

#NeverAgainIsNow: 36 Arrested As Hundreds of Jewish Protesters Block Road to Migrant Detention Center



Three dozen protesters were arrested at a demonstration where about 200 Jewish people blocked the entrance to a detention center in Elizabeth, New Jersey on Sunday. (Photo: @NeverAgainActn/Twitter)

By Julia Conley | [Common Dreams](#)

Rejecting the notion that denouncing the Trump administration's immigrant detention centers as "concentration camps" does harm to the memory of the Holocaust, 200 Jewish people demonstrated at a facility in New Jersey Sunday evening and demanded the release of the thousands of immigrants in U.S. custody.

Grassroots group Never Again Action called for all detention centers to be closed and for the U.S. government to protect asylum seekers and undocumented immigrants—instead of sending Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) into communities where the agency has arrested [hundreds](#) so far this year in raids.

The group reported that 36 participants were arrested for blocking the road to the Elizabeth Detention Center in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

“I have to do whatever is in my power to disrupt ICE, to close these camps, to provide permanent protection, and to ensure that ‘never again’ means never again,” [said](#) Rebecca Oliver, a demonstrator who was arrested.

200 Jews are shutting down an ICE detention center because we when we say never again we [] fucking [] mean [] it.
[#NeverAgainIsNow pic.twitter.com/iVBL6tv85z](#)

– Alyssa Rubin [] (@aly_mixed_up) [June 30, 2019](#)

[#NeverAgain pic.twitter.com/4TTaq2oxhq](#)

– [] Never Again Action [] (@NeverAgainActn) [July 1, 2019](#)

[#NeverAgain pic.twitter.com/1Wv04HJf5u](#)

– [] Never Again Action [] (@NeverAgainActn) [July 1, 2019](#)

Holding signs reading, “Never again for anyone” and “Jews demand freedom for immigrants,” the demonstrators stressed the need to recognize the parallels between the Trump administration’s arrests of undocumented immigrants and detention of asylum seekers and the treatment of Jewish people and other marginalized groups by the Nazi regime in the 1930s

and 40s.

“I’m a Jewish Latina. The military camps where my people are being held today are concentration camps; just like the camps my people were held in 75 years ago were concentration camps,” [said](#) Tae Phoenix, another protester. “That’s why I’m here. That’s why we’re here.”

“As Jews, we were taught to never let anything like the Holocaust happen again. We refuse to wait and see what happens here now.”

–Never Again Action

The demonstration came a week after conservatives attacked Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) for [labeling](#) the administration’s detention centers—where legal advocates recently [found](#) hundreds of children living without access to soap, personal hygiene necessities, and sufficient food—“concentration camps.”

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum [rejected](#) Ocasio-Cortez’s statement, saying the museum “unequivocally rejects efforts to create analogies between the Holocaust and other events, whether historical or contemporary.”

In its statement of purpose ahead of the protest in Elizabeth, Never Again Action did not mention the museum’s stance, though the group made clear its disagreement.

“As Jews, we were taught to never let anything like the Holocaust happen again,” the group [said](#). “We refuse to wait and see what happens here now.”

Similar actions are planned for Tuesday in cities including Los Angeles, Chicago, and Boston.

“ICE isn’t just at the border—they’re in every community,” the group said in a video calling for others to join their campaign. “Since politicians won’t shut down ICE, we will.

It's going to take all of us."

"We are calling on our people to put their bodies on the line to stop ICE!" Yesterday was just the beginning.

*Over 2,000 people have signed up for tonight's call to get involved! Please join us and share with your Jewish friends and family! <https://t.co/o8YqKEw0Lz>
[pic.twitter.com/gBFkxUwcEi](https://t.co/o8YqKEw0Lz)*

– *Never Again Action (@NeverAgainActn) [July 1, 2019](#)*

Immigrant rights organizations applauded young Jewish activists from across the country for standing up against the Trump administration's violations of human rights and attempts to turn away from the reality of prison camps in the present-day United States.

This is what solidarity looks like. <https://t.co/SMWORguiEN>

– *RAICES (@RAICESTEXAS) [July 1, 2019](#)*

"We are inspired by the Jewish community who today sent a bold statement of solidarity rooted in their past struggles," said Movimiento Cosecha, a grassroots campaign for the protection of undocumented immigrants. "As families continue to be separated, as children continue to be caged, and as thousands of immigrants are forced to make a life-threatening journey crossing borders out of desperation, every American should be called to stand up and take action."

"These times will not be defined by the actions of our enemies but rather the actions of those who feel compelled to do something and demand that immigrants be treated with dignity and respect," the group added.

Ocasio-Cortez also amplified Never Again Action

and [thanked](#) the protesters for their “profound solidarity.”

“Thank you, Never Again Action, for your courage, compassion, and selflessness in pursuit of justice,” tweeted the congresswoman.

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