



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for March 3rd

14 Feb - Casey Goonan Update

Finally! As you may have seen elsewhere, Casey is finally out of the holdover unit at FCI Mendota and is in the transfer pipeline to their designated facility.

MORE:

At 4 am on Tuesday, 2/11, Casey was woken up, told to pack it up, and then put on the bus before the sun rose. They were transported from Mendota to the SF Federal Building and then to the county jail in downtown SF. Casey reported that coming over the hills that morning into the Bay as the sun rose, they felt blessed. Casey, sitting in a van still cuffed up, was able to see the horizon, able to see the sun's light grow and spread over the city and the Bay.

While at the SF jail, Casey was able to walk around the unit freely, talk to others, and enjoy phone access with their friends and loved ones in a way not possible for months in that shithole holdover unit. Casey and a member of our committee were able to have a loving, hour long conversation that didn't feel like a rushed whisper through a keyhole. ❤️

Casey didn't spend long in SF before they were put on a plane. On Friday, Casey showed up on the BOP inmate locator at FCI Allenwood – Medium, one facility of three in a prison complex located in northern Pennsylvania.

A few notes about Casey's current placement:

- This may be an intermediate placement. We have not confirmed with Casey that this is their permanent designated facility and this may well be a temporary location. All prison systems are opaque and move people around at will according to their own fickle bureaucratic criteria. When we confirm this is to be Casey's designated facility, we will let you know.
- It's always good to write! Address for the facility is below. But know that in addition to this possibly being a short-lived placement, sometimes Casey's mail has been held by the mailroom for weeks or months. We have also found that multiple pieces of mail have been blocked or "lost" as well. So independent of Casey being at Allenwood permanently or temporarily, know that comms through the mail are goofy as well as slow and fully surveilled.
- Conditions have changed already. According to Casey, this current spot is more capable meeting their needs as a diabetic. They are let out of their cell from 8 am to 5 pm, have phone access, and at the time of the last call with fam, Casey was on their way to check out the library (!! of course. If you know Casey... 😊)
- At some point, Casey's counselor told them that they had been given a "Low" security classification. This has not been formally confirmed. So again, we will let you know when we know more. And yes, a Low can be sent to a Medium level facility – Welcome to the byzantine nature of prison regulations and practices.
- All property is surrendered on transfer out of a holdover unit so Casey has to start over in terms of personal property and nutritional supplements from commissary to deal with their diabetes. To send funds to keep Casey's commissary account topped up, you can Venmo Casey's fam – @JuliePetersonG

More on the toll of "holdover life"

Casey spent over 4 months in holdover at Mendota. Holdover – the limbo unit for people being received, moved, etc. – is worse than solitary in many respects. You have no property, no programs, limited access to

anything but your tiny cell, and no definite date for getting out. Casey had only minimal access to medical care for their diabetes: insulin only dispensed once per day, insufficient blood sugar checks, mediocre diet, and maximum stress and uncertainty. The poor care had started to permanently damage Casey's eyesight. If they were to continue much longer in holdover, Casey was anticipating needing a new prescription in order to read or see adequately.

Also, every other person that passed through holdover at Mendota only spent a few weeks there. A month in and Casey became in effect the "OG" of the unit, the prisoner housed there the longest, orienting others to the layout and program of the place. Yet again, to those who been locked up or who have years doing prisoner support, the question at some point becomes "Is this bullshit targeted or is it just random, just industrialized abandonment and they don't give a shit about anybody?"

Well, Casey is a political prisoner. And while everybody inside gets a number and everybody gets put in the uniform, there is nonetheless a wild card or two in the deck for politicals. Consequences can be heavier. And that's another thing for people on the outside to remember and take to heart regarding risks, expectations, and communications with our loved ones inside.

Legal update

Casey has been working on a habeas petition with another legal team in order to appeal their conviction and sentencing. The deadline for this filing will be 12 months from their sentencing (Sept. 23, 2026) so we will report more on this in the coming months as it develops.

15 Feb - Mistrial Declared in Stanford Pro-Palestinian Protest Case

Jury deadlock halts felony case against Stanford Gaza protesters as prosecutors plan retrial amid nationwide campus activism.

MORE:

by Palestine Chronicle Staff (*Palestine Chronicle*)

Jury Deadlock Ends Trial

A California judge declared a mistrial Friday in the case of five current and former Stanford University students charged after a pro-Palestinian protest in 2024, when demonstrators barricaded themselves inside senior administrative offices on campus.

After five days of deliberations, jurors said they could not reach a unanimous verdict. The panel voted 9–3 in favor of a felony vandalism conviction and 8–4 in favor of a felony conspiracy to trespass conviction, but remained divided.

Judge Hanley Chew asked jurors whether additional deliberation would help break the impasse. Each juror answered no.

"It appears that this jury is hopelessly deadlocked, and I'm now declaring a mistrial in counts one and two," the judge said before dismissing the panel.

The trial in Santa Clara County Superior Court lasted three weeks and was among the most serious criminal cases brought against student protesters during demonstrations opposing Israel's war on Gaza.

Prosecutors alleged the students spray-painted the building, broke windows and furniture, disabled security cameras and splashed a red liquid described as fake blood across offices.

Defense attorneys argued the action was political protest and said prosecutors failed to prove intent to cause criminal damage. They also said demonstrators wore protective equipment and barricaded doors fearing injury during police intervention.

If convicted, the defendants could have faced up to three years in prison and restitution exceeding \$300,000.

Prosecutors Plan New Trial

Santa Clara County District Attorney Jeff Rosen said his office intends to retry the case.

"This case is about a group of people who destroyed someone else's property and caused hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage," Rosen said in a statement. "That is against the law and that is why we will retry the case."

The five defendants showed little visible reaction in court as the mistrial was announced.

One of the students, Germán González, who had been a sophomore at Stanford at the time of his arrest, said after the hearing that prosecutors failed to secure a conviction despite institutional backing.

"The District Attorney's Office had Stanford University supporting them and other multibillion-dollar institutions behind them, and even then, the district attorney was unable to convict us," González told The Associated Press by phone.

Initially, authorities arrested and charged 12 individuals. One pleaded no contest under a program allowing young defendants to have cases dismissed if they complete probation, and later testified for the prosecution before a grand jury indicted the remaining defendants.

Six others accepted plea agreements or diversion programs, while the remaining five pleaded not guilty and proceeded to jury trial.

Campus Protest Movement

The June 5, 2024 occupation took place on the final day of spring classes during a wave of demonstrations across US campuses opposing the war on Gaza and calling for divestment from companies linked to Israeli military activity.

Students established encampments and demanded universities cut financial ties with Israel or corporations connected to the war effort. Some institutions negotiated agreements with protesters, while others called police to dismantle demonstrations.

Approximately 3,200 people were arrested across the United States in 2024 during pro-Palestinian campus protests, according to figures cited in court coverage. Most criminal cases were later dismissed or resolved through diversion programs.

The Stanford prosecution was notable because it involved felony charges rather than minor offenses typically associated with campus protests.

