

May-June 2008 U.S. Immigration Alert!

A Monthly Newsletter from National Immigrant Solidarity Network

May-June, 2008 Issue, Volume 27

No Immigrant Bashing! Support Immigrant Rights!

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May Day 2008! ICE Massive Immigrant Raids! Immigrant Counter-Recruitment Campaign, NO to Killing!

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National Immigrant Solidarity Network National Grassroots Immigrant Strategy Conference - Spring, 2009

Calling for Program and Speaker Proposals, We're Looking for Hosting City!

Get Ready! We are calling for our next National Grassroots Immigrant Strategy Conference at Spring, 2009! After the first 100 days of our new President, we need to send a clear message to he/she and the Congress our clear and loud demands for immigrant workers rights! The conference will be a strategy planning meeting for what we should be doing for the 2009 and beyond.

We are looking for a host city who can help us find a conference location and housing for the participants (ideally free location), and begin accepting program, workshops and speakers proposal.

Please send us your idea, help and proposal to: siuhin@aol.com and info@ImmigrantSolidarity.org

Lee Siu Hin
National Coordinator
National Immigrant Solidarity Network

May Day 2008: Tens of Thousands March for Immigrant Rights; ICE Raids Continue

National Immigrant Solidarity Network "May Day 2008 International Workers Day and Mobilization to Support Immigrant Rights! Reports from Around the World"

Download Link: <http://www.immigrantsolidarity.org/Documents/MayDay08Reports.pdf>

An In-depth Report By: Immigration News Briefs (INB)

May Day demonstrations for immigrant and worker rights took place in at least 220 cities in 32 states on May 1, 2008. The largest action appeared to be in Milwaukee, where some 30,000 marched, although crowd estimates at Chicago's march ranged from 15,000 to 50,000. In Los Angeles, the reported turnout was anywhere between 10,000 and 30,000.

The mainstream media ran fairly favorable coverage of the marches, noting their energetic spirit despite lower turnout. Compared to previous years, the media also paid more attention to the way in which the immigrant marches have become an

annual tradition and are bringing the May Day labor holiday--International Workers' Day—back to the US, where the tradition started in the 1880s.

Many of this year's protests were focused on stopping the immigration raids, especially workplace raids, which have increased steadily since 2006. Yet the raids continued, both before and after May Day, with at least 170 workers arrested in workplace raids in Texas, Arkansas, California, Hawai'i and Virginia between Apr. 25 and May 5.

"[W]hen there is so much repression against immigrants and their families, the real story is how so many people overcame their fear and marched in 200 cities," noted Gladys Vega of the Chelsea Collaborative, which organized a May Day march in Chelsea, Massachusetts.

NORTHEAST: NY, NJ, CT, RI, MA, NH, PA

New York: Mexican daily La Jornada reported that between 5,000 and 10,000 people took part in a rally in Union Square in Manhattan, followed by a march down Broadway to Foley Square near the federal building. A report from French news agency AFP said police estimated the turnout at 10,000. A feeder march of at least a few hundred people, organized by the Break the Chains Alliance, went from Chinatown to Union Square, where it joined the rally already under way. Another march of several hundred people, organized by Make the Road NY and focusing on the right of immigrant youth to higher education, came from Brooklyn into Manhattan across the Brooklyn Bridge.

Elsewhere in New York state, more than 200 people participated in a rally in Hempstead, on Long Island, led by the Workplace Project. Some 225 people, including students from Cornell University and Ithaca College, took part in a rally in Ithaca organized by a broad coalition of 31 immigrant, community, labor, religious and student groups. About 50 people rallied in Rochester.

New Jersey: According to The Militant newspaper, actions took place in at least three cities in New Jersey: Bridgeton, with 80 participants; Elizabeth, with 40, and Morristown with 40.

Connecticut: In New Haven, hundreds participated in a Workers' Day fair on the Green, followed by an immigrant rights march. The fair has been an annual event for the past 22 years; the immigrant rights march began in 2006.

Rhode Island: In Providence, about 250 people rallied near the steps of the state capitol, calling on governor Don Carcieri to rescind the executive order he signed in March which requires state police to act as immigration enforcers and employers to check all new hires against a government database.

Massachusetts: Hundreds gathered at Central Square in East Boston and in front of City Hall in Everett; the two marches then converged on City Hall in Chelsea, where thousands participated in a spirited rally. In East Boston, City Councilor Chuck Turner gave a keynote talk connecting immigrant rights to the fight against foreclosures, workers' rights and against racism. The march from Everett was led by Bishop Filipe Teixeira; Tony Hernandez of District Council 35, Painters and Allied Trades; and Chelsea Collaborative organizers. At least 150 people gathered in a separate action on the Boston Common, where some of the pro-immigrant demonstrators got into verbal confrontations with about 20 counter-protesters. Police kept the two sides apart. According to The Militant, 150 people also demonstrated in Amherst, and 15 people took part in a May Day action in Pittsfield.

