BAY AREA

# Protesters shut down Port of Oakland, call for cease-fire in Gaza

By **Danielle Echeverria**, **Daniel Lempres**

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Pro-Palestinian demonstrators march through the Port of Oakland on Saturday, calling for a cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war.

Protesters calling for a cease-fire in Gaza again descended on the Port of Oakland and shut down operations Saturday, organizers said.

More than 1,000 protesters gathered early Saturday and marched at the port, waving Palestinian flags and beating drums while chanting for a free Palestine and calling for the United States to stop military aid to Israel.

After disrupting the port's morning operations, protesters left around 8 a.m. and returned around 2 p.m. for the port's afternoon shift, where they again disrupted the shift, organizers said.

"No business as usual while the US funds the genocide in Gaza!" organizers wrote on social media.

Pro-Palestinian demonstrators march through the Port of Oakland

After assembling by the West Oakland Bart Station, more than 300 demonstrators marched to the port on Saturday afternoon where they chanted and heard from local activists, leaving shortly before 5 p.m.

The protestors shut down sections of Oakland's four maritime terminals twice on Saturday, protesting a U.S. military ship called the Cape Orlando, which, they say, will ferry weapons to Israel. The action is Oakland's second "Block the Boat" protest since the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas in Israel that ignited the conflict. The protest included members of ILWU Local 10, the local longshoremen's union.

Activists described the day's demonstration as a "win for workers around the world." They planned to return on Sunday and Monday to honor the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

Events that interrupt port activity can have far-reaching consequences, said Robert Bernardo, director of communications for the port.

Lucas Miranda, 16, center, and fellow pro-Palestinian demonstrators rally at the Port of Oakland on Saturday.
Noah Berger/Special to the Chronicle

The Oakland port competes against other ports in what is a highly competitive global market, Bernardo said. When businesses that send products through Oakland hear about a disruption like this, they'll find another port to do business with, he said. "Then those jobs and commodities are not going to come to the Bay Area."

The Port of Oakland, the country's ninth-biggest, is vital to Oakland's economy, he said.

"There are nearly 100,000 local jobs that are impacted when there's a disruption to our maritime operations," Bernardo said. "Those are the very real impacts that we're talking about when there are demonstrators at the Oakland Seaport."

"I really want folks who don't know anything about the Port of Oakland to know that any disruption to the seaport really will impact them," he said. "The everyday person will be impacted on some level."



Heather, who declined to give her last name, joins several hundred pro-Palestinian demonstrators at the Port of Oakland. She said the flag is a "a representation of Israel having blood on their hands." Fellow protesters asked that she not display the flag.
Noah Berger/Special to the Chronicle

The Israel-Hamas war, which marked its 100th day Sunday after Hamas militants carried out a surprise, deadly attack in Israel, has brought widespread destruction and thousands of deaths. Israel's airstrikes and ground offensive in the Gaza Strip have displaced the vast majority of Palestinians in Gaza, stopped operations in nearly half of Gaza's hospitals, and caused widespread famine, the Associated Press reported.

Nearly 24,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, as well as about 350 in the West Bank. Officials believe about two-thirds of those killed in Gaza are women and children, the AP reported. About 330 health workers and 82 journalists also have died in the conflict.

In Israel, more than 1,300 people have been killed, including 790 civilians on Oct. 7, according to the AP.

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