

Police crackdown against anti-genocide protests continues, as Biden appeals for African American support in Atlanta and Detroit

Jacob Crosse
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In the face of massive police repression, protests and demonstrations against the ongoing US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza continued across the United States over the weekend, including on college campuses and during commencement addresses.

In Austin, Texas, thousands of people wearing keffiyehs and waving Palestinian flags marched to the statehouse to protest the ongoing ethnic cleansing of Gaza which has officially killed over 35,000, a vast undercount. The march in Austin, like many other protests, was held in part to commemorate the *Nakba*, or the catastrophe. It marks the genocidal founding of the Zionist state of Israel 76 years ago, when over 750,000 Palestinians were ethnically cleansed and forcibly displaced from their homes.

While hundreds of riot police amassed outside the Austin statehouse, as of this writing it does not appear any arrests were made.

In Washington D.C. Sunday morning, dozens of students and some faculty walked out of commencement addresses held at Georgetown and George Washington University. Many carried signs calling for their colleges to divest from Israeli weapons companies, while others pointed to the horrendous death toll, including over 15,000 children.

On Saturday, in the Bay Ridge neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York, hundreds of people marched to commemorate the *Nakba*. The neighborhood is home to a large population of Arabs and Muslims who have been commemorating the anniversary for years. Despite the fact that the most recent peaceful march was smaller than last year's, police reacted with extreme violence less than 30 minutes after the demonstration began.

Multiple videos, filmed by independent journalists Katie Smith, Josh Pacheco and others, show police punching and beating protesters, even as they are lying on the ground with their arms behind their backs.

Smith reported on her X account that police “rushed in and grabbed people out of the crowd seemingly at random. Officers tackled multiple protesters to the ground and then proceeded to punch them.”

Several videos recorded by Smith and others show police deliberately harming protesters even when they were complying. One video showed a cop stepping on someone's legs even as they lay on the ground with their arms behind their back.

New York City-based video journalist thizzL recorded multiple instances of police grabbing people at random, throwing them on the ground and beating them.

On Sunday, the New York Police Department confirmed they had arrested 40 people but have yet to state what they were charged with.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams, a Democrat and long-time cop, has spearheaded the crackdown against anti-genocide protesters. Of the over 3,000 arrested nationwide in the last month, over 600 were seized by police in New York City.

The nationwide crackdown on anti-genocide protesters is being directed and encouraged from the White House. President Joe Biden in multiple speeches has vilified and smeared protesters as “antisemitic” and violent, while remaining silent on police abuse.

Biden spoke Sunday first at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, and later in the evening at an NAACP fundraiser in

Detroit, Michigan. At both events Biden cynically postured as a defender of “democracy” and “democratic rights” and even a proponent of a “ceasefire” in Gaza, less than a week after calling for another \$1 billion in military arms to Israel.

The speech was littered with lies and distortions. Perhaps one of the biggest distortions was Biden’s declaration that he “walked the picket line and defended the rights of workers.” The Biden administration has intervened against workers multiple times, including blocking railroad workers from striking in 2022.

The war criminal president then declared that he supported “peaceful non-violent protests,” and that “Your voices should be heard, and I promise you I hear them.”

Biden said nothing about thousands of students who have been arrested for peacefully protesting the imperialist wars led by him and both big business parties. Instead of adhering to the demands of protesters for an end to the genocide, Biden has funded the Israeli massacre in Gaza and stepped up the police repression at home.

Stephen Semler, co-founder of the Security Policy Reform Institute and author of the Speaking Security Substack, reported earlier this month that since Biden took office, police departments across the United States have received an additional \$150 million worth of military-grade combat gear through the 1033 program.

The 1033 program allows the Pentagon, with a sign-off from the president, to transfer military equipment to police departments at no cost. Semler estimates that as of this year, police have acquired \$1.6 billion worth of equipment through the program, some of which have been used against protesters on college campuses.

Semler found that “68 college and university police agencies currently have militarized equipment that they received through the 1033 program.” This includes major colleges with thousands of students, such as Clemson University; Michigan State University; Ohio State University; Purdue University; Texas Southern University; University of Akron; University of Wisconsin-La Crosse; Western Michigan University and dozens of others.

Cognizant of his cratering popularity with virtually the entire population, including large sections of young people outraged over the genocide in Gaza, Biden said it was a “humanitarian crisis” but neglected to assign responsibility for that crisis. Biden is well aware that the destruction of Gaza and the forced transfer of its inhabitants is the joint

policy of Israel and the US.

He concluded his remarks on Gaza by calling for a “two-state solution,” claiming it is the “only solution for two people to live in peace and dignity.”

During his speech several graduates from the private men’s Historically Black College and University (HBCU) walked out, while several more left after Biden was given an honorary degree from the college. A massive police presence kept a group of about 100 protesters, including some students and faculty, away from the address.

After finishing his speech in Atlanta, Biden flew to Detroit to attend an NAACP fundraiser. Over 200 people protested Biden’s appearance in Detroit, but they were dwarfed by the massive police presence which included hundreds of riot cops and a helicopter.

Despite the peaceful character of the protests, at least two people were arrested by Detroit police. Reflecting the racist and backward attitudes endemic to police departments in the US and internationally, in one video, a racist Detroit cop is heard telling a Palestinian protester to “go back to Mexico.”

Socialist Equality Party candidate for US president Joseph Kishore campaigned at the Detroit protest. Dozens of demonstrators disgusted with both capitalist parties and interested in a socialist and anti-war perspective signed petitions to put Kishore and his running mate Jerry White on the ballot in Michigan. Speaking from outside the convention center, Kishore denounced Biden for waging “an escalating war abroad while he wages a war on the working class at home.”



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