New Hampshire: About 50 people marched in Manchester.

Pennsylvania: In Kennett Square, nearly 100 people marched through downtown, calling for justice and amnesty. In Pittsburgh, a vigil against detention was planned at Allegheny County Jail in the city's downtown area, to be followed by a march and rally through to Mellon Square Park.

DC AND SOUTHEAST: DC, VA, NC, GA, FL

Washington, DC: Several hundred people (350 according to "The Militant" newspaper) took part in May Day activities in the nation's capital, including marches on the headquarters of the Republican and Democratic National Committees; a rally at Malcolm X Park that began with a Native American drum ceremony; and a march through the Mount Pleasant and Columbia Heights neighborhoods.

North Carolina: In Charlotte, a group of 35 students from Garinger High School walked off campus about 7am and marched seven miles to the Mecklenburg Board of Education, ending with a rally at Marshall Park. The march was held without school permission; all 35 students received an unexcused absence for the day.

In Raleigh, the organization El Pueblo had reportedly called a peaceful gathering at the Legislative House. However, an article from the Spanish news agency EFE reported that El Pueblo called on supporters to call or email their legislators

instead of participating in a demonstration. According to the anti-immigrant "Save our State" website, about 15-20 people held an anti-immigrant rally at the Capitol in Raleigh, organized by the "NC Fire Coalition."

EFE reports that pro-immigrant vigils and a prayer day were planned in Greensboro, but no activities were planned in Durham, Burlington or Siler City, where marches were held last year.

Georgia: About 200-400 people gathered on the steps of the state capitol in Atlanta for a rally organized by the Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights. Another 70 people marched in Carrollton, Georgia, a town of about 20,000 people located 50 miles west of Atlanta.

Florida: In Miami, there were three events on May 1. A group of 75 people marched to the regional immigration offices from the Little Haiti neighborhood. About 100 people, mainly Central Americans, took part in a May 1 rally at José Martí park in Little Havana, near the city center, organized by the United Coalition for a Just Legalization (Coalición Unida por una Legalización Justa). The group planned another demonstration at the same site for May 3. Groups including Fraternidad Americana, Unidad Hondureña and the Peruvian-American Coalition organized a May 1 vigil in front of the offices of the Fraternidad on West Flagler Street, featuring US citizen children whose parents have been detained or deported. Another activity was planned for May 3 in Homestead.

"The Militant" newspaper reported that 120 people demonstrated in Fort Pierce and 250 rallied in Orlando on May 1. A May 1 action in Sarasota, organized by Reclaim the Streets, protested the US war in Iraq; reports mentioned no demands around immigrant rights. Two people were arrested.

Louisiana: About 100 people demonstrated in New Orleans, according to "The Militant."

Kentucky: A march was scheduled to take place on May 1 in Louisville, leading from the Courthouse to Jefferson Park.

MIDWEST: IL, WI, IN, MI, MN

Illinois: Nearly 15,000 demonstrators marched through downtown Chicago to an afternoon rally in Federal Plaza. The crowd included many high school and college students who skipped classes to join the march from Union Park. A report from the Filipino Network for Empowerment said 50,000 people marched in Chicago. About 50 people marched in Bloomington, Illinois.

Wisconsin: In Milwaukee, more than 30,000 people took part in a May 1 mobilization organized by Voces de la Frontera. Last year about 65,000 people took part in Milwaukee's May Day march.

In Madison, about 700 people marched from Brittingham Park to the Dane County Building near the Capitol. The march was organized by the Immigrant Workers Union; among other demands, marchers were calling on Sheriff Dave Mahoney to halt his policy of checking the immigration status of people held at Dane County Jail.

Indiana: A march was scheduled to take place in Indianapolis at 5pm on May 1; no details were available.

Michigan: About 2,000 people marched along the main street of Detroit's Latino community, demanding an end to the raids and deportations that separate families. Many businesses and schools closed. Speakers included Baldemar Velázquez, president of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee. The event was organized by Latinos Unidos.

Minnesota: Some 500 people marched through St. Paul to the state capitol from a park overlooking the Mississippi River, chanting in Spanish and English.

