendant could face up to 15 years in prison and a fine of as much as \$10,000.

A warrant for her May 2022 arrest claims that Kass was seen on cell phone and surveillance video footage “facilitat[ing] the group to spray paint” messages on the building. Kass is also accused of not personally causing a disturbance, but being part of a group that caused a “violent disturbance” and “assisting in shooting off roman candles” near the office, apparently setting some grass on fire. Hannah’s “group” further damaged property by throwing paint bombs at some of the windows of the building, the warrant claims.

For her part, Kass isn’t convinced that the property damage is the point of the indictments.

“The Attorney General is still gunning for election as governor in the primary in May” Kass pointed out. “He needed his political win,” she said, speculating that the defeat he and his office have faced in prosecuting other Cop City cases has prompted him to keep trying to convict activists and organizers under the banner of “Antifa.”

Kass’s lawyer Amith Gupta agrees that Carr’s politics likely play a part in his office bringing the new indictment.

“While I cannot opine on Mr. Carr’s personal motives, I believe his dramatic press conference and his fear-mongering rhetoric confirm that the case is politically motivated,” Gupta told *Unicorn Riot*.

But despite the Attorney General’s bluster, Gupta believes the case won’t succeed.

“I am confident that a fair jury will agree with our perspective that Dr. Kass committed no crime,” he added.

Judge Sonja Brown will oversee the case in Cobb Superior Court.

29 Apr - From Activists to Terrorists

NOTE: The following mentions nine convicted defendants. NYC ABC only recognizes eight as political prisoners, as the ninth, Meagan Morris, following arrest, sat to be interviewed by the FBI which led to future arrests of others.

MORE:

by Phil Mandelbaum (*CounterPunch*)

On June 28, 2025, locals from Dallas-Fort Worth met for a pot-luck dinner at a community garden, a garden that allows residents to partake in the seasonal harvests no matter how they're able to contribute. Around a bonfire, participants lamented about the No Kings Day marches held two weeks prior; the event in Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) "felt more like a block party," and the area's activists wanted to "actually do something that would make a difference."

With July 4 on the horizon, an organically grown collective agreed on a noise demonstration outside the nearby Prairieland ICE detention center in Alvarado, Texas. This demonstration, attended by less than a dozen people from mostly intersecting activist groups, quickly devolved from free-spirited fireworks display to a violent interaction with Alvarado police.

Most of the protesters were taken into custody that night, at or near the site of the demonstration; others, including family members and friends, were arrested in the following days. Immediately labeled an "Antifa cell," 19 defendants then faced federal prosecution for terrorism, for behaviors like wearing black, owning

zines, and carpooling through Signal chats and a Discord server. And on March 13, 2026, nine defendants — 'the Prairieland 9' — were convicted by a Texas jury of "providing support to terrorists" in an unprecedented case of what the National Lawyers Guild called "unchecked state repression."

In the government's official statement on the guilty verdict, Attorney General Pam Bondi is quoted as saying, "Antifa is a domestic terrorist organization," and "today's verdict on terrorism charges will not be the last as the Trump's administration systematically dismantles Antifa and finally halts their violence on America's streets."

Investigative journalist and author Will Potter has spent decades documenting how the government prosecutes activists as terrorists. "Whether it's environmentalists, animal rights activists, Cop City protesters or now, antifascists, the playbook is identical," he told us. "Find a conspiracy, stretch it as far as it will go, and try to scare the rest of the movement into submission."

What's different about the Prairieland case, though? "The scale."

According to Potter, national security presidential memorandum NSPM-7, Countering Domestic Terrorism and Organized Political Violence, "made clear the administration isn't just targeting a movement, it's targeting anyone who resists fascism — they're going after the funders, the publishers, the organizations. They're not building a case against 'Antifa,' they're building a case against dissent itself."

The autonomous collective Crimethinc concurred, providing a global perspective on the trial, as well as the treatment of those convicted and caged:

Looking at similar cases such as the 'Network' case in Russia, we can see the model that far-right elements of the US government aim to import to the US. The playbook is to fabricate an association, then pressure defendants to plead guilty. In Russia, they did this with cattle prods; in the Prairieland case, they are seeking to accomplish the same thing via solitary confinement and other less direct means of torture.

We spoke with Elisabet from the DFW Support Committee, who detailed for *Counterpunch* everything leading up to the guilty verdict cited by Donald Trump as a victory in the fight against Antifa, and the defendants' attorneys' March 30 filing for a new trial and judgments of acquittal.