Lawyers for the students said the case raised questions about the criminalization of political protest. Prosecutors maintained the charges concerned property damage rather than speech.

The mistrial leaves open the possibility of a new trial as authorities pursue the case again in court.

Gaza Genocide

The campus protests took place amid Israel's ongoing genocidal war in the Gaza Strip, which has killed more than 72,000 Palestinians and wounded over 171,000 others. Women and children account for a large share of the casualties, while thousands remain missing under the rubble.

Hospitals across the enclave have collapsed under bombardment and siege conditions, forcing surgeries without anesthesia and leaving many injured without treatment. UN agencies have reported the destruction of most housing units and the displacement of the overwhelming majority of the population.

Humanitarian organizations have also warned of starvation conditions due to restrictions on food, water and medical supplies, alongside outbreaks of disease linked to the breakdown of sanitation infrastructure.

16 Feb - Trial Updates of Political/Anarchist Prisoners in Bandung

Indonesia: On February 2nd, the cyber-hunting cluster underwent sentencing at the Bandung District Court.

MORE:

via Dark Nights

Nine comrades—Arfa, Azriel, Deni, Muhibuddin, Moch Sidik, Rifa Rahnabilla, Rifal, Rizky, and Yusuf—were found guilty and sentenced to 6 months in prison, with time served taken into account by the judges.

Then, on February 12th, the comrades from the admin-hunting cluster—Komar, Abul, and Dana (Black Bloc Zone)—also underwent sentencing at the Bandung District Court. They were found guilty and sentenced to 6 months in prison, with time served taken into account by the judges.

We will provide an update on the political expression hunting cluster (Chaos Star Case) as soon as their sentencing and verdicts are finalized.

February 24th - Update on the Anarchist Prisoners Trial of Bandung

via Dark Nights

The anarchist prisoners from the Bandung cluster of "political expression hunting" have undergone their verdict reading session at the Bandung District Court. Adit and Naufal were found guilty and sentenced to two years in prison, with time served deducted from their sentence. Meanwhile, Rhexcy, Jalus, Tebe, and Jihar were also found guilty, receiving a sentence of one year and four months, with time served deducted.

Now, six comrades from the Chaos Star Case have completed the lengthy trial process, and there are still several more anarchist comrades from the Chaos Star Case awaiting their trials, following in the footsteps of these six comrades.

16 Feb - Chronicle of Repression Against Anarchists and Antifascists in 2025

Belarus: In 2025, the level of repression did not decrease...

MORE:

via Anarchist Black Cross Belarus

Pressure in prisons and penal colonies continues: prisoners are regularly placed in solitary confinement, deprived of visits and parcels, and subjected to other forms of punishment. Despite two prisoner exchanges in return for lifting sanctions, the overall trajectory of the repressive policy remains unchanged. New criminal cases are being initiated, and those already incarcerated continue to face systemic pressure.

Extension of Sentences for “Disobeying Prison Administration”

In 2025, 8 criminal cases were initiated against anarchists and antifascists under Article 411 of the Criminal Code (“willful disobedience to the prison administration’s demands”).

Nikita Emelyanov – received an additional 1 year of imprisonment. He was sentenced in 2020 to 4 years and was supposed to be released in 2024, but his sentence was repeatedly extended under Article 411.

Aleksey Golovko – +6 months.

Aleksandr Kozlyanko – +1.5 years.

Pavel Shpetny – +2 years.

Evgeny Rubashko – +1 year.

Aleksandr Frantskevich – sentence unknown.

Sergey Romanov – +1.5 years. Sergey was arrested in 2020 and sentenced in 2021 to 20 years of imprisonment. Due to continuous trials under Article 411, his total sentence now amounts to 24 years and 5 months.

Artem Solovey – +1 year.

Tightening of Conditions

In June, Dmitry Rezanovich was sentenced to nearly 20 years in prison and had his regime tightened, being transferred to a high-security prison for 3 years. In October, it became known that Igor Olinevich was in solitary confinement in Correctional Colony No. 20. After serving his prison sentence in August, he was transferred to a penal colony, but it took two months to find out where exactly he was held. Hiding the whereabouts of political prisoners remains one of the forms of pressure on them and their families. After two months in solitary confinement, Igor was transferred to a penal colony's strict regime (PKT). Later, it became known that upon arrival at the colony, he went on a hunger strike for a month.

Pressure on Relatives

On July 19, 2024, Tatiana Frantskevich, the mother of political prisoner Aleksandr Frantskevich, was arrested along with her sister Natalia Lobachevich. Both were accused of aiding extremist activities (Article 361-4 of the Criminal Code). Tatiana Frantskevich was sentenced to 3 years and 3 months of imprisonment, and Natalia Lobachevich was sentenced to 3 years of imprisonment.

New Sentences

In December, it became known that sentences were handed down to the participants of the “Black Nightingales” group:

Aliaksandra Pulinovich – 10 years and 3 months.

Trafiim Barysau – 12 years.

Siarhei Zhyhaliou – 12 years.

Dzmitry Zakharoshka – 10.5 years.

Releases

On April 18, after more than 4 years in prison, Andrey Chepyuk was released. On June 21, together with a group of political prisoners from other countries, Akihiro Gaevsky-Khanada was released and deported from Belarus. On September 11, Nikolai Dedok was released and deported from Belarus along with 50 other political prisoners. Nikolai was supposed to be released on April 4, 2025, but a new case was initiated against him for leading the organization “Autonomous Action Belarus,” which was preliminarily recognized as part of a criminal organization. He faced up to 13 years in prison. On November 22, Maria Misiuk, who had been sentenced to 13 years for “terrorism” as a member of the “Black Nightingales” group, was “pardoned” and deported to Ukraine. At the time of her arrest, she was 16 years old.

17 Feb - In Contempt #4 Is Out

In Contempt, a monthly roundup of political prisoner, prison rebel, and repression news, happenings, announcements, action and analysis, is out, covering the Prairieland Defendants on Trial, Inside-Outside ICE Detention Center Protests, Palestine Action UK Actionists Acquitted, Free Alabama Prison Strike, & More!

MORE:

You can read In Contempt online or download it reformatted as a zine at incontempt.noblogs.org

18 Feb - Illustrated Guide 19.1 Uploaded

New year, new look! Make sure to check out the fully refreshed version of the Guide!

nycabc.wordpress.com/2026/02/18/guide_19_1

MORE:

For close to twenty years, NYC Anarchist Black Cross has been publishing our Illustrated Guide to Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War. With volume 19.1, we're unrolling a totally revamped Guide, with illustrations by award winning Italian artist Gianluca Costantini! The Guide contains mini-bios, illustrations, current addresses, birthdays, and support sites (when available), as well as guides to writing letters and staying safe. So please download, print, and use this resource to make connections with imprisoned comrades by going to the site at the top of this post.

19 Feb - Update On "Operation City" Repression

Italy: "Operation City", a crackdown on the mobilization against 41bis prison regime in Italy and in solidarity with anarchist comrade Alfredo Cospito

MORE:

via Act for Freedom Now!