TEXAS, SOUTHWEST & ROCKIES: TX, NM, AZ, CO, NV

Texas: In Austin, about 400 people rallied at the steps of the state capitol before marching through downtown to Austin City Hall. As they marched past the Travis County Jail, demonstrators protested the facility's recently increased collaboration with immigration agents. The rally included speeches and music and a short play that depicted immigrants trying to cross the Rio Grande when they are arrested and deported back to Mexico. An estimated 300 to 400 people marched through intermittent rain in downtown Houston. In San Antonio, about 300 to 400 people marched through the streets of downtown, many wearing pins reading "Todos Somos Inmigrantes" ("we are all immigrants") and chanting "No wall between amigos!" to protest the border fence. In Dallas, about 150 people marched through downtown chanting "today we march, tomorrow we vote." Fewer than 300 people marched in El Paso from Chamizal Park to Plaza San Jacinto. More than a hundred people gathered in a local park in McAllen for a rally organized by La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE).

New Mexico: In Albuquerque, community members braved the chilly winds to attend a "family day" celebration convened by the Center for Equality and Rights. In Santa Fe, a group of nine women held a creative protest in front of the Santa Fe Hilton, where they were formerly employed as housekeepers. Taping their mouths shut with messages like "Fired" and "No rights," the women charged that they were unfairly dismissed because of worker complaints over hazardous and abusive labor conditions last March. The action by Latina and immigrant workers was supported the group Somos Un Pueblo Unido and

the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Marcela Diaz, executive director for Somos Un Pueblo Unido, said the women chose May 1 for their public protest to express "solidarity with workers around the world."

Arizona: In Tucson, the indigenous dance group Danza Mexica Cuauhtémoc de Arizona led a march of 1,000-2,000 people to downtown Armory Park. A coalition led by the group Derechos Humanos organized the demonstration. In Phoenix, a handful of pro-immigrant labor activists faced off against anti-immigrant demonstrators in front of the state capitol.

Colorado: About 50 people gathered at Fletcher Plaza in Aurora. "We want the government to move quicker on processing documents for the workers. And we're against the expansion of the immigrant detention center in Aurora, which now holds about 400 people and will be expanded to hold 1,100 people," said protest organizer Horace Kerr.

Nevada: About 150 people marched in downtown Reno for what was called a "Day Without Immigrants," chanting "Sí se puede" ("It can be done") and waving US flags. Last year, about 1,000 people attended a similar rally in Reno.

PACIFIC COAST: PORT STRIKE, CA, OR, WA

On May 1, thousands of West Coast dock workers staged an eight-hour work stoppage at 29 ports from San Diego to Seattle to protest the US war in Iraq. The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) sponsored the strike in defiance of an arbitrator's ruling saying the job action violated the contract. "The ILWU struck West Coast ports and brought cargo operations to a virtual standstill," said Steve Getzug, spokesman for the Pacific Maritime Association, which represents companies that move cargo through the ports. Union officials estimated that 25,000 workers took part in the actions, while maritime officials placed the number closer to 10,000.

The striking port workers joined other activists at rallies protesting the war in several cities. Workers at the Iraqi ports of Umm Qasr and Khor Al Zubair also stopped work on May 1 to protest the war. The ILWU's "No Peace, No Work" campaign is part of the US Labor Against the War coalition, which has about 200 union locals and affiliates and a detailed platform that calls for ending war funding and boosting workers' rights--including those of immigrants.

California: The Filipino Immigrant Network for Empowerment (FINE) said 30,000 people participated in May Day mobilizations in Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Times reported that about 8,500 people took part in three separate marches in Los Angeles, merging into a single rally at 1st Street and Broadway in the city's downtown area. The Chinese news agency Xinhua said the crowd in LA was about 10,000 people; French news agency AFP said "more than 10,000" participated. One march organized by the Multiethnic Immigrant Workers Organizing Network (MIWON) left from MacArthur Park, merging into another of about 1,500 people which departed from Olympic Boulevard and Broadway, led by the March 25th Coalition.

Last year on May 1, Los Angeles Police Department officers attacked marchers and journalists at MacArthur Park; the abuses caused an uproar, and this year the police appeared to be on their best behavior. A number of people who were injured by police at last year's demonstration marched in a group this year. Los Angeles Unified School District officials reported that 743 students walked out of classes on May 1.

About 200 people marched through downtown Santa Ana on the afternoon of May 1. Earlier in the day, a small group of anti-immigrant protesters briefly demonstrated outside the Mexican consulate, getting into shouting matches with passersby. Police reported no violence or arrests. Some 500 people marched through downtown San Diego, starting at San Diego City College and going down Broadway to Pantoja Park. The march was organized by a broad local coalition called Sí Se Puede. In Oxnard 300 people demonstrated. Another 300 people demonstrated in Modesto at a parking lot on Crows Landing Road. About 1,500 people marched through downtown Fresno.