The Wikipedia page on this case relies on reports from police; this article tells the other side of the story, supplemented by exclusive expert insights on what the case represents for democracy today.

The July 4 Noise Demonstration

Although the official police record on the Prairieland 9 focuses on "several dressed in black 'military-style' or black bloc clothing with their faces covered," the 11 attendees of the noise demonstration primarily wore blue jeans and tanktops, according to Elisabet. The title of the Signal group created by the loose network to organize the gathering was "4th of July Party!"

"Let's look at who these people actually are," said Brittany Friedman, author of *Carceral Apartheid*.

Trans women being held in men's prisons, people who helped out at a community garden, and a woman who became vegan at twelve years old and lobbied as a teenager to protect animals from cruelty. Her family says she has never hit anyone, that she won't even say a curse word. Yet the government introduced her first-aid kit as evidence of material support for terrorism. She is now a convicted terrorist facing decades in federal prison.

Putting into question how they've been characterized, the protesters even researched the property's boundaries to ensure they wouldn't be trespassing.

The demo itself lasted 30 minutes, Elisabet said. Up to an hour, at most. And it worked: they got the attention of those locked inside. The 'prisoners' gathered by the windows to return the show of solidarity; this is also what tipped off the security guards.

The guards exited the building and asked the demonstrators to leave; all but two of the 11 did. Unbeknownst to the remaining protesters, one of the three who stayed behind, Nathan Baumann, used spraypaint to vandalize ICE vehicles and the detention center's guard shed, tagging "ICE pig" and "fuck you pigs" as indoor security looked on.

Security called the police, and an officer from Alvarado responded. According to Elisabet, Lieutenant Thomas Gross exited the vehicle, and within six seconds pulled his firearm on Baumann, who at this point had their backs turned and were running away.

The third straggler, Benjamin "Champagne" Song, is a former Marine, an active member of the Socialist Rifle Association and a firearms instructor, who had previously brought their rifle to other Texas protests "to protect the peace." When they saw the officer point his weapon, they fired a warning shot into the ground in hopes it would allow the others to escape.

This resulted in an exchange of fire between Gross and Song; according to Elisabet, Song never fired directly at the officer, but one of Gross's bullets hit Song's rifle, causing it to jam.

Police say one of Song's bullets hit Gross, but as Elisabet explained, the mangling of the bullet suggests he was hit by a ricochet, and not a direct shot. There's even police body camera footage, Elisabet said, of a second officer telling Gross he was only grazed.

"Nathan Baumann was incredibly fortunate Champagne was there, because there's no doubt that Lieutenant Gross would have murdered him in cold blood."

Arrests and Jail Time

The night of the noise demonstration, Baumann was arrested on the grounds outside the ICE facility; Song was able to evade arrest that evening, but would be picked up in the coming days.

Meanwhile, the eight who immediately complied with police orders were standing by or walking back to their cars when other Alvarado officers approached them — and, according to Elisabet, violated their Civil Rights.

"All of the defendants who were stopped on the road repeatedly said, on camera, 'I do not consent to a search,' and the cops still took their backpacks and emptied them out onto the ground," Elisabet said. "It was raining, and one of them asked if they could sit on the curb instead of the wet grass, and an officer said, 'I will pop you, don't mess with me.' Another person was sitting, waiting in their car. They never attended the protest, they just gave rides, but they were arrested too."

The surveillance of the family members of those arrested began within 24 hours, Elisabet said. "And it didn't take long before doors started getting bashed in and people's homes started getting searched."

Daniel "Des Revol" Rolando Sanchez Estrada, the partner of Prairieland protester Maricela Rueda, was one of those targeted and arrested by law enforcement following the noise demonstration.

According to Elisabet, Estrada was surveilled by the FBI transporting a box of his belongings to a friend's house in nearby Denton, Texas. Although the box contained letters from his students, a small collection of political zines, and other personal belongings, the FBI, she said, had determined the box also stored an improvised explosive device.

Nevertheless, Elisabet said, the authorities didn't call in the team that identifies and neutralizes IEDs, they left the box on the porch, unsupervised. Instead, the FBI contacted Denton police, and the police pulled Estrada over for making a wide right turn. Estrada would then be charged with impeding a federal investigation, though during the trial the prosecution's focus would be on the contents of the box; specifically, the titles — but not the content — of the zines.

With a bail set in the millions, Estrada and the other defendants would spend the next 90 days in jail, awaiting their indictments and trying to build a defense. According to Elisabet, "the conditions were horrific." The defendants were all held in solitary cells, and restricted from communicating with their attorneys. The women were strip-searched multiple times per day, often on video. And jail officials refused to administer necessary medications or provide food that adhered to defendants' dietary restrictions. As a result, a number of the defendants grew increasingly unwell and consumed only bread and water for months.

