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FUTURES

#StopCopCity Statement: Mapping the War on Terror Roots of Cop City in Atlanta



MUSLIM ABOLITIONIST FUTURES NETWORK

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Solidarity Statement with #StopCopCity Protestors: Mapping the War on Terror Roots of Cop City in Atlanta

The Muslim Abolitionist Futures National Network is releasing this public statement in solidarity with #StopCopCity protestors and joins organizational demands to drop domestic terrorism charges against the Defend the Atlanta Forest Protestors. Since December, 42 protestors have been charged with domestic terrorism, a felony that carries up to 35 years in prison. These terrorism enhancements are meant to punish #StopCopCity forest defenders and repress resistance movements.

1. Cop City as a Site of Global Militarized Violence

Cop City is the term used to describe the Atlanta Police Foundation's 90 million dollar project to build the largest policing and militarized compound in the country. As noted by Community Movement Builders, 70 percent of local residents are opposed to the facility. Cop City would serve as a training ground for expanding policing and militarism across the U.S. South, while specifically harming local Black, Brown and indigenous communities in Atlanta. Cop City would include a mock town with homes and neighborhoods for police agencies to practice carrying out militarized violence. For example, compound plans include a "shoot house" where police will practice shooting civilians, a bomb detonation range, and a Black Hawk Helicopter pad.¹ Given the scope of the site, Atlanta's history in building counter-terrorism policing methods, and existing police exchanges between Atlanta police officers and security agencies from Israel and other parts of the world, it's important to frame this site as a focal point for local, national, and global militarized violence.

¹ Stop Cop City: What is Stop Cop City Instagram Post.
Accessed from https://www.instagram.com/p/Cnw5R_mumnW/

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In order to build Cop City, Atlanta Police Foundation would destroy the sacred Weelaunee forest, one of the last urban city forests in the country. The devastating ecological impacts from destroying a forest, disturbing the ecological ecosystem, and replacing it with a site of state violence would have devastating impacts for local communities, in addition to contributing to the ongoing violence and capture of Native sites and land. The #StopCopCity movement has responded with a clear list of demands that center community needs and invest into community wellbeing, rather than further divesting from local communities. Given this week marks the National Week of Action, the Muslim Abolitionist Futures Network is sharing our solidarity statement with local forest defenders that includes resources for direct support, and a mapping of the “Global War on Terror (GWOT)” roots of Cop City in order to link our broader movements for abolition.

Atlanta has served as a site for building counter-terrorism policing practices that pre-date the official coining of the Global War on Terror in 2001 by former President Bush. Hence, Atlanta and Georgia’s policing and militarized responses have fed and shaped the Global War on Terror and vice-versa. While social movements have always experienced criminalization and state repression, the use of domestic terrorism charges at this scale is deeply concerning and forecasts the future of how state, local, and federal governments will leverage domestic terrorism laws to criminalize movements for justice and liberation.

As we have mapped out in the tool below, it isn’t a coincidence that Georgia is testing out the escalated use of domestic terrorism charges against protestors to usher in the next phase of the Global War on Terror. Atlanta’s Cop City would be situated within a broader infrastructure of mass surveillance, policing, counter-terrorism, state authoritarianism, and criminalization. It is

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intended to be one of the global centers of training, police exchanges, private and public partnerships to expand surveillance capitalism, and urban warfare policing that is built upon displacement of local communities from their neighborhoods and the destruction of the environment.

With Cop City the counter-terrorism infrastructure is also being deployed to test out how far state governments can target movements and destroy internal and communal solidarity with movements. The use of domestic terrorism charges activates a legal system that gives the state expanded power and further strips any individual rights for protestors. It activates the militarized, surveillance, and incarceration systems linked with counter-terrorism, which have proliferated over the past few decades with impunity. It activates a legal system that has given military and police agencies the cover to murder individuals without public outrage. Extrajudicial killings are a key tool of the War on Terror. In Atlanta, the state murdered forest defender, Tortuguita - the first forest defender to be killed. Tortuguita was killed during an operation that involved officers from the Georgia state patrol, Dekalb county police, Atlanta police, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and the FBI. The state falsely labeled Tortuguita a domestic terrorist. Labeling individuals and communities with the terrorism label isolates and stigmatizes individuals who often end up navigating a complex system that sits at the nexus of the prison industrial complex, militarism, immigration enforcement, and national security.