In San Jose, the May Day march began with fewer than a thousand people in the parking lot of the Mi Pueblo supermarket in East San Jose. The march was organized by Voluntarios de la Comunidad, labor unions such as SEIU Local 1877, and community service organizations active among Latino immigrants. It was supported by a wide array of community, labor, and religious organizations. As the march proceeded along Santa Clara Street, it swelled to a peak of some 5,000 people before reaching San Jose City Hall for a closing rally in front of the First Christian Church. (The San Jose Mercury News reported the crowd count as 1,500 to 2,000.) In Santa Cruz, about 150 people gathered for a rally at Quarry Plaza. Another 300 or so people, including many families with kids, took part in a May Day rally and festival at a plaza in nearby Watsonville.

More than 10,000 people gathered in San Francisco at a 2pm rally in Dolores Park, a 3:30pm march to Civic Center, and a 5pm rally and musical performance, all under the slogan "Workers Uniting Without Borders--Amnesty for All." Other reports put attendance much lower: "The Militant" newspaper said 2,000 people participated, AP said about 400 people marched.

Across the bay, some 5,000 to 6,000 immigrants and supporters marched from the Fruitvale BART train station to a rally at Oakland City Hall. About 200 students and workers rallied on Upper Sproul Plaza on the University California Berkeley campus before marching to Chancellor Robert Birgeneau's office to protest the erosion of rights for immigrant students and to

demand fair wages and working conditions for some 1,100 workers on the UC Berkeley campus who are members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3299. The demonstration was organized by campus groups including Xinaxtli, By Any Means Necessary and Students Organizing for Justice in the Americas. A vigil was also scheduled to take place in San Rafael, just north of San Francisco in Marin County.

An estimated 2,500 people marched and rallied in Santa Rosa to urge, among other demands, that Sonoma County be designated a "county of refuge" for undocumented immigrants. Demonstrators gathered in the city's Roseland neighborhood and marched to a rally at Juilliard Park. At least a few hundred high school students skipped school to attend the march. The march was disrupted near the park by several clashes between members of the Sureño and Norteño gangs. Santa Rosa Police Capt. Gary Negri said no injuries were reported and no one was arrested. As marchers approached Santa Rosa City Hall, they were confronted verbally by a group of nearly 70 counter-demonstrators organized by the local chapter of the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps.

Several hundred immigrant workers and supporters marched around the state capitol in Sacramento. Some marchers carried banners with the slogan "The Right Not to Migrate." The banners declared that Mexico's minimum \$5-a-day wage is so low that many Mexicans have been forced to migrate to survive. The march was organized by a group called Primero de Mayo (May First) which assists undocumented workers when employers cheat them. Latino and non-Latino members of the carpenter's union marched with the group, as well as Sacramento janitors who belong to the SEIU. About 100 people demonstrated in the town of Davis, 15 miles west of Sacramento.

Oregon: About 1,000 people gathered on the steps of the state capitol in Salem to call for changes in immigration and workplace laws within the first 100 days of the next congressional session. Many demanded that Oregon reverse a decision, imposed by the state legislature in February, to require proof of legal residence to get a driver's license. Some 500 people demonstrated in Portland. A march was also planned in Medford, organized by Unete and Razas Unidas.

Washington: In Seattle a noon anti-war march of some 3,000 people, which headed to the Port of Seattle in solidarity with striking dock workers, was followed by a late afternoon immigrant rights march of 10,000 people from Judkins Park through the Asian community and into downtown. The immigrant mobilization was called by the Committee for Immigration Reform and Social Justice under the slogans: "We are not undocumented. We are not illegal. We are workers!" and "For an immigration reform with human, labor and civil rights!"

In Olympia, about 200 people took part in a rally at a downtown park and a march to the capitol to support immigrant rights and call for an end to the war. After demonstrating at the capitol, marchers headed downtown. Several participants threw rocks breaking windows at two downtown Olympia banks with customers inside; television news reports showed graffiti including an anarchy symbol on marble walls in the legislative building. No injuries were reported. As officers tried to make arrests, "they were attacked by the march participants who attempted to free those being arrested," according to a police news release. Police used pepper spray and pellet guns against protesters. Following the arrests, 30 to 40 protesters gathered outside City Hall, where the six arrestees were being held in custody for investigation of rioting and potential other charges including first-degree malicious mischief, second-degree theft and third-degree assault.

As many as 500 people took part in Bellingham's Third Annual Immigrant Solidarity March (participants numbered "several hundred" according to the Bellingham Herald). Marchers went from Maritime-Heritage Park to a rally at the Whatcom County Courthouse, then continued on to Cornwall Park for a barbeque.

Some 800 people, many of them farm workers, demonstrated in Yakima. AP said participants numbered "several hundred."