The guards were "especially tough" on Rueda, Elisabet said, "throwing her in the actual shoe, a cell covered floor to ceiling in feces," and "making her scrub it with a brush, all by herself."

At the same time, other defendants were making deals with law enforcement to protect themselves from prosecution.

Cooperating with the Law

On November 19, 2025, five of the original Prairieland defendants entered a guilty plea to one count of providing material support for terrorism; this resulted from their agreement to provide 'evidence' to assist in the prosecution. The testimonies of Lynette Sharp, Seth Sikes, John "Juniper" Thomas, Joy Gibson and Nathan Baumann — who initiated the unplanned vandalism on the ICE vehicles — would be used against the remaining defendants during their trial.

Even still, when asked about the five informants, Elisabet said:

While I would normally say that I have no sympathy for people that snitch, knowing what everybody went through, I have a little sympathy, because I know they were tortured physically, mentally, and emotionally. They were told they would never see their families again. They were told that their children would be arrested, that their spouses would be arrested. They were told basically that everyone they knew and loved would be destroyed if they did not cooperate.

The Trial, and its Aftermath

For the Prairieland 9, trial began February 23, 2026 — and only lasted 12 days. The prosecution called more than 45 witnesses and presented 200-plus exhibits, designed to support the charges against the nine indicted defendants: Cameron Arnold (also known as Autumn Hill), Zachary Evetts, Benjamin "Champagne" Song, Savanna Batten, Bradford "Meagan" Morris, Maricela Rueda, Elizabeth Soto, Ines Soto, and Daniel "Des Revol" Rolando Sanchez Estrada.

During the trial, Elisabet said, the prosecution's primary goal was to use the government's new classification of 'Antifa' as a terrorist organization to label the defendants' everyday activities as signs of membership in 'Antifa,' thus positioning the defendants as terrorists.

Do you use the word 'community?' Using the word 'community' is apparently a hallmark of 'Antifa.' Participating in mutual aid or helping other people in need is a sign of 'Antifa.' Thinking fascism is bad is a sign of 'Antifa.' Learning a new skill from someone or teaching someone a new skill is 'Antifa.' If you look up a map of your city, to get directions, you're 'Antifa.' If you use fireworks on the 4th of July, you're 'Antifa.' Wearing cargo pants is tactical gear and makes you 'Antifa.' Attending a book club, carrying a first aid kit, participating in a group chat, writing something and sharing it with a friend, donating to a crowdfunding campaign, wearing any article of black clothing, these are signs you're 'Antifa.'"

Among the prosecution's witnesses was Kyle Shideler of The Center for Security Policy, a far-right think tank labeled a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center. Shideler acknowledged contributing to the government's definition of "Antifa," and urged the Justice Department to take more aggressive action in his September 2025 article "How to Dismantle Far-Left Extremist Networks: A Roadmap for the Trump Administration."

Although the defense did cross-examine the prosecution's witnesses, and raised concerns about the validity of a testimony by Shideler, when it was time to present its case, the attorneys for the nine elected to rest, unbeknownst even to some of the defendants themselves.

Instead, the defendants were left to file appeals.

This was a poor decision, at least based on FOIA records obtained by Type Investigations and In These Times, which prove the FBI's own files "counter" the prosecution's argument in the case.

But, for Elisabet, the decision wasn't entirely surprising.

"When it comes down to it, there's not a single person around who hasn't done one of these things now labeled 'Antifa,' she said. "In this case their goal went beyond criminalizing the individuals who were directly defending themselves, their goal was to create such a massive list of Antifa activities to scare people from standing up."

Author and activist Ray Acheson agreed, adding:

The conviction of these activists should alarm everyone. This trial seems to have been built on... government-led efforts to criminalize mutual aid, Signal chats, leafleting, and other organizing tactics as "terrorism." In the Prairieland case, the government's decision to prosecute as many activists as possible as "antifa" was a political stunt meant to intimidate everyone who might show up to protest ICE or any other horrific human rights abuse the government is currently engaged in here or abroad.

Extremism expert Robert Evans, an acclaimed internet broadcaster, journalist and author, summed it up, calling the case against the Prairieland 9 "a blueprint for how the administration intends to quash freedom of assembly and freedom of speech." The goal, he continued, was "to frighten anyone who dissents from organizing, finding community, or spreading knowledge."