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As a network, we have witnessed the application of the “Global War on Terror (GWOT)” apparatus to suppress resistance movements in the U.S., most recently with reproductive justice activists in the wake of the Roe decision; Black Lives Matter protestors; to Land-Back defenders and water protectors; and, now Weelaunee Forest defenders. This dangerous trend will continue and Muslim Abolitionist Futures Network remains in solidarity with directly targeted movements, and seeks to integrate lessons learned from numerous communities, including our Muslim communities who have lived with the impact of the Global War on Terror for the past twenty plus years. Given how Muslim communities have experienced the traumatizing impact of the state testing out terrorism frameworks, policies, and charges on our communities, we are committed to resisting and undermining any expansion of such violence.

II. Mapping of the “Global War on Terror (GWOT)” Roots of Cop City in Atlanta

For organizers and community members who are interested in learning more about the GWOT roots of Cop City in Atlanta, we have provided a mapping of the different programs in Atlanta that have been built over the past few decades. The presence of these programs and Atlanta’s role in the local, national, and global ecosystem of policing, militarization, surveillance, and training makes the defense of #StopCopCity a priority. For example, the police exchanges with policing and security forces across the world through the GILEE program will further deepen partnerships between policing and intelligence agencies that are using the counter-terrorism framework to repress movements from Palestine to numerous other countries that are using national security and terrorism to destroy movements. All of these programs and initiatives further strengthen the infrastructure for militarized violence against #StopCopCity forest defenders. We have offered a small overview of the various programs and initiatives. We welcome any feedback.

Call To Action



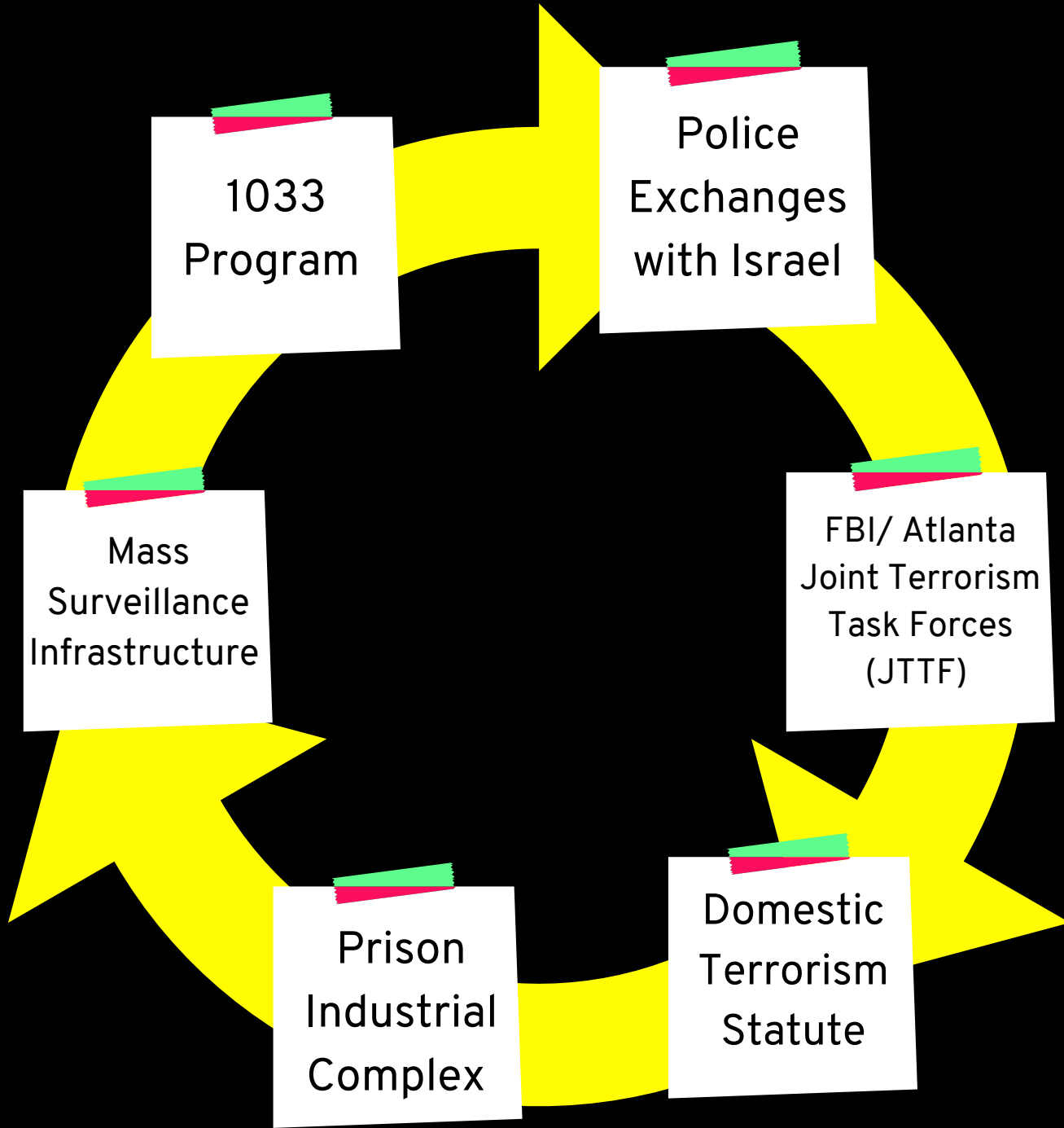
- Community Movement Builders Stop Cop City: Cancel the Lease Action
 - Community Movement Builders has created this petition to gain global support in calling for the cancellation of this lease and the immediate stopping of the police facility project. This is the official petition to Mayor Andre Dickens and the Atlanta City Council.