From October 2022 to April 2023, a strong solidarity movement accompanied the hunger strike of Alfredo Cospito, an anarchist prisoner in 41-bis, the most afflictive prison regime in the Italian penitentiary system, a regime of extreme harshness and isolation, a tomb where one spends 22 hours in a cell, with hardly any possibility to communicate with the outside world (censorship on all communications and with only a one-hour visit per month with a family member or a ten-minute phone call, also a month).

Initiatives, demonstrations, direct actions have marked in Italy, and in many other parts of the globe, the steps of a heterogeneous movement that has grown to give strength to Alfredo's protest.

A protest which not only called for the transfer of Alfredo himself from the 41bis regime but also demanded the abolition of this legalized torture together with that of ostensive life imprisonment i.e., life sentences without the possibility of access to parole or benefits, with which the Italian State as of today condemns almost 1300 prisoners to die in prison.

A government that is strongly characterizing its policy on the tightening and embitterment of laws and sentences, obviously had no problem ignoring, and sometimes mystifying, that struggle that highlighted the State's torturer's true face and it certainly would not have given in, if Alfredo, after 6 months of struggle, had not interrupted his hunger strike. But the objectives of protest and mobilization remain on the table of causes worth fighting for. Obviously that same government, which probably would have left our comrade to die of hunger, did not delay in presenting the bill with investigations and trials in various territories and cities where the solidarity mobilizations of those months spread like wildfire.

In the city of Turin, this government counter-offensive is manifesting itself mainly through the so-called "Operation City", an investigation which has provided a good number of preventive measures (such as house arrests, obligation to sign on in police stations on a daily basis, ban from accessing certain cities, obligation to not leave your town of residency, etc.) and has led to several trials for which hearings are being celebrated at the present moment. The contested crimes refer to different moments of the mobilization, but most of the comrades on trial are accused in relation to the events that occurred during the international demonstration that took place in Turin on the 4th of March 2023, when Alfredo had been carrying out a hunger strike for almost five months with an inevitable worsening of his physical conditions.

The events that occurred during the demo are classified under the charge of "complicity in devastation and looting". "Devastation and looting" is the most serious crime that can be contested in the field of public

order under Italian State law, which provides for high sentences (from 8 to 15 years); “complicity” on the other hand, does not require that the defendant has carried out a “criminal action” in itself but it is his mere presence at the demo which constitutes a crime of “complicity” with any criminal action that happened during the demo. The call into question of the count of “complicity” reveals the political purpose for which it is used: to scare and dissuade people from demonstrating because the punishment could affect anyone who decides to take to the streets. For this reason, the juridical concept of “complicity” must be fought with the aim of not giving up space to the criminalization and demobilization of street conflict, an inevitable element in any path of real criticism of political and economic orders.

As far as we are concerned, the practices implemented during that demonstration are nothing other than the response to the violence that the State wanted to exercise against its enemies for yet another time, at a moment when its intention to psychologically and physically annihilate our comrade Alfredo Cospito was clear. In the same way, we believe the self-defense of demonstrations is essential to protect the safety of the demo itself and make the identification of demonstrators more difficult. These are practices that belong to the heritage of every movement that wants to position itself in opposition to the State – practices that are increasingly pilloried, criminalized and stripped of their political meaning to reduce their presence in public demonstrations merely to a problem of “public order”.

Our considerations regarding the international demonstration of March 4th 2023 are few but immutable: the importance of having been there in that specific and crucial moment of the mobilization, the expression of anger towards an announced death sentence, the affection and gratitude towards a comrade who put his life on the line to fight against a world of exploitation and authoritarian abuse.

At the moment, the trials involve over 60 people; thus, the legal expenses are high and all contributions are welcome. For any contribution, please write to: operazionecity@anche.no

Today, as always, on Alfredo’s side, against the 41-bis regime and life sentence without parole, against all prisons and all governments! The only response to repression is to keep on fighting!

19 Feb - Alex Stokes moved to new prison

Political prisoner Alexander Stokes has been moved to a new prison- another maximum-security prison and an infamous one: Sing Sing prison.

MORE:

His birthday was on February 26th and transfers are always rough, so shoot him a letter or card if you can. Alex received a 20-year sentence and is not eligible for parole until 2039. You can donate to his support fund at freealexstokes.com/donate

19 Feb - Judge Declares Mistrial on First Day of Prairieland Trial

The trial of nine protesters accused of a laundry list of extreme charges stemming from a noise demo outside the Prairieland ICE detention facility last year began and was abruptly delayed Tuesday when the judge declared a mistrial during jury selection.

MORE:

by Sean Summers (*Unicorn Riot*)

The case has gained national attention as civil rights organizations and activists have warned about the potential it has to set precedents for criminalizing resistance to ICE, and dissent against an authoritarian administration more broadly, as domestic terrorism.

The sprawling case has seen a total of 19 people arrested and charged with a variety of extreme crimes including domestic terrorism and attempted murder of a federal employee. Some defendants accepted plea deals late last year, but remaining Prairieland defendants were prepared to go to trial this week.

Though cameras and other recording devices weren't allowed in the courtroom, observers and supporters present inside the court described an agitated U.S. District Court Judge Mark Pittman, a Trump appointee, abruptly ending court for the day after jurors began answering questions as part of the selection process.

Pitmann reportedly commented on one defense attorney's shirt which depicted Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Shirley Chisholm and other civil rights leaders, apparently in homage to the recently-deceased Jesse Jackson, according to reporting by *KERA*.

Pittman commented on MarQuetta Clayton, who is representing defendant Maricela Rueda, wearing the shirt after stopping jury selection because he was frustrated with her line of questioning to potential jurors, according to *KERA*.

Now, the trial will need to be reset after a new jury pool has been called up, which is set to happen Monday.

In the days leading up to the trial, organizations and individuals had ramped up support efforts. From teach-ins and letter writing events, to call-in campaigns pressuring the jail where defendants are being held to improve conditions, to showing up to support defendants in court, people have increasingly recognized the gravity of the case, which many see as a bellwether for how the administration will treat protesters moving forward.

But as support swelled, so too has the state's harsh treatment of the defendants, who remain in custody awaiting trial.

Ten days before the trial began Tuesday, the nine defendants were transferred to the Tarrant County jail, where supporters say they were housed in inhumane conditions in solitary cells caked in human waste, lacking access to working showers. The defendants are to remain housed there for the rest of the now-delayed trial.

All of the defendants set to go to trial this week have been held without bail since their initial arrests due to the seriousness of the crimes they're alleged to have committed. One defendant, Daniel "Des" Rolando Sanchez, was briefly released last year before being taken back into custody after what the court called a mistaken release.

The trial is set to resume Monday, February 23, with an all-new jury pool.

February 19th - Prison-Style Free Speech Censorship Is Coming for the Rest of Us

by Jeremy Busby (*The Intercept*)

American prisons have never been much for the First Amendment, and now, the Trump administration is exporting prison-style censorship to the general population. In tactics that are easily recognizable to incarcerated people like me, they're doing it in the name of "security."