And it's worked. "They did a pretty good job with smashing in all the doors, and making it very difficult for us to get help and support," Elisabet said. Even before the guilty verdict, "people that we could normally depend on around here to activate to help support were too terrified to help us."

As professor and author Stanislav Vysotsky put it, "the trial and convictions in the Prairieland case are the first major success for the federal government to generate an 'Antifa' prosecution out of thin air. This case sets a precedent that prosecutors can use the 'Antifa' boogeyman to get convictions."

30 Apr - Support Marius Mason's Release from Prison!

The uplifting news is that after more than 17 years behind bars, Marius Mason will be released from federal prison in May 2026!

MORE:

That timeline brings post-prison support issues to the fore.

As Marius re-enters life on the outside, we are organizing support and raising funds so this transition can proceed with dignity, care and solid footing. Marius was stolen from his community nearly 20 years ago. That's 20 years of the world changing, politically, technologically and in other ways. Let's make it easier

for him. That is why we are asking for donations of gift cards, in any amount. All cards will be given directly to Marius upon release for his own use.

A system has been set up for purchase of gift cards, like “Vanilla Gift” that can be purchased, using contact info: Moira Meltzer-Cohen, Attorney at Law, 277 Broadway Suite 1501 NY, NY 10007. For phone # needed with the address, use (212) 219-1919. In addition, there will be a trust account to receive direct donations through the donations page on supportmariusmason.org. Everything helps.

An environmental and animal rights activist, anarchist, writer, artist and trans advocate, Marius was sentenced to nearly 22 years for property damage carried out in defense of the planet in 2009, acts in which no injuries resulted. Nonetheless, his sentence was increased with terrorism enhancement, making it the longest sentence meted out for an act of environmental sabotage. We who love and support him are working to provide solid mutual support, along with room for choices while helping with basic needs.

Marius accomplished a lot while in prison—producing artwork, poetry, book reviews, and other writing for publication. He has taken college courses through several universities, became certified as a Paralegal, studied to be a writing tutor and studied immigration law. He engaged in mentoring while in prison, and counseled other prisoners. Now it is our turn to provide support as he comes back home and establishes his footing with employment, housing and community.

At this time, we do not know what post-release restrictions will be in place, nor for how long. We recognize the many people who have advocated, supported, and worked toward this outcome, and we hope you will join us in raising support for Marius.

30 Apr - Trial Set For 7 of 26 Protester Tax-Funded Support Of Genocide in Gaza

California will begin trial proceedings against 7 of 26 peaceful activists arrested during a 2024 Golden Gate Bridge protest against US support for Israel's genocide in Gaza. The case marks a major escalation, as felony conspiracy charges (previously denied) now stand, despite the withdrawn restitution claims.

MORE:

via Quds News Network

Seven Bay Area activists will stand trial on Thursday, in a high-profile case linked to an anti-genocide protest on the Golden Gate Bridge. The defendants belong to the "Golden Gate 26," a group arrested during a bridge protest on April 15, 2024. The jury trial will take place at the Civic Center Courthouse and is expected to last six to eight weeks, in a case widely described as highly politicized and marked by disproportionate charges and penalties.

Prosecutors, led by Brooke Jenkins, filed felony conspiracy charges against the seven defendants, alongside multiple misdemeanor counts. Authorities originally charged all 26 protesters with a total of 44 counts each, including dozens of false imprisonment charges. The case marked a rare escalation, as most previous bridge protests in the Bay Area typically resulted in minor infractions or dismissals rather than felony prosecutions.

Prosecutors initially sought nearly \$200,000 in restitution, including claims from the Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District. However, the district later withdrew its financial claim after sustained legal challenges and public pressure. Despite this, judges denied repeated defense motions to reduce the felony charges, allowing the case to proceed to trial.

The protest aimed to demand an end to the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza. Demonstrators blocked traffic on the bridge, calling attention to the humanitarian crisis as global institutions reported mass massacres and widespread destruction in Gaza, especially during the first months of the war.

Defendants and their legal team stress that the charges reflect political bias and an effort to suppress dissent. Defense lawyer Shaffy Moeel described the protest as "an act of conscience," stressing that participants sought to raise awareness about human suffering and to push for accountability. Co-defendant Sara Cantor said the prosecution sends a chilling message to those who protest government policies, warning that criminalizing solidarity risks undermining fundamental freedoms.