Immigration News Briefs (INB), a weekly English-language summary of US immigration news, is forwarded out to the email list of the Coalition for the Human Rights of Immigrants (CHRI). E-mail: nicaig@panix.com

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e-Activism.org ActivistVideo.org

e-Activism.org: a free open-membership social networking site for the community activists for on-line activism with different tools to create your campaigns, useful tools for the policy research and on-line policy advocacy tools to contact the elected officials.

ActivistVideo.org: a free video-sharing site for activist communities! Can create your own campaign pages to upload related videos!

Massive Racist ICE Immigrant Raids Across the Country at Post-May Day 2008 Mobilization!!

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Join our Immigrant Detention & Deportation Alert! E-Mail List
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5/12 URGENT! Up to 700 Arrested in Iowa Raid!!!!

By Citizens For Legitimate Government

Up to 700 arrests estimated in Postville raid 12 May 2008 (IA) Four Homeland Security buses with U.S. Immigration and Customs tags on them have entered the Agriprocessors Inc. complex. The buses, along with a trail of SUVs and vans with Minnesota license plates, arrived at about 11:45 a.m. Tim Counts, a Midwest ICE spokesman, **declined to confirm where people who are arrested will be detained.** Federal officials have leased the National Cattle Congress fairgrounds in Waterloo, but they declined to explain last week whether the property was being prepared for use as a detention center.

'Activists discussed today possible strategies to help after a raid, including locating children and identifying detainees.' **Fearing raid, immigration-rights activists meet in Waterloo** 11 May 2008 Several Iowa immigration-rights activists gathered today at a Waterloo church and the home of a local social worker to discuss what they consider to be an impending immigration raid. The discussions were prompted by federal officials' lease last week of the National Cattle Congress fairgrounds in Waterloo. Local immigration-rights activists fear the fairgrounds will be used as a detention center.

Questions Surround Homeland Security's Presence in Waterloo --Many people in Waterloo believe the site is being transformed into a detention center. 09 May 2008 People in Waterloo are trying to figure out what sort of operation federal officials are conducting in town. This week, the Department of Homeland Security took-over and sealed-off the grounds of the National Cattle Congress on the west side of Waterloo. Thursday night, our crew went to investigate, but security guards told them to stay across the street from the property. Our camera caught pictures of elaborate ventilation systems going into the buildings. There were dozens of cars coming in and out with license plates from surrounding states, and even as far away as Georgia and Texas. A guard at the gate told us they are preparing for training exercises, but a Homeland Security spokesman would not confirm that. Many people in Waterloo believe the site is being transformed into a detention center.

A once ailing private-prison sector is now a revenue maker 12 May 2008 "The private prison industry was on the verge of bankruptcy in the late 1990s, until the feds bailed them out with the immigration-detention contracts," said Michele Deitch, an expert on prison privatization with the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas in Austin. As increasingly tough immigration laws have called for the detention and deportation of ever more immigrants [**and soon-to-be bird flu vaccine refuseniks**], the demand for bed space by immigration authorities has helped turn what was once a dying business into a multibillion-dollar industry with record revenue and stock prices several times higher than they were eight years ago. In San Diego, CCA [Corrections Corporation of America] is in the permitting process to build a nearly 3,000-bed facility that the company hopes will be used by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE. It would hold more than four times the detainees held in San Diego now.

Also from Immigration News Briefs (INB)

RAID AT TEXAS LANDSCAPING BUSINESS

On Apr. 25, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents arrested 28 Mexican workers employed by landscaping business and nursery in El Paso, Texas. Doña Ana County Sheriff's Department officers assisted as ICE agents executed search warrants at Nash Gardens in West El Paso, and a business annex in Sunland Park, New Mexico. Special agents also served a search warrant at the residence of the Nash Gardens business owner. The US Attorney's Office is prosecuting 25 of the workers for using a false document or Social Security number for employment purposes. They were placed in US Marshals Service custody and detained at the Otero County Jail pending their initial appearance in federal court during the week of Apr. 28. The other three workers who were arrested face administrative charges for violating immigration laws. Some of the workers had apparently entered the US legally with a Laser Visa (DSP-150) but had violated the terms of the visa by working without authorization.

RAID AT ARKANSAS AIRPORT

ICE agents arrested 24 workers on administrative immigration violations in an Apr. 30 raid on a construction project at the Little Rock National Airport in Little Rock, Arkansas. One of the workers was from Peru; the rest were from Mexico. A US

citizen working as supervisor of a concrete crew on airport property was also arrested on an outstanding warrant for driving while intoxicated. The workers were arrested at the site of Supermarine, a company that provides fuel and supplies to corporate and private aircraft. US Attorney Jane Duke said one or two of the arrested immigrants would face unspecified criminal charges; Duke declined to say whether she would pursue any charges against Naylor Concrete, the Oklahoma City company which employed them. Michael A. Holt, special agent in charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in New Orleans, thanked the Little Rock Police Department, the Transportation Security Administration and Customs and Border Protection for their assistance.