This includes claiming antiestablishment ideologies and literature must be punished because they pose nebulous risks to those with government-approved political views. It also includes the logical next step: criminalizing efforts to keep authorities from finding out that one holds those ideologies or reads that literature.

Daniel "Des" Sanchez Estrada is set to be tried starting Tuesday on charges of corruptly concealing a document or record and conspiracy to conceal documents. He's been in custody since July and in federal prison since October (save for a brief accidental release before Thanksgiving, during which he spoke to *The Intercept*). He and his codefendants were recently transferred to county jail to await trial. Supporters report that they've been placed in solitary confinement and are dealing with other horrid conditions.

In plain language, Sanchez Estrada is facing up to 20 years behind bars for allegedly moving a box of anarchist zines from his parents' house to another residence in his hometown of Dallas. His indictment came on the heels of Trump's signing an executive order to classify "Antifa" as a "domestic terrorist organization" and issuing National Security Presidential Memorandum 7 (NSPM-7) on Countering Domestic Terrorism and Organized Political Violence.

Sanchez Estrada's case originated with a July 4, 2025 anti-ICE protest his wife, Maricela Rueda, attended outside the Prairieland ICE detention center in Alvarado, Texas, where an officer was shot. (Prosecutors do not allege that Sanchez Estrada or Rueda were involved in the shooting.) The home-spun zines at issue contain no plans for any shooting, and under normal circumstances, they would clearly be deemed constitutionally protected speech under the First Amendment. But the government's concealment theory only makes sense if it views merely having the literature as criminal.

Once possessing literature is considered criminal, it opens the door to corollary charges, like transporting literature to conceal evidence or the "offense" of possessing it. That's what happened to Sanchez Estrada. What other crime could the magazines have incriminated Rueda of?

Last month, activist Lucy Fowlkes became the 19th person indicted in connection with the same Texas protest. Fowlkes's alleged crime is using Signal, the encrypted messaging app made famous by Pete Hegseth, telling people how to delete messages, and removing people from group chats, which government lawyers argue amounts to "hinder[ing] prosecution of terrorism," a first-degree felony.

The founders placed a great premium on ensuring Americans had the right to possess and read anything that attracted their interest, even if it challenged the government.

But while this form of censorship might seem brazenly anti-constitutional to most Americans, it has been the reality faced by incarcerated individuals for decades. In the name of "security," prison officials have punished and even killed people for possessing literature they deemed suspect.

One such case involved Johnson Greybuffalo, a member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate tribe who dedicated himself to studying Native American history while in custody at the Waupun Correctional Institution in Wisconsin. His studies included learning about the American Indian Movement, or AIM, a civil rights organization in the U.S. and Canada that works for equal rights for American Indians. He found information on AIM in the prison's library and took notes throughout his studies.

A prison volunteer also gave him a copy of a document titled "Warrior Society" that included a code of ethics that required Native Americans to serve the people, be honorable, kind, and not steal or be stingy. A prison guard searched his cell one day in 2005, and confiscated the AIM notes, along with the "Warrior Society" document. Both were classified as "written contraband." Greybuffalo was written a disciplinary case and sentenced to 180 days in solitary confinement. The disciplinary charge was upheld in part by a federal district court in 2010.

In another case, Kenneth Oliver left an article about human rights activist, philosopher, and scholar George Jackson on his bunk while he went to his California prison's dining hall in 2007. An officer searched his cell and discovered two books authored by Jackson, "Blood in My Eye" and "Soledad Brother." As Oliver detailed on "Ear Hustle," the award-winning podcast created and produced from San Quentin State Prison, he came back to officers swarming his cell, which they had yellow-taped off like a real crime scene. Oliver was handcuffed and held in solitary confinement for the next eight years in California. His only offense was "possessing illegal contraband," which also made him ineligible for new sentence under a 2012 California law easing life sentences on nonviolent "three strikes" convictions. (Oliver was finally freed in 2019 after serving 23 years.)

"The guards said, 'We've been told to get rid of you,'" Oliver said on the podcast. "They want you to go to the SHU [solitary confinement] forever."

Historically, the U.S. government has always used disenfranchised populations as a test case to develop both strategy and legal precedent for infringing on constitutional rights before exporting them to society as a whole. Before incarcerated people faced retaliation for possessing books, African slaves were frequently punished for reading the Old Testament out of fear that the Exodus story might inspire them to dream of freedom. In some places, proponents of slavery reconciled their desire to convert slaves to Christianity with their fear or rebellion by creating a heavily redacted “Slave Bible.”

Land confiscated from Native populations eventually became eminent domain. Former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover’s surveillance of Black leaders during the civil rights movement gave justification for George W. Bush’s invasive Patriot Act and mass surveillance of civilians. Now, the Trump administration is taking a page directly out of oppressive prison authorities’ playbook.

The system that gives those in charge broad power to decide what literature is a dangerous threat to “national security” interests and who they can target, detain, prosecute, and punish criminally for merely possessing it. They may be starting with anarchist magazines, but anyone on the mailing list of Trump’s political enemies, whether in possession of an issue of the *New York Times* or an op-ed written by Marjorie Taylor Green, could find themselves on the wrong end of the administration’s overreach.

It’s all so circular. When the administration declares a political viewpoint “terrorism,” hiding literature espousing that viewpoint from the government is a perfectly logical response. So is using secure communications technology to communicate with others who share similar politics. But when your thoughts and reading list are deemed illegal, preventing the government from finding out what you think and read becomes a crime in and of itself — obstruction of the thought police.

“Daniel has broken no laws,” Sanchez Estrada’s family said in a statement to *The Intercept*. “He should not be in jail, should not be threatened to lose his permanent resident status as a part of this case.”

Criminalizing possession of literature is a miscarriage of justice, whether in prison or at a protester’s husband’s parents’ house. If the Trump administration is allowed to send Sanchez Estrada to prison for the crime of possessing literature, members of society at large can be subjected to the same pernicious rules as the incarcerated.

In a letter to his attorney published in “Soledad Brother,” one of the books that landed Oliver in solitary, George Jackson wrote that if prison officials are able to trample upon the rights of incarcerated people unchecked, “There will be no means of detecting when the last right is gone. You’ll only know when they start shooting you.”

Sanchez Estrada, for his part, “has done nothing wrong,” his family said. “Reading, writing, or sharing zines is not a crime.”

February 20th - All Eyes On North Texas

via *The National Lawyers Guild (NLG)*

After spending over seven months in multiple jails across North Texas, the Prairieland Defendants finally had their federal trial start on Tuesday, February 17. But then, as soon as the first defense attorney started asking questions to the prospective jurors, presiding Judge Mark Pittman declared a mistrial. Why? Because attorney MarQuetta Clayton, the only Black woman among the defense lawyers and counsel for defendant Maricela Rueda, was wearing a t-shirt featuring civil rights leaders of the past. Judge Pitman also took issue with Ms. Clayton’s voir dire questions, which reasonably probed jurors’ feelings about protest.