Link: [Cancelthelease.com](https://cancelthelease.com)



- Support #StopCopCity Demands
- Defend the Atlanta Forest
- Atlanta Solidarity Fund: Directly support protestors targeted by domestic terrorism charges

Mapping of the “Global War on Terror (GWOT)” Roots of Cop City in Atlanta



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Police Militarization and Urban Warfare:

1033 Program

Police agencies across Georgia use the 1033 program to gain military equipment.² Between 1993-2020, the state of Georgia received \$62.8 million in military equipment.³ Some of the transferred military equipment included: 28 mine resistant vehicles (\$19.2 million); 213 utility trucks (\$13.4 million); 22 ground unmanned vehicles (\$1.8 million); 12 observation helicopters (\$1.7 million); 115 thermal sights (\$1.4 million); 2,015 5.56mm rifles (\$787,939), and 775 7.62mm rifles (\$106,950).⁴ The state of Georgia is one of the top 10 states to receive military equipment transfers.

Utilize interactive map to see all military equipment transferred to local police agencies under 1033 Program by Zip Code.

Georgia’s Domestic Terrorism Statute



The statute was passed in 2017 in response to fighting white supremacist hate violence. The statute is one of the vaguest definitions of what constitutes domestic terrorism in the country. As Natasha Lennard states in the Intercept, “domestic terrorism under the statute includes the destruction or disabling of ill-defined “critical infrastructure,” which can be publicly or privately owned, or “a state or government facility” with the intention to “alter, change, or coerce the policy of the government” or “affect the conduct of the government” by use of “destructive devices.”⁵ It’s important to note this amendment was passed as part of a broader anti-immigration bill to establish a public database of immigrants who had felonies (House Bill 452).⁶

Anti-Protest Proposed Legislation: Safe Communities Act (SB 171)

In the face of continued attacks on forest defenders, lawmakers in the Georgia General Assembly are attempting to pass anti-protest legislation that would restrict the freedom of assembly and criminalize and pose extreme penalties on protestors. This along with the wave of anti-protest bills proposed by state governments across the country is not a coincidence, but a direct attack on successful mobilization and base-building efforts of Black and Brown communities

2 <https://thecurrentga.org/2023/01/04/check-out-which-coastal-georgia-police-departments-have-federal-military-equipment/> Accessed from https://www.instagram.com/p/Cnw5R_mumnW/

3 \$1.8 Billion in Military Gear Transferred to 8,200 Local Police Agencies, OpenTheBooks Oversight Report, 2020.