RAIDS AT BAY AREA RESTAURANTS, HOMES

On May 2, ICE agents arrested 63 immigrants employed at 11 locations of a Bay Area Mexican restaurant chain, Taqueria El Balazo. Officials said one of the workers was from Guatemala and the rest were from Mexico. Those arrested were photographed, fingerprinted and processed; 10 men and one woman were released the same day on humanitarian grounds to await hearings in immigration court. By May 5, all but 10 of those detained in the raids had been released pending future immigration proceedings, according to ICE spokesperson Virginia Kice. A suspected gang member was still detained, as well as five individuals who refused the option of electronic monitoring, and three juveniles, said Kice. Some 250 people protested the raids in an emergency press conference and rally at ICE offices in San Francisco on May 5.

On May 6, ICE arrested four family members at a Berkeley home and a woman at an Oakland residence. The sweep was part of ICE's fugitive operations program, which seeks out people who have failed to comply with deportation orders. The raids sent a wave of panic among parents in both cities, as many people believed immigration agents were raiding nearby schools. ICE spokesperson Virginia Kice said the rumors launched a "tsunami" of calls to the ICE office. The next day, some two dozen students from Berkeley High School protested the raids by wearing brown armbands in solidarity with the Latino community.

Representative Barbara Lee, whose congressional district includes the raided homes in Berkeley and Oakland, issued a press release condemning the May 6 raids: "Although ICE officials assured my district office that they did not physically enter public school property, the presence of the ICE van near or parked in front of the Esperanza Academy and Fred T. Korematsu Discovery Academy is of grave concern to me," she wrote. "I will be working with my colleagues to oppose the use of this troubling approach, and I am personally committed to reviewing any ICE policies that may create a culture of fear and intimidation, especially near a school or place of worship."

RESTAURANTS RAIDED IN HAWAII

On May 2, ICE agents arrested 22 Mexican immigrant workers at two popular chain restaurants on Maui, according to a news release. Eight workers were arrested at the Cheeseburger Island Style restaurant in Wailea and the Cheeseburger In Paradise restaurant in Lahaina; ICE also arrested 14 employees of the Bubba Gump Shrimp Company restaurant in Lahaina. The arrests are part of separate ongoing investigations by ICE. The workers were arrested on suspicion of administrative immigration violations. Officials questioned the individuals and released two men under supervision on humanitarian grounds. Twenty workers--six women and 14 men--were flown to the Federal Detention Center in Honolulu. The state Department of Public Safety Sheriff Division, Maui Police Department, Coast Guard, Hawaii Army National Guard, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and US Attorney's Office assisted in the case.

VIRGINIA CONSTRUCTION SITE RAIDED

On May 5, ICE agents raided the construction site of a new federal courthouse in Richmond, Virginia, arresting 33 workers for violating federal immigration laws. Officials had received information that unauthorized immigrants were working at the site, said ICE spokesperson Ernestine Fobbs, and the investigation is ongoing. Fobbs said the 29 men and four women were from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru and were being processed for deportation. No information was available about the employers, Fobbs said.

According to radio reports, federal agents and Virginia State Police officers surrounded the work site about 8 am and rounded up about 50 workers while others attempted to hide inside the half-built complex. The reports said that officials were still searching the site hours later and that the remaining workers were required to wear wristbands showing that their IDs had been found valid.

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County jails welcome ICE & USMS \$\$\$

8/28: County Jails Welcome Immigrants

Tom Barry Americas Program, Center for International Policy (CIP)

The immigration crackdown is filling county jails across the country with immigrants who have been torn away from their jobs and homes. Tens of thousands of arrested immigrants are bedding down in county jails while they await court dates and eventual deportation.

As the immigration crackdown escalates, county commissions and sheriff departments are increasingly signing contracts with the federal government to house arrested immigrants. For the most part, county governments are eager to receive immigrants into their jails.

The per diem payments they receive from two federal agencies—Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Marshals Service (USMS)—are covering shortfalls in county budgets, funding the hiring of new deputies, and paying for jail expansion projects. Although some localities are complaining of jail overcrowding and a diffusion of law enforcement priorities, more and more local governments are cashing in on the immigration crackdown.

ICE is the agency of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) responsible for the "detention and removal" of unauthorized immigrants. USMS is the Justice Department agency that transports federal prisoners, including arrested immigrants. Both agencies offer per diem payments—generally much higher than those provided by local law-enforcement organizations—to governments and private companies that house immigrants.