As experienced defense attorneys, we can attest that Ms. Clayton did nothing wrong. Despite both the prosecution and the defense opposing more delays, Judge Pittman nevertheless declared a mistrial and dismissed the entire jury pool. Significantly, immediately before the judge’s decision, prospective jurors

had overwhelmingly expressed criticism of ICE, and several took the position that the Second Amendment extends to protests – opinions with which the judge appeared to take issue.

Ms. Clayton now faces a threat of being held in contempt at a hearing that Judge Pittman has announced will take place after the trial commences. NLG affirms that Ms. Clayton is clearly facing anti-Black retaliation for her zealous advocacy, while wearing a t-shirt with Black civil rights icons.

Alarming, this mistrial order is just the latest example of attacks on the Prairieland Defendants' constitutional rights to access to counsel, a fair and impartial jury, an adequate defense, a public trial, and more. Judge Pittman has made highly unusual moves that suppress defense teams and which federal lawyers have not seen during their entire careers:

- Judge Pittman refused to allow local counsel, George Lobb, to represent defendant Maricela Rueda, threatening to hold him in contempt for 90 days if he did not withdraw from his role as her attorney. This led Rueda to hire Ms. Clayton as her attorney.
- Judge Pittman attempted to place limits on defense objections, allowing only one defendant's lawyer to object during the prosecution's case. After a motion from attorney Leigh W. Davis, counsel for defendant Ines Soto, the judge is now limiting duplicative objections which, practically, will still limit defendant-specific arguments.
- In a pretrial hearing, Judge Pittman fined attorneys Patrick McLain, Brian Bouffard and Bradley Sauer, counsel for defendant Zachary Evetts, \$500 each for filing a discovery motion, effectively discouraging other defense attorneys from filing motions in the case. It is not only the right of counsel to file pre-trial motions; attorneys are obligated by the Rules of Professional Conduct to competently and diligently represent their clients. This ruling by Judge Pittman arguably violates defendants' Sixth Amendment rights and puts counsel in an untenable position with respect to their independent professional ethical duties.
- Defense attorneys have been allotted only eight minutes each for their opening statements, and 35 hours total across nine defendants to put up witnesses. Judge Pittman has justified these time limit restrictions in a case where several defendants are facing life in prison by citing "other pressing matters on the court's docket."
- Since the mistrial, Judge Pittman has moved the trial to a smaller room in the Federal Courthouse in Fort Worth, and assigned an overflow room for the public to observe in Dallas, more than 30 minutes drive away.
- Most recently, Judge Pittman ordered that only the Court will be allowed to ask questions to the jury during voir dire.

NLG remains extremely concerned about these cases. Defendants' First Amendment rights to free expression, assembly, and association; their Sixth Amendment rights to counsel; their Fifth Amendment rights to a public trial; and their Second Amendment rights to bear arms are under attack in North Texas. If unchecked and ignored, this case and the judicial decisions coming from it will set a very dark precedent for the rest of the country.

February 22nd - Jury Selection Begins Again Monday After Judge Declared Mistrial Last Week in Widely Watched Prairieland ICE Detention Center Protest Case

Nine defendants will proceed to federal trial on Monday in a widely watched case that stems from a July 4, 2025 noise demonstration in support of detained immigrants at the Prairieland ICE Detention Center in Alvarado, Texas. Following a mistrial declared last week by presiding U.S. District Court Judge Mark Pittman for a defense attorney's attire featuring civil rights leaders, jury selection is scheduled to begin again on Monday, February 23. The trial is expected to last at least three weeks. Defendants Savanna Batten, Zachary Evetts, Autumn Hill, Meagan Morris, Maricela Rueda, Daniel "Des" Rolando Sanchez Estrada, Benjamin "Champagne" Song, Elizabeth Soto, and Ines Soto were indicted in November on a variety of charges including riot, discharging a firearm, attempted murder, material support for terrorism, and conspiracy to conceal documents.

*An overflow room to view the trial virtually has been opened in Courtroom 1570 at the Earle Cabell Federal Building at 1100 Commerce Street, Dallas, Texas 75242.

Under significant public pressure, Judge Pittman made accommodations for a trial overflow area, but in a Dallas courthouse, more than a 30-minute drive from the Fort Worth courthouse where the defendants are being tried. Thus far, Judge Pittman has refused to move the trial to a courtroom that can accommodate the number of family members, journalists, and the general public wanting to witness a trial of significant public interest. No broadcasting equipment is allowed in the Fort Worth Courthouse, and Judge Pittman has also banned any livestream to the general public.

“Given the national significance of the Prairieland case, media and public access to the trial is of utmost importance and foundational to democratic justice,” said Suzanne Adely, President of the National Lawyers Guild. “Barring such access not only limits transparency, but also impugns the court’s accountability and the integrity of the judicial system more broadly.” The DFW Support Committee issued a statement in January underscoring the significance of ensuring a fair trial. “The fate of the defendants—and the result of this trial—will have enormous impacts on the legal terrain for those resisting ICE terror and the course of the rising authoritarianism in the U.S.,” read the statement. “As such, the fairness of this trial should be an acute concern for all.”

Supporters are raising increased concerns over whether the Prairieland defendants will receive a fair trial given the severe trial restrictions, including public access to the trial and the punitive posture of the Court before the trial has even begun. As an example, Judge Pittman has limited defense attorneys to only eight minutes each for their opening statements, and 35 hours total for all nine defendants to question witnesses, despite the severe consequences that several defendants are facing, such as life in prison. Judge Pittman is also limiting defense objections during trial, which has the effect of limiting defendant-specific arguments. In an extraordinary move, Judge Pittman declared last week that only he will be allowed to ask questions of the jury during voir dire.

“I have never been in a situation where I might be prohibited from being present at a hearing of my own client,” said Xavier T. de Janon, attorney for Elizabeth Soto in her Johnson County state case. “The Court-imposed constraints on the defense resemble Jim Crow era courtrooms, where Black defendants would never get due process and their attorneys would be punished for advocating for their clients.”

All nine trial defendants have been moved to Tarrant County Jail, where they are being held during the trial. Tarrant County Jail is notorious for its neglect and abuse of prisoners held there, with as many as 70 deaths since 2017, and at least five last year alone. “Our loved ones have been moved to Tarrant County Jail, put in solitary confinement, and had their legal paperwork confiscated a week before trial,” said Cynthia Lokey, the mother of Prairieland defendant Savanna Batten. “The state has also designated the defendants as aggressive and dangerous, which has meant they are restrained and confined in wheelchairs when being transported, brought to court in shackles, with a federal agent placed behind each defendant,” continued Lokey. “It’s all aimed at breaking the defendants and making it appear they are far more dangerous than they actually are, as they approach the trial of their lives.”

Prejudicial statements related to these cases have been made repeatedly by officials at the highest levels of government, undermining the defendants’ ability to get a fair trial. The Trump administration has publicly claimed that the Prairieland case is the first legal case against Antifa, while Trump declared Antifa a domestic terrorist organization. On September 25, the White House released the National Security Presidential Memorandum-7 (NSPM-7), which ordered all federal law enforcement agencies to prioritize combating Antifa as a domestic terrorism threat. FBI director Kash Patel has called the Prairieland defendants “Antifa-aligned anarchist violent extremists,” sharing Fox News coverage of the case on X.