Manan Kocher, a co-defendant and press coordinator, told *Quds News Network* that authorities filed more than 900 combined charges against the group. He argued that prosecutors used restitution claims and felony charges to intimidate activists and discourage future protests. He also pointed to a pattern, noting that similar charges have targeted pro-Palestine demonstrators in previous bridge protests. "Over at least the last 35 years, every Bay Area bridge protest has been handled as an infraction and/or ultimately dismissed, until our case," he said, highlighting a departure from legal precedent.

Kocher further noted that DA Jenkins has taken a uniquely aggressive approach to Palestine-related protests. He said she is "the only local DA to charge bridge protestors with false imprisonment," adding that both cases involved demonstrations in solidarity with Palestinians. "While we've been fighting charges of 'false imprisonment,' Palestinians in Gaza fight for their lives in an actual open-air prison," he said.

Brooke Jenkins has shown clear bias in the handling of this case and other Palestine-related protests. She had called a rally calling for a ceasefire in Gaza as a "pro-Hamas rally". Reports also surfaced that senior staff in her office have expressed extreme racist anti-Palestinian views and that some met with pro-Israel lobbying groups, including the Jewish Community Relations Council. Jenkins' office had also meetings with the Israeli Consulate, raising concerns about impartiality. In September 2024, the defense filed a motion to disqualify Jenkins and her office over bias, but the court rejected the request.

The case unfolds amid broader debates in the United States over protest rights, policing, and political expression. Activists say the trial could set a precedent for how authorities handle large-scale demonstrations, especially those tied to US wars and unlimited support for Israel.

6 May - Hundreds on hunger strike at Michigan detention center over conditions

Hundreds of detained immigrants have launched a rolling hunger and work strike at the North Lake Detention Center, the largest detention center in the Midwest, operated by the private prison corporation GEO Group in Baldwin, Michigan. They are protesting what they describe as inhumane conditions, medical neglect, and a systematic denial of due process.

MORE:

by Jack Kelly And Eli Folts

The strike, which began on April 19 and escalated into a coordinated action across all facility blocks on Saturday, April 25, involves a majority of the prison population. Organizers with No Detention Centers Michigan report that detainees are refusing to eat and refusing to work to demand immediate improvements to their treatment and living conditions.

"We began our strike on Sunday, April 19," said one striker who spoke with organizers via phone. "Some people involved have been sanctioned, others do not have any violations, but they have all suffered abuse... We are all committed. We want them to listen to us, not hide us."

The North Lake Detention Center, located in rural Osceola County, has long been a focal point for immigrant rights activists. Operated by the GEO Group—one of the largest private prison corporations in the United States—the facility holds hundreds of individuals awaiting immigration hearings.

The detainees cite a pattern of medical negligence as a primary driver of the protest. According to multiple testimonies, medical appointments are routinely canceled, and the only treatment offered for serious

ailments—including tooth infections, diabetes, and high blood pressure—is over-the-counter medication like Tylenol or aspirin.

"The conditions of the prison are truly deplorable," said a male prisoner in a recorded statement. "The bathroom walls are completely yellow. The ceilings are cracking. They won't give any medicine other than Tylenol or Advil. If you are in pain, they don't care about your symptoms. They just tell you to take Tylenol, and that's it."

Beyond the physical conditions, detainees are sounding the alarm about the lack of due process. They report that federal judges are issuing excessively high bond amounts and denying asylum cases arbitrarily, while Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents cover up the strike and abuse inside the facility.

"They are lying, like always, when they say there is no strike," the striker continued. "They never admit the truth. They hide what is happening, they abuse us. They treat us like murderers, and we are not."

The human cost of this system was laid bare in the harrowing testimony of a female detainee who recounted her abduction by ICE in February 2026. She described being followed by men in civilian clothes carrying baseball bats, who dragged her from her car, beat her, and verbally abused her before transporting her to a detention center in Detroit.

"I was terrified," she recalled. "They kicked me in the back. They started cursing me... The person who was telling me, 'Shut up, f-cking b-tch,' was an old man with a long beard. He kept screaming in my ears... pulling my hair brutally, hitting my face against the seat, repeatedly."

She described being held for 21 days without access to a lawyer or family, denied showers for the first week, and subjected to cruel mockery by guards. Her story highlights the stark contrast between the legal protections promised to immigrants and the reality of their treatment.

Despite the isolation, the strike has sparked a wave of solidarity on the outside. On Sunday, April 26, more than 70 supporters traveled from across Michigan to the North Lake facility to show their backing. Organizers chose a side gate as the picket location because it was the only spot from which prisoners could see the crowd through their windows.