ICE has its own detention centers but these are often full or too far removed from the immigration raids. Since Sept. 11 the federal government has steadily expanded the number of beds in its immigrant detention centers. The Bush administration has added 13,000 beds in the ICE detention centers and in the ICE "contract facilities" of private prison firms. Most of these centers are in the Southwest. Today there are 32,000 beds in ICE's eight detention centers and in the seven immigrant detention centers run by Corrections Corporation of America and GEO Group under ICE contracts.

Despite this increase, ICE is still hard pressed to find beds for the increasing number of immigrants that the agency has detained. Responding to the pressure of immigration restrictionists, the Bush administration and Congress are committed to increasing bed space for detained immigrants. The Intelligence Reform Bill of 2004 contained the authorization for expansion to 40,000 beds by 2010, and the president's 2009 budget includes funding for 1,000 more beds, most of which will likely be contracted out.

However, as ICE increases "interior enforcement," the agency is arresting large numbers of immigrants in areas of the country far removed from its 15 detention centers. The recent ICE raid on the Agriprocessors Inc. meat-processing plant, described by the U.S. attorney in Iowa as the "largest criminal worksite enforcement operation ever in the United States," sent more than 300 immigrants to county jails scattered around Iowa or to the state prison. Most have pled guilty to document fraud and have been sentenced to as many as five months in jail.

The raid on Agriprocessors Inc. illustrates another factor leading to increased immigrant detention in local jails and prisons. Rather than simply detaining and deporting unauthorized immigrants, ICE is now often charging immigrants with crimes. In the Agriprocessors case, arrest warrants were issued for 697 workers for such crimes as "aggravated identity theft," using a fraudulent Social Security number, illegally reentering the country after having been deported, and fraudulently using an alien registration card.

Immigrant-Hunting a Hot New Business Opportunity

Over the past several years, ICE has encouraged local governments not only to help with detention but also to enforce immigration law. Under ICE's 287(g) agreements and the cooperation of its newly created Law Enforcement Support Center, ICE is training and deputizing local police as well as providing funds for police officers and deputies. Although the 1996 immigration reform law authorized the program, it wasn't launched until after 2001. In the last couple of years, the 287(g) agreements have become "one of the hottest ideas for local and state officials to deal with immigration."

The 287(g) program is rapidly gaining new state and local partners, expanding from only eight partners at the start of 2007 to 47 currently, with 90 state and local police forces on a waiting list to sign agreements with ICE. According to ICE, since 2006 more than 50,000 immigrants have been deported or are scheduled for deportation as a result of the 287(g) program. While many local police and sheriff departments, particularly in rural areas, have eagerly joined the immigration crackdown, other police chiefs, backed by local governments, have refused to enforce immigration law, saying that it distracts from their crime prevention responsibilities.

Most immigrants arrested and detained by local police are not criminals but migrant workers who lack the proper papers to live and work in the United States. But ICE describes the new local-federal cooperation as more of a national security program than enforcement of immigration laws.

"Terrorism and criminal activity are most effectively combated through a multi-agency/multi-authority approach," says ICE in its description of its new collaborative agreements with local law enforcement agencies. "State and local law enforcement play a critical role in protecting our homeland because they are often the first responders on the scene when there is an incident or attack against the United States. During the course of daily duties, they will often encounter foreign-born criminals and immigration violators who pose a threat to national security or public safety."

To read rest of the article, please visit: <http://americas.irc-online.org/am/5253>

Immigrant Workers Rights!

Fights Against “Modern Day Slavery” Demands Hold Hearings on Signal International!

Justice for Indian Guest Workers in New Orleans!

After Hurricane Katrina, billions of dollars poured into the Gulf Coast region to rebuild. Unfortunately, many corporations used these funds to enrich themselves instead of investing in the devastated communities. When Signal International needed workers to rebuild the shipping industry, they did not hire and train the local population. Instead, **Signal used the exploitive “guest worker” visas and corrupt recruiters to hire workers.**

Welders and pipe-fitters from India paid recruiters up to \$20,000 for the promise of permanent visas for themselves and their families. **Upon arrival to the U.S. these workers were placed in cramped, unsanitary housing, charged exorbitant rent, and forced to work for Signal International.** Their working and living conditions in the Gulf Coast amounted to modern day human slavery.

On March 6, more than 100 workers broke the human trafficking chain and quit their jobs at Signal in protest. These workers, together with the New Orleans Workers Center, are carrying forward the struggle for justice not only for themselves, but also for all immigrant workers in the U.S. by exposing the fundamental injustices of the guest worker program. These workers have toured the U.S. telling their stories and have appealed to Federal Government to investigate Signal International and their recruiters, only to be surveilled by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

On May 14th, these brave workers started a hunger strike to demand action from our elected officials.