4 \$1.8 Billion in Military Gear Transferred to 8,200 Local Police Agencies, OpenTheBooks Oversight Report, 2020, pg 26-27.

5 The Crackdown on Cop City Protestors is So Brutal Because of the Movement’s Success. Written by Natasha Lennard. <https://theintercept.com/2023/01/27/cop-city-atlanta-forest/>

6 Domestic Terrorism Bill Passes Senate, heads to governor’s desk. <https://www.ajc.com/news/state--regional-govt--politics/homeland-security-measure-attached-immigrant-felon-database-bill/LXntOIYbPEWvXyEHZPd3OO/>

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Police Exchanges with Israel

GILEE (Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange) Program



The GILEE program includes exchanges between the Atlanta Police Department and other countries, including the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). The GILEE program was founded by an anti-Muslim bigot who has a long history of Islamophobic and rightwing trainings. GILEE’s founding director has a record of attacking Muslims and Arab-Americans, denying that Islamophobia exists and complained that the 2nd Amendment prevented the FBI from targeting mosques.

The GILEE program was originally founded in 1992 under the guise of counter-terrorism responses against the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. In 2022, Atlanta Police Department sent a 16 member delegation of police chiefs, command staff, sheriffs and other law enforcement officials to Israel as part of Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange’s (GILEE) 29th annual training program. It is important to note that other police chiefs from other parts of the country have attended this exchange. GILEE works in partnership with Georgia State University.

FBI/ Atlanta Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF)

The Atlanta JTTF is a multi-agency that investigates suspected terrorist activity. The Atlanta JTTF is led by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and includes local and state law enforcement agencies that also collaborate with ICE and local police departments. They share data and information. In 2006, documents were released by the ACLU where SOA Watch, a grassroots anti-war and immigration justice group was surveilled by the FBI/JTTF in Atlanta.⁸ The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), formerly named School of the Americas, is a US military training school located in Fort Benning, Georgia.⁹ Among the list of graduates are some of the worst violators of human rights in the continent, including nearly a dozen Latin American dictators.¹⁰

During SOA protests, multi-agency collaboration was present between the Columbus Police Department, Muscogee County Sheriff’s and Marshals Office, Georgia State Patrol, and Muscogee County Prison.¹¹ An organizer familiar with SOA Watch protests elaborated that “a whole floor of inmates would be transferred to other floors to leave the unit empty for protesters.” They also recalled joint training exercises between WHINSEC personnel and Muscogee County Sheriff’s Office. There is a movement nationally to demand localities end their participation in the JTTF program. Organizers in Portland, San Francisco, and Oakland ran successful campaigns to demand that their city legislatures withdraw from the JTTFs.

⁷ Petition sponsored by Jewish Voice for Peace-Atlanta, Project South, and CAIR-GA. Accessed from <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/end-racist-and-violent-policing-atlanta-out-of-gilee-2>

⁸ ACLU (2006). School of the Americas Watch - FBI/JTTF Documents Released. Accessed from <https://www.aclu.org/other/school-americas-watch-fbijttf-documents-released>

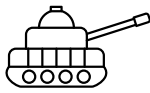
⁹ SOA Watch: Then And Now, <https://soaw.org/soa-watch-then-and-now>.

¹⁰ Our History, SOA Watch, <https://soaw.org/about-soa-watch>.

¹¹ 300+ Officers on hand for WHINSEC protest, <https://www.wtvm.com/story/11548264/300-officers-on-hand-for-whinsec-protest/>.