The rally featured the reading of prisoner testimonies, the playing of song requests sent from inside, and a unified message of defiance. "The picket was intended to show solidarity for the strikers and prisoners, and show them that the people of Michigan have not forgotten them," said an organizer.

As the strike continues into the week, the detainees remain resolute. "Almost all the people inside are participating in the hunger and work strike in some way," the striker affirmed. "None of us are bad people. We are human beings, and there's only one God who looks down from above and can bestow justice."

No Detention Centers Michigan, and faith leaders from across the state have planned another solidarity picket at the North Lake facility for May 17th at 3 p.m.

8 May - Insane Pre-Crime Strategy Unveiled for Leftist "Extremists"

New national counterterrorism strategy vows to "cripple them before" crimes are committed

MORE:

by Ken Klippenstein

The White House declared war on the American people today, labeling its political opponents as terrorists, including "Left-wing extremists." The new label also claims that there are "deepening alliances" between "the far-left and Islamists" — or pro-Palestinian protesters.

The language is contained in the White House's newly released National Counterterrorism Strategy. It is the first National Strategy to be unveiled since 2021, when the Biden administration issued its document. The Strategy identifies the "left-wing," "anti-Fascists," "Anarchists" and "radically pro-transgender" ideologies as threats equivalent to jihadi groups like al Qaeda and ISIS, or narco-traffickers.

The Strategy is the brainchild of White House counterterrorism czar Sebastian Gorka, an eccentric figure I have reported on, who last year hinted at terrorism charges being levied for political opponents of the administration. The document makes clear he got his wish. Gorka called the Strategy "my life's work," and apparently waxed so poetic in previous drafts that his superiors told him (by his own account): "Cut it down, Gorka!"

"Currently we face three major types of terror groups," the Strategy says, listing "Narcoterrorists and Transnational Gangs," "Legacy Islamist Terrorists," and "Violent Left-Wing Extremists, including Anarchists and Anti-Fascists."

"Counterterrorism" itself is a propaganda term, sanitizing the actual practice: pre-crime, which aims to build cases against people for what they might do, most ominously based on speech or beliefs. (I've written about the Bureau's pre-crime push at length.) The Strategy doesn't bother hiding it. It promises to "Identify terror actors and plots before they happen" and to use "law enforcement tools to cripple them operationally before they can maim or kill the innocent."

The Strategy also hints at a crackdown on pro-Palestinian groups. In a section laying out "five functional aspects of the current CT environment" beyond the previously named three categories, it warns of "New and deepening alliances between the far-left and Islamists, i.e., the 'Red-Green' alliance" — a phrase borrowed from conservative discourse to suggest a conspiratorial alignment between the American left and radical Islam.

The "Red-Green alliance" term has been pushed by Israeli think tanks like the Reut Group — which defines the term as "the nexus between radical progressive groups to Islamists organizations" — and picked up by right-wing U.S. news outlets. The framing is designed to recast pro-Palestinian activism as a front for jihadism.

The Strategy proposes employing the same tactics used to map out jihadi networks like al Qaeda against Americans here at home, promising "rapid identification and neutralization" of the supposed threat. This is exactly the technique that Gorka and other top Trump officials like Kash Patel cut their teeth on during the post-9/11 global war on terror — experience that I previously warned they would lean heavily on.

Per the document:

"In addition to cartels and Islamist terror groups, our national CT [counterterrorism] activities will also prioritize the rapid identification and neutralization of violent secular political groups whose ideology is anti-American, radically pro-transgender, and anarchist. We will use all the tools constitutionally available to us to map them at home, identify their membership, map their ties to international organizations like Antifa, and use law enforcement tools to cripple them operationally before they can maim or kill the innocent."

National Security Presidential Memorandum 7 (NSPM-7) defines the threat as those espousing "anti-American," "anti-Christian" and "anti-Capitalism" viewpoints. The new National Strategy uniquely identifies "radically pro-transgender ideologies" as terrorists, adding yet another threat group to the federal government's targeting.

As I reported last year, the FBI in response to Charlie Kirk's murder was preparing a war on what it considers transgender "extremism," based on my sources. That report was subject to endless fact-checks asking how I knew this — something I can't answer without burning my sources — and whether I was spreading panic in the transgender community. The counterterrorism strategy affirms my reporting,

explicitly pointing to “the assassination of Charlie Kirk by a radical who espoused extreme transgender ideologies” as part of its justification for the new targeting.