You can help! **Please urge your Representatives in Congress to hold hearings on Signal International and to grant continued presence to the workers.**

Send a letter to the following decision maker(s) to your Congressperson and Senators

You can take action on this alert via the web at: <http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/signal/>

You also can write to them directly, who’s your elected officials? visit our e-Activism service: <http://www.e-Activism.org>

We encourage you to take action by June 30, 2008!

Hold Hearings on Signal International!

Your letter will be addressed and sent to: Your Congressperson Your Senators

Dear [decision maker name automatically inserted here],

I recently learned of an alarming case of employer abuse that urgently needs your attention.

Signal International has been using unscrupulous recruiters in India to lure workers to help rebuild after Hurricane Katrina. Welders and pipe-fitters from India paid recruiters up to \$20,000 for the promise of permanent visas for themselves and their families. Upon arrival to the U.S. these workers were placed in cramped, unsanitary housing, charged exorbitant rent, and forced to work for Signal International. Their working and living conditions in the Gulf Coast amounted to modern day human slavery.

I urge you to hold hearings on Signal International and their recruiters, and to ensure the workers can remain in the country legally while their cases are heard.

Sincerely;

[Your Name]

*** Please send us your report from your Congressman to: info@ImmigrantSolidarity.org**

Calling to Create Immigrant Counter-Recruitment Campaign!

At our last July's National Grassroots Immigrant Strategy Conference (<http://www.2007conference.net>) we'd decided immigrant counter-recruitment campaign will be one of our core projects for the National Immigrant Solidarity Network.

Immigrant communities in general had been increasingly targeted by military recruiters, more and more immigrant rights groups and immigrant student organizations are rely on grants from U.S. military--in exchange for promoting military recruitment at their programs. **Why?** because the immoral U.S. wars and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan had drained military manpower, with sharp drop on military recruitments from White and African-American communities, immigrants--especially undocumented immigrant youths had become the last promising source of soldiers--With the vague promises of citizenship or college scholarship.

Therefore, National Immigrant Solidarity Network, is calling for establishing a immigrant counter-recruitment working group, to work with immigrant gold-star families, immigrant-based antiwar groups and United for Peace and Justice to formulate a national immigrant counter-recruitment strategies.

Please contact info@ImmigrantSolidarity.org if you want to be part of this movement.

Please Donate to National Immigrant Solidarity Network! **All Donations Are Tax Deductible!**

Make check payable to ISN/AFGJ and it will be tax deductible! Send your check to:

ActionLA / The Peace Center
8124 West 3rd Street, Suite 104
Los Angeles, California 90048

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Please join our Following NISN E-mail Lists

Asian American Labor Activism Alert!

send-e-mail to: api-la-subscribe@lists.riseup.net
or visit: <http://lists.riseup.net/www/info/api-la>

New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Pennsylvania areas immigrant workers information and alerts

send e-mail to: nyc-immigrantalert-subscribe@lists.riseup.net
or visit: <http://lists.riseup.net/www/info/nyc-immigrantalert>

US-Mexico Border Information and Action Alert!

send e-mail to: Border01-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
or visit: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Border01/>

Virginia state-wide immigrant organizing E-mail list

send- e-mail to: va-immigrantrights-subscribe@lists.riseup.net
or visit: <https://lists.riseup.net/www/info/va-immigrantrights>

May Day 2008 national organizing e-mail list

send e-mail to: mayday2008-subscribe@lists.riseup.net
or visit: <https://lists.riseup.net/www/info/MayDay2008>

About National Immigrant Solidarity Network

NISN is a coalition of community, immigrant, labor, human rights and student activist groups, founded in 2002 in response to the urgent needs for the national coalition to fight immigrant bashing, support immigrant rights, no to the sweatshops exploitation and end to the racism on the community. Please visit our website: <http://www.ImmigrantSolidarity.org>

Contact Information:

E-mail: info@ImmigrantSolidarity.org
(213) 403-0131 (Los Angeles)
(212) 330-8172 (New York)
(202) 595-8990 (Washington D.C.)

Please donate to ISN! (All donations are tax deductible!)

Check pay to: NISN/AFGJ
Send to: ActionLA / The Peace Center
8124 West 3rd Street, Suite 104
Los Angeles, California 90048

Please subscribe to the U.S. Immigration Alert! A Monthly Newsletter from National Immigrant Solidarity Network

1 year subscription rate (12 issues) is \$25.00

It will help us pay for the printing costs, as well as funding for the NISN projects (additional donations to the ISN is tax deductible!)

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