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The Northern District of Georgia's Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council (ATAC)¹²



The ATAC was created in the aftermath of 9/11 as part of the War on Terror. The goal of the ATAC includes:

1. “coordinating anti-terrorism initiatives;
2. initiating and supporting anti-terrorism training programs; and
3. facilitating terrorism information sharing”

Mass Surveillance Infrastructure



FAIRVIEW: According to the Intercept, Atlanta hosts one of the 8 facilities nationally that are part of the NSA’s spying initiative that has monitored billions of emails, phone calls, and online chats passing across U.S. territory.¹³

Operation SHIELD: The Atlanta Police Foundation’s core smart program that gives the police foundation access to over 3,000 cameras across Atlanta and is integrated into Atlanta Police Department’s Video Integration Center (VIC).¹⁴

Fusion Center: Atlanta is one of the most surveilled cities in the country. Georgia’s Fusion Center was created on October 24, 2001. “The Georgia Information Sharing and Analysis Center (GISAC) was created simultaneously with the Georgia Homeland Security Task Force and the appointment of the state’s Homeland Security Coordinator. On August 12, 2010 an executive order merged the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI)¹⁵ Criminal Intelligence unit into GISAC to form Georgia’s current all-crimes intelligence fusion center under the director of GBI.”

There are campaigns to fight back against Fusion Centers because they are used to monitor protests and movements, from the Black Lives Matter movement to other resistance movements.

¹² United States Attorney’s Office: Northern District of Georgia. Accessed from <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndga/criminal-division/anti-terrorism-information>

¹³ Ryan Gallagher, Henrik Moltke (2018) The Wiretap Rooms. The NSA’s Hidden Spy Hubs in Eight US Cities. Access from <https://theintercept.com/2018/06/25/att-internet-nsa-spy-hubs/>

¹⁴ <https://atlantapolicefoundation.org/programs/operation-shield/>

¹⁵ GA Information Sharing Analysis Center. Accessed from Georgia Bureau of Investigation Investigative Division’s website: <https://investigative-gbi.georgia.gov/investigative-offices-and-services/specialized-units/ga-information-sharing-analysis-center>

Mapping of the “Global War on Terror (GWOT)” Roots of Cop City in Atlanta

Secure the Neighborhood Initiative



The Atlanta Police Department launched this program to provide homes at a reduced cost to police officers in predominantly Black and working class neighborhoods. In return, officers agree to patrol these neighborhoods. Additionally, police are offered incentives like access to a car, a monthly stipend, and down payment assistance to purchase a home. This is a tactic used to continue policing and surveilling Black, brown, immigrant, and working class communities.

Prison Industrial Complex



For a deeper analysis of how the prison industrial complex shows up in Atlanta, we recommend the mapping conducted by Micah Herskind, which includes the following institutions.¹⁶

- “City Government: Mayor & City Council
- Atlanta Police Department
- Atlanta Committee for Progress
- Atlanta Police Foundation (nonprofit institution)
- Cox Enterprises
- Media: Atlanta Journal Constitution (AJC)”

¹⁶ Mapping the Prison Industrial Complex by Micah Herskind. Access from <https://abolitionist.tools/Mapping-the-PIC> and <https://www.mainlinezine.com/cop-city-and-the-prison-industrial-complex-in-atlanta/>

Solidarity is Our Best Defense

Muslim Abolitionist Futures Network strongly opposes the building of Cop City and is in solidarity with #StopCopCity movements, who are working to protect the sacred Weelaunee forest and all communities who are at risk of further violence at the hands of police. The liberation of all oppressed people is tied to the protection of stolen land. From Palestine to the Weelaunee forest – the militarized tactics being deployed by the state and law enforcement only serve to protect the oppressors in power. As a network of faith inspired activists, who are predominantly Muslim, we reject supremacy and state violence in all its forms, and especially white supremacist violence. The creation of Cop City will directly impact and harm our Black, Indigenous and Brown communities, who are the targets of white supremacist violence globally. We recommit to divesting from any and all forms of white supremacist violence, and investing in the liberation and care for the environment, land and impacted communities.

About the Network: The Muslim Abolitionist Futures (MAF) Network is working towards building a world where we all live with dignity, freedom and justice. Our goal is to abolish the "Global War on Terror (GWOT)." The "Global War on Terror (GWOT)" is a system of death and destruction that exists through policies, programs, and laws that target Muslim communities, communities racialized as Muslim, and more broadly Black and Brown communities targeted under the false guise of national security. We invite those interested in learning more about our collective agenda to read, ["Abolishing the War on Terror, Building Communities of Care."](#)