The Strategy is, in important respects, Charlie Kirk’s strategy. Within hours of his September 10, 2025 murder at Utah Valley University, White House, Justice, and Homeland Security officials scrambled to draft a sweeping domestic crackdown, as I previously reported. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent called the killing “a domestic 9/11,” vowing his department would now do to American political networks what it once did to al Qaeda’s in going after their finances.

Charlie Kirk was not just an ally of the new terror hunters. Trump reportedly considered the 31-year-old Turning Point USA co-founder part of his “extended family,” in his words, with a direct line to the Oval Office that few others enjoyed. The President credited Kirk with delivering young voters in 2024, posthumously awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom on what would have been his 32nd birthday, and used his February 2026 State of the Union to mourn “my great friend Charlie Kirk,” with Kirk’s widow Erika seated in the chamber as a special guest.

Kirk’s death resulted in the issuance of NSPM-7, on which much of the new counterterrorism Strategy is built.

The new Strategy also leans heavily on grievances about the “weaponization” of counterterrorism powers under prior administrations to justify a sweeping expansion of those same powers. It cites past FBI controversies — surveillance of “conservative Catholics attending traditional mass in Virginia,” “parents standing up for their children at school board meetings,” and investigations of “Members of Congress, or President Trump and his associates” — as the rationale for what it calls a previous “radical shift” in U.S. counterterrorism.

In other words: abuses of counterterrorism authorities against the right have now become the grounds for unleashing those same authorities against the left.

The Strategy anticipates this reversal and tries to inoculate against it. “Our counterterrorism powers will not be used to target our fellow Americans who simply disagree with us,” it insists, before going on to describe a regime that does precisely that — provided the disagreement is categorized as “extremism.”

Except that’s exactly what it does!

The strategy includes a foreword by President Trump that emphasizes its unparalleled focus on the homeland: “my Administration has put an unprecedented focus on dismantling threats to the American homeland in our Hemisphere.”

The global war on terror has come home.

8 May - Santa Clara County DA Barred From Retrying Pro-Palestinian Protesters

A Santa Clara County judge has barred Rosen and his office from retrying a vandalism case against pro-Palestinian protesters due to a conflict of interest.

MORE:

by Joseph Geha (*KQED*)

Their case has gained notoriety in part because it was one of the most severe prosecutions connected with protest-related activity over the Gaza war across college campuses in 2024. While thousands were arrested, few of the cases saw felony charges filed, and many of the lesser charges were eventually dropped.

Five of the original 12 went to trial, and in February, a deadlocked jury pushed the case to a mistrial. Defense attorneys, including Deputy Public Defender Avi Singh, filed the request to recuse Rosen shortly after.

German Gonzalez, one of the defendants in the trial, said immediately after the decision on Thursday that he was very happy about the outcome. "I think given the ways that we've seen the district attorney try to really trade this prosecution for a campaign fund, it's not a question of monetization, it's a question, to a certain degree, of corruption," he said.

"I'm very grateful for Judge Paul's ruling," he said. "I tried to keep a calm and composed expression, but I was definitely very nervous because the experience of the prosecution from this district attorney's office has been quite difficult."

Rosen's office, in an emailed statement, said Thursday, "While we disagree with the judge's ruling, we respect it."

When recusal motions are considered in local courts, the state's Attorney General's office represents the DA. Attorney General Rob Bonta's office argued in filings that the defense's "claims are meritless, and recusal is not required."

Singh, in his motion, raised several issues about Rosen's conduct during the lead up to the charges of the protesters and their prosecution, and the trial. He said Rosen had labeled protesters as antisemitic, because of his inclusion of the case on his campaign page about "fighting antisemitism."

That webpage was sent in an email blast to over 600 people in L.A. County advertising a fundraiser for Rosen. The page also included a video recording of a speech Rosen gave to a nonprofit organization that supports Jewish college students.

Paul cited the video in court, saying Rosen said "fighting for Jews and for Israel is fighting for America, that antisemitism is anti-Americanism, that antisemitism is un-American." She also said Rosen criticized the group Students for Justice in Palestine.

Paul also referred to a 2020 San Luis Obispo County case where the District Attorney, Dan Dow, had fundraised around his prosecution of Black Lives Matters protesters marching in the streets after the police murder of George Floyd, which was cited by Singh in his motion.

A trial court there disqualified Dow, and an appeals court upheld the decision, because of his "well-publicized association with critics of the Black Lives Matter movement." The case was known as the Lastra ruling, based on one of the defendants' names.

"The court agrees with the defense that the videos and articles posted on the fighting antisemitism campaign page must be considered together as a whole," Paul said. "In an age of digital media, this page and the email blast...parallels" the conflict in the Lastra case, she said.