Yet, supporters are refuting the claims of terrorism and planned violence. “The Prairieland case is a protest case involving people expressing solidarity with detained immigrants,” said Amber Lowrey, sister of defendant Savanna Batten. “The federal government is trying to reframe protest activity as terrorism, and

we're seeing this attempted across the country, in Chicago, Minneapolis, Portland, and now here in Dallas-Fort Worth."

The nine federal defendants are also charged in a State case, along with eight additional defendants, forcing them to fight their State and federal charges concurrently. Seven federal defendants pleaded guilty to federal charges in November 2025 and are awaiting sentencing.

Exorbitant bonds of up to \$15 million are being used in the State cases to imprison people who do not represent a flight risk or a danger to the community. Supporters believe that pretrial detention is being used by the government to hinder the defense and to maintain the dominant narrative in the media.

The Prairieland cases, involving both state and federal charges, stem from a noise demonstration in solidarity with detainees at the Prairieland ICE Detention Center in Alvarado, Texas, on July 4, 2025. After the protest, an officer with the Alvarado Police Department allegedly became involved in an exchange of gunfire soon after arrival. The officer allegedly sustained minor injuries, and was reportedly released from the hospital shortly afterwards. Authorities have still not provided hospital records to justify these claims, seven months later. Alvarado police arrested ten people in the area, and a manhunt ensued in the subsequent days for another defendant. Eight more defendants were arrested in the days and weeks following the protest.

February 25th - Opening Arguments and Testimony from Alvarado Officer at Center of Prairieland Case Marks First Day of Landmark Trial Against Nine Defendants

Opening arguments and testimony from the Alvarado police officer at the center of the controversial Prairieland ICE Detention Center case marked the first day of trial against nine defendants. The federal government offered no new or compelling arguments in their opening statement and relied heavily on First Amendment-protected activity to make their case. However, during cross-examination, Alvarado police officer Lt. Thomas Gross revealed information that undermines the government's narrative that the noise demonstration on July 4, 2025 was an "ambush" and that police were the targets of a "planned attack."

During today's proceedings, the defense team was able to cross-examine the Alvarado police officer Lt. Thomas Gross, who was injured at the scene. This is the first time Lt. Gross has spoken publicly since the incident. He described a hectic scene with few details, claiming to see only a small handful of male individuals, despite multiple women defendants in the case.

On cross-examination, Lt. Gross said he spent between 2-4 hours in the hospital before being released, and could not explain why he appears to have been shot from the back despite also claiming to have been facing the person who the government alleges fired at him. Gross could not say who drew their weapon first, but he admitted drawing his weapon without any obvious threat, stating instead that at the time he arrived on the scene the only crimes he was aware of possibly being committed were "criminal mischief." At one point, in response to questions from defense attorney Phillip Hayes, Gross admitted that he was pointing his firearm at a fleeing person's back before encountering the individual holding a rifle. This testimony seemed to contradict the government's claim that the police were ambushed.

The Prairieland case has drawn significant attention due to the use of First Amendment-protected political literature as evidence of the alleged criminal conspiracies. This concern was underscored again today by the key role that literature played in the prosecution's opening arguments. Remarkably, a printing press found in a raid on the home of defendants Liz and Ines Soto was one of the only aspects of the government's opening statements linking them to the broader case. The government claimed that the use of this printing press to create "zines" constitutes criminal activity.

Access issues continued to plague the Northern District Courthouse, with family members prevented multiple times from attending trial. In one instance, a family member of a Prairieland defendant was removed from the courtroom after seeming to fall asleep during the proceedings. This had been preceded by an incident at the beginning of the day when Lydia Kosza, wife of defendant Autumn Hill, was removed

from the courtroom when a section of seats was cleared for law enforcement. Kosza was only able to reenter after another attendee volunteered to leave.

The nine defendants, Savanna Batten, Zachary Evetts, Autumn Hill, Meagan Morris, Maricela Rueda, Daniel “Des” Rolando Sanchez Estrada, Benjamin “Champagne” Song, Elizabeth Soto, and Ines Soto were indicted in November on a variety of charges including riot, discharging a firearm, attempted murder, material support for terrorism, and conspiracy to conceal documents, all stemming from a noise demonstration in support of immigrant detainees being held at the Prairieland ICE Detention Center in Alvarado, Texas.

Trial continues on Wednesday February 25, and is expected to last up to three weeks.

The Prairieland cases, involving 19 people charged with both state and federal charges, stem from a noise demonstration in solidarity with detainees at the Prairieland ICE Detention Center in Alvarado, Texas, on July 4, 2025. After the protest, an officer with the Alvarado Police Department allegedly became involved in an exchange of gunfire soon after arrival. The officer allegedly sustained minor injuries, and was reportedly released from the hospital shortly afterwards. Authorities have still not provided hospital records to justify these claims, seven months later. Alvarado police arrested ten people in the area, and a manhunt ensued in the subsequent days for another defendant. Eight more defendants were arrested in the days and weeks following the protest.

22 Feb - Take action to stop Mumia Abu-Jamal from going blind

As of February 2026, Mumia has yet to receive eye treatment for diabetic retinopathy and aggressive glaucoma.

MORE:

Although his vision has been restored to some degree with the secondary cataracts removed, the serious eye diseases which could rob Mumia of the sight he has, have not been addressed.

We need the Pennsylvania Dept of Corrections (PA DOC) and Wellpath to obtain ophthalmologists to treat the diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma.

We ask the public to resume calls, emails, and letters to SCI Mahanoy (the prison) and the Secretary of the PA DOC this week. Operation hours are Monday thru Friday 9:00am to 4:00pm Eastern Standard Time

SCI Mahanoy Superintendent (Bernadette Mason): 570-773-2158

PA Department of Corrections Secretary (Dr. Laurel Harry):

717-728-4109 or 717-728-2573

PA DOC Secretary email (Dr. Laurel Harry): ra-crpdocsecretary@pa.gov

Bernadette Mason, SCI Mahanoy, 301 Grey Line Drive, Frackville PA 17931

Basic Script:

“Hello, my name is ———— and I’m calling to request that Mumia Abu-Jamal, number AM 8335, be seen and treated by specialists who treat diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma, serious eye diseases that can cause permanent blindness. He also needs to be examined for new glasses.

Due to his congestive heart disease, Mumia must have a heart healthy diet, filtered water and regular exercise, indoors and out.”

23 Feb - Action Alert for Malik Muhammad

Malik is asking for calls to be made into Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution due to the lack of quality food they are providing Muslim adults in custody for Ramadan!