"This is a conspiracy to commit a misdemeanor, trespass and a felony vandalism case, plain and simple. It is not a hate crime case and the characterization of the prosecution of this case as a fight against antisemitism, as part and parcel of a fundraising campaign, runs afoul of Lastra," Paul said.

Sharon Loughner, the Deputy Attorney General representing Bonta's office, argued previously in court filings that the protesters' arguments "fail to present direct evidence of DA Rosen labeling them 'antisemitic'," and that Rosen's public statements "consist of ideologically neutral comments with no financial solicitations."

Loughner said prosecutors are allowed under the First Amendment to express their political views, and "may continue to fundraise while in office provided those efforts are not tied to biased speech."

Paul, on Thursday, said Rosen, as a DA, a citizen and a candidate, has rights to express his opinions and take stances against issues like antisemitism, but she admonished that "caution and care" need to be used.

During court arguments over the request for recusal from Singh last month, Paul ordered Rosen's campaign to turn over fundraising records connected with an event in December in Los Angeles, and allowed Singh to subpoena other documents from outside parties.

In an interview last month with the Bay Area News Group's editorial board about his campaign for re-election, Rosen "grew visibly heated" when asked about the monetization allegations, according to The Mercury News.

Rosen said DAs often campaign on their prosecutions, and said he hasn't faced challenges about other cases, but said because he is Jewish, this case is being treated differently.

"But in this case, because it's about antisemitism, and it's because I'm a Jew, it's the oldest f***ing antisemitic trope. And that's exactly what the defense attorney is doing in this case," he said, The Mercury News reported. Paul cited the statements in the article in court.

The last time Rosen's office was recused from a case was a bribery case in 2021, in connection with the prosecution of a key defendant in the quid-pro-quo scandal around concealed carry gun permits issued by the sheriff's office.

An appeals court ruled in 2021 Rosen's office was conflicted because a close friendship and fundraising relationship with Christopher Schumb made it unlikely he would receive a fair trial. The case was taken over by the Attorney General's office and the charges were later dropped.

Paul's decision orders the Attorney General to take over the case. The Attorney General's office could still appeal Thursday's decision.

The new trial for the protesters is currently scheduled for May 11, but could be delayed due to potential appeals.

Gonzalez said he hopes the Attorney General's office drops the charges.

"I think that this case should have never been charged to begin with," he said. "I'm very grateful that it's in the hands of the AG now and I hope they make the correct decision."

14 May - Intro to Meshtastic: Off-Grid Communications for Contingencies

WHAT: Info Session

WHEN: 6:00pm, Thursday, May 14th

WHERE: Property Is Theft (P.I.T.) (411 South 5th Street, Brooklyn 11211)

Access: Quick ramp setup; bathroom not accessible

COST: FREE

MORE:

Meshtastic is an Open Source messaging program with encryption capabilities using Bluetooth and license free radio frequencies to relay simple messages between users.

Come learn about Meshtastic with us. With a variety of climate disasters and civil uprising/repression in our past and future, having replicable and resilient communication systems.

Meshtastic has been developing to fill that need. Come plug into it.
Now

15 May - Alborz, We Climb Mountains

WHAT: Fundraiser

WHEN: 6:30pm, Friday, May 15th

WHERE: Ridgewood Commons - 585 Woodward, Queens

COST: FREE (but it is a fundraiser so bring your wallet, digital or analog)

MORE:

Join us on Friday, May 15, for a special screening of Maryam Sepehri's documentary "Alborz, We Climb Mountains" (2023), followed by a discussion with the director and Persheng Sadegh-Vaziri.

"Alborz, We Climb Mountains" chronicles the storied history of Alborz High School, tracing the institution's evolution from its 1873 origins as an American missionary school to becoming the country's powerhouse of modern education. Through archival footage and personal interviews, Sepehri captures the school's profound impact both within Iran and across its diasporas, amidst the backdrop of a shifting political landscape.

Admission is free, with refreshments and books available for purchase to raise funds for mutual aid efforts inside Iran.

For those unable to attend in person, the documentary is available to stream via vimeo.com/ondemand/alborzweclimbmountains

16 May - Saxapahaw Prison Books Packing Party

WHAT: Book packing

WHEN: 4:00pm, Saturday, May 16th (and every other Saturday)

WHERE: P.I.T. - 411 South 5th Street, Brooklyn

COST: FREE

MORE:

Join Saxapahaw Prison Books to get packages of books loaded up and sent out to prisoners.