MORE:

THE ISSUE:

“Islam has never been respected or allowed to be practiced freely inside. They started Ramadan a day late providing us our meals late, luckily most of us have our own food so fasted and broke fast still. Still, it’s not something that we should have to miss out on if we don’t have food. Yet to add insult to injury, the very simple basic meal they provide us to eat ([which is] supposed to be 4 pieces of bread, 2 for peanut butter and jelly and 2 for a meat and cheese sandwich, a ramen, carrots, and celery, bag of chips, and some baked “dessert”—that’s how it’s been across institutions) is not standardized, and varies based on the proclivities of the kitchen coordinator. At OSP, we got rotten meat and complained. The coordinators response was to only give us one day with meat, one day with tuna for our sandwich. When the tuna came rotten and we complained, they took away dessert. At Snake, they also rotate meat one day, tuna the next, sometimes neither.

Now here, we are also given bread and cheese, no meat. Not even tuna. The reason here is apparently because of a complaint about it being rotated between roast beef and turkey. The coordinator, in spite and retaliation for the complaint, now gives us only bread and cheese. Kosher meals are provided daily for those of the Jewish faith but our bare minimum is too much to ask. We don’t get halal meals special and our Eid meals, everywhere I’ve been, have been substandard, save for OSP because they allow Muslims to prepare the food. Now we’re being discouraged to complain for fear of more retaliation. The chaplain and the kitchen coordinator need to be informed and corrected and the dome building need to give us standard dignified meals and treatment no matter the plan.”

THE DEMAND:

Provide dignified standard food with meat that meets a daily calorie count suitable for adults.

Phone Zap How-To

If you’ve never done a phone zap for someone behind bars before, here are some helpful pointers:

- We want to focus on putting pressure on the Chaplains and EOCI, so start by calling the Chaplains and Faith-Based services line and the general line. Proceed to call as many of the remaining numbers as you can!
- Dial *67 before entering the prison phone number in order to prevent the caller ID at the prison from registering your number
- Be aware that prison guards and officials may sound hostile or annoyed, lie, try to intimidate you, or ask for information such as AIC names and SIDs (state identification number). You do not need to give them any information about yourself or who you’re calling on behalf of. Malik has requested that their name and SID are not included in calls, so simply remain firm and polite in your demands.
- If you get directed to voicemail, simply leave your message. Again, you do not need to leave your number or any other personal information.
- It is possible that you will be transferred to various different numbers and offices when you call. This is normal.
- It is important that we keep a record of who we’ve been able to reach and what information they have provided, especially since it is common for prison officials to lie or give contradictory information.

Numbers to Call

- EOCI Chaplains and Faith-Based Services: (541) 278-3641 and (541) 278-3642
- Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution General Line: (541) 276-0700
- Michael Reese (Director of Oregon Department of Corrections): (503) 945-0927
- Jessica Hale (Executive Assistant): 503-945-0978
- Ryan Dwyer (Acting Inspector General): 503-945-0988

Sample Script:

“Hello, I’m calling on behalf of the Muslim adults in custody at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution. I was extremely concerned to hear that since the start of Ramadan, they have been provided with delayed meals and food

that is not suitable for adults, consisting of simply bread and cheese. Not only is this discrimination based on their religious practices, but it is extremely unhealthy and dangerous. I am contacting you to demand that the adults in custody practicing Ramadan at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution are supported with standard food that meets the daily caloric intake required for adults, including meals with meat in them. Additionally, adults in custody have been retaliated against by the kitchen coordinators for complaining about the quality of food being provided. I am requesting that this retaliation ceases at once."

Please note that Malik has requested that their name and SID do NOT be included in calls! If asked for AIC names or SIDs, keep statements generalized

24 Feb - Peppy released to halfway house

Political Prisoner Brian 'Peppy' DiPeppa was released to halfway house and wrote the following, "Unwavering Faith In Collective Power."

MORE:

Some years ago, Krystal and I departed downtown Pittsburgh with a farewell kiss. We know love when free is liberating and when held in defiance of oppression is revolutionary.

We left with an unwavering faith in the collective power accompanying us through the hardship of an all-too-common journey, in the clutches of the carceral state.

Now I return to the point of departure, having fared well with your hands at my back every step of the way. I return to my comrades' arms for a moment to pause and breathe; we are still not free until all are free.

I took a ride along the contours left by the wounds of a system fixated on war. What these 971 days behind the walls have gifted is attunement to the shadowed sorrow that state, capital, and alienation are so committed to.

I exited the closed prison today for the open prison of "community confinement", a half-way house. From within and against these prisons, it is clear that abolition is only rational if we seek war's end. Beyond idealism is the practical matter of placing hurt people with other hurt people in battle royale ghettos. AI will not resolve social inequities.

My eyes saw ingenuity and cleverness, hallmarks of determined people to find a way. Your letters and shared stories, from Minneapolis to Gaza, upheld this heart in which our new world is carried.

May we find many ways together!

26 Feb - Oso Blanco Birthday Statement

Oso Blanco's birthday was February 26th. Send him a note and check out his birthday statement below.

MORE:

I am now about to turn 59 years of age, and this will be my 26th birthday serving time on this case in federal prison. It is often very empty and cold on birthdays and holidays, because you're obviously far away from your family. But when people reach out, when brothers and sisters in the struggle reach out and write to a political prisoner on their birthday, it is amazingly powerful. But when you share something that sounds like it was written according to a format, or like it comes from a robot, it is disheartening. Because I often receive birthday greetings from people where it sounds like there is no real heart to the message. I'm a human being, and I like people to express human love from the heart. When they write they should write something from the heart—because I can tell the difference, and I don't feel any human interaction because they don't express real human emotions. It is often the same thing—the same words—over, and over, and over, for years.

If you're reaching out to me on my birthday, you should express real thoughts. Don't go by a format, a set of words, that someone told you to say. I want you to express your real hearts because I put in my work for the struggle, for the Native-American struggle, for the Zapatista struggle—and I want you to express your real selves, your real heart, your real emotions.

I am far away from my family, and the letter will come a month after February because the police won't let me have my mail, and they will hold it for at least that long. People must express themselves more genuinely, more from the heart, because you're talking to a person that is suffering because they're missing their birthdays with their family, because they're missing their birthdays with their friends, missing their birthdays with their community. You're talking to a person who is excluded and exiled from society and all human connection.

When you reach out to a political prisoner and it's their birthday, it's really meaningful. I still get birthday greetings from my homeboys in the streets in Albuquerque sometimes, but Fentanyl killed 100 people that I knew in New Mexico, and that's a real number. And that almost ended the greeting cards coming from people I knew from the streets. My parents are too old. I get some birthday greetings from my Cherokee sister's side of the family in Oklahoma, on the reservation in Tahlequah. When you're reaching out to a political prisoner, don't sound like a robot. Sound like a real human being with real emotions and real love. Because I can tell the difference as time goes on. And I would venture to say society is really messing up the human-emotion-connection for things as important happy birthdays.

When someone that reaches out to you for your birthday, something that is so deep and meaningful when you're in prison doing a zillion years for your political actions, it is very powerful. So, let's keep the human connection going for political prisoners because they're in here for you. They're in here for people who want a better world. They're in here for people who know we have to heal the Earth. And they're in here for the struggle to uplift love. Because without love there will be no change, there will be no better world, there will be no revolution—not without love.

If I have a birthday wish, I wish that people would get up off their asses and really do something to end oppression. Really organize. Really bring oppression, and repression, and abuse by the State to an end. That is my birthday wish.

I love you all, and I thank you so much. Anyone who picks up a pen or types up a letter, I love you so much. I could never have survived these 26 years alone. I never could have survived these years without people like Leonard Peltier, Tom Manning, and Dr. Mutulu Shakur, who I crossed paths with—and not without little things. Not without little things that mean a lot—like birthdays.

26 Feb - A Columbia Student Was Detained by DHS

A Columbia University student was detained by Department of Homeland Security agents Thursday morning. In an email sent to members of the Columbia community, acting university president Claire Shipman said federal agents were able to get into a residential building on campus after falsely representing their reason for entry.

MORE:

by Olivia Craighead (*The Cut*)

“Our understanding at this time is that the federal agents made misrepresentations to gain entry to the building to search for a ‘missing person,’” Shipman wrote. In her note, Shipman emphasized that law enforcement requires a “judicial warrant or judicial subpoena” in order to access nonpublic areas of the university. “An administrative warrant is not sufficient,” she noted.

The detained student has been identified as Ellie Aghayeva. According to the *New York Times*, she is a senior majoring in neuroscience and political science. Aghayeva is an international student and was reportedly detained at her Columbia-owned apartment. Columbia's student newspaper, *The Daily*

Spectator, reported Aghayeva had posted an Instagram Story on Thursday morning that read, “Dhs illegally arrested me. Please help.”

In a joint statement, City Council Speaker Julie Menin and majority leader Shaun Abreu, both Columbia alumni, condemned what they called the “disturbing incident.” “ICE has no place in our schools and universities. These activities do not make our city or country safer, but rather drive mistrust and danger,” they said.

Governor Kathy Hochul also came out against Aghayeva’s detainment. “I want to know if they had a warrant. What the conditions of that arrest were,” she told *CBS News*. “We’re still looking for more information, but to misrepresent who they are, I’ve said they’re out of control.” Later, in a post on X, Hochul said, “Let’s be clear about what happened: ICE agents didn’t have the proper warrant, so they lied to gain access to a student’s private residence.”

On Thursday afternoon, DHS confirmed that Aghayeva was arrested by ICE officers. “ICE arrested Elmina Aghayeva, an illegal alien from Azerbaijan, whose student visa was terminated in 2016 under the Obama administration for failing to attend classes,” the agency said in a statement sent to *The Cut*. “The building manager and her roommate let officers into the apartment. She has no pending appeals or applications with DHS.”

Mayor Zohran Mamdani had a meeting with President Trump on Thursday and shared on X that he had brought up Aghayeva’s arrest. Mamdani said he received a phone call from the president after their meeting, during which Trump informed him that Aghayeva would be “released imminently.”

Aghayeva’s detainment comes almost a year after the arrest of Columbia grad student Mahmoud Khalil, the pro-Palestinian activist who was also taken by federal agents from his apartment building, sparking a monthslong battle for his release. Khalil was finally freed last June, but in September an immigration judge ordered him to be deported.

28 Feb - International solidarity for the Ampelokipoi case

Greece: This announcement is to inform you about the current developments regarding the upcoming trial of the imprisoned comrades of Ampelokipoi case and to also share our thoughts about organizing international days of solidarity actions.

MORE:

In the immediate period ahead, the trial is expected to begin, almost one and a half years after the explosion in Arkadia's Street on October 31, 2024, which had the tragic consequence of the loss of our beloved comrade Kyriakos Xymitiris, as well as the imprisonment of comrades Marianna and Dimitra, comrades Dimitris and Nikos, and A.K. We believe that the mobilization of the movement around their political and moral support as well their defense during this period is crucially important.

As we approach the date of the trial’s beginning, we would like to share our idea of calling for an International Week of Solidarity Actions with the imprisoned comrades and in memory of the armed guerrilla Kyriakos, in the week just before the first court hearing.

As we do not yet know the exact dates, the purpose of this announcement is to provide an initial update so that groups and individuals, both locally and internationally, can begin discussing and preparing around the issue and ensure a certain level of preparation. We will update you again once we have confirmed dates and additional details.

Finally, as an assembly, we have for some time been organizing actions within the framework of a campaign regarding the case, the main axis of which is “Who is putting our lives at risk? certainly not those

who struggle.” We share this so that you are informed, and in case you are interested in incorporating it as content in future solidarity actions.

5 Mar - Letter-writing To Support the Prairieland Defendants

WHAT: Letter-writing

WHEN: Thursday, March 5th, 2026 6:30-8:30pm

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

Access: Quick ramp setup; bathroom not accessible

COST: FREE (Donations to cover the cost of stamps greatly appreciated)

MORE:

On Thursday, March 5th, join NYC ABC for a letter-writing & solidarity event for the imprisoned Prairieland (Texas) defendants. Prairieland is a political repression case stemming from a noise demonstration in solidarity with ICE detainees that took place on July 4, 2025, outside the Prairieland Detention Center in Alvarado, Texas. The current defendants are charged as an alleged “Antifa Cell,” including the transport “antifa materials”—a box of commonly available anarchist zines. The defendants face decades or even life behind bars, and in the case of green card holder Daniel “Des” Sanchez Estrada, also deportation. They are currently being held in a disgusting county jail while awaiting trial, scheduled to begin on February 23rd. Beyond destroying these defendants’ lives, this case could have wide-ranging impacts: making it an act of “domestic terrorism” to resist fascism, whether with organizing, solidarity, or words.

For more details: prairielanddefendants.com | [@dfwsupportcommittee](https://twitter.com/dfwsupportcommittee) | freedes.net | [@free.des.revol](https://twitter.com/free.des.revol)

We encourage people to wear an N95/KN95 mask | Letter-writing supplies, vegan snacks, and info will be provided

7 Mar - Joy Powell Birthday Bash

WHAT: Birthday Celebration

WHEN: 5:00pm, Saturday, March 7th

WHERE: The People's Church - 163 East 111th Street, Harlem

COST: FREE (with raffles, art sales, and more as a fundraiser, so bring your wallet)

MORE:

Please join us for Rev. Joy's birthday bash and fundraiser. Rev. Joy's across the walls birthday bash will be held at The People's Church. Food will be potluck-style, so please bring a dish or two to share!

We will have music, poetry, games, activities, raffles, and prizes, so also please bring friends and comrades to join in the fun, help celebrate Rev. Joy's birthday, and help us fundraise to support legal fees and bring her home!

Art that Rev. Joy has made while inside will also be available for sale, as well as tshirts, zines, pins, and other merch. We will also be sharing music that she's made while inside too!

Rev. Joy will be our featured speaker. She will share words, her latest exciting legal update, and poetry from her upcoming book!

Rev. Joy wants her birthday bash and fundraiser to be a big and loving celebration across the walls, so please share this info out with anyone who might want to attend or support (the donate links are on her website, which is linked on the flyer), and please join us if you're able!