By: Vi Lina

Since the last Dissonant Times reportback, the 200 year-old Cottonwood tree that anchored the border wall resistance camp in Lochiel, AZ has been slain and replaced with a 30ft tall steel wall, separating communities, wildlife, and terrain that has never before been divided with such a foreboding physical barrier. Surely, many will grieve the death of this tree and the disbandment of this 75-days-long camp (affectionately called Camp "O:Shad", the word for jaguar in the O'odham language). Yet to see the death of Grandmother tree and the end of Camp O:Shad as an end to border wall resistance is naive to the centuries-long resistance on this land against colonialism, privatization, and capitalist extraction. The international attention it attracted and the hundreds of people mobilized have re-energized and strengthened the movement that many are now calling "Tierra Libre" (Free Land).

This transition, in preparation for the continued fight ahead, necessitates a pause to document and reflect on the final climactic week of Camp O:Shad. The following reportback is compiled by first-hand accounts of people on the ground:

October 4th: Camp O:Shad hosts a Day of Action, during which many people travel to witness and celebrate the Grandmother tree with music, dancing, parading, intricate puppets, stilts, and more. The crowd celebrates the 70th consecutive day of a tree sitter remaining in the tree, and stopping the construction of the double border wall.

October 5th: A group gathers in prayer around the Grandmother tree for their daily sunrise ceremony. Protesters report 50+ border patrol agents (BP), including BORTAC (BP technical units), stretching "as far as the eye could see". BP swarms the tree and protesters in a show of unprecedented force. Some protesters position themselves between oncoming construction equipment and the tree, locking arms, but BP force them back, unlawfully entering private property without a warrant and cutting through a private fence in the process. BP tramples tents, forces protesters to the ground and kneels on or beats them, and arrests 12. One freed protester reports a broken toe and a torn ligament in their knee as a result of brutal handling by BP. Ultimately, BP uses a cherry-picker to extract the treesitter and cuts down the Grandmother tree. As soon as she falls, border wall construction begins at a rapid rate, with vehicles running, music blaring, and fluorescent lights shining around the clock. Some construction workers report they are expected to pull double shifts for the week, meaning they are driving huge trucks loaded with panels of border wall for most of each day, getting only a few hours of sleep each night.

October 6th: The next day dawns with a protester high up in the "Abuela" tree, another large Cottonwood that stands on the edge of the road that is being leveled for wall construction, on the Mexican side of the imaginary border. In mid-August, a treesitter ascended into a platform in this tree, initiating the first-documented bi-national tree sit. The treesitter had been forced out after one day, and the tree sat empty for about five weeks. On this morning, a treesitter once again occupies the platform, and a group

of protesters block the roadway in front of the tree. This is an attempt to stop construction vehicles rumbling beneath the tree, shaking the ground, damaging the Abuela's roots, and endangering the treesitter. In response, BP arrest 6 people, throwing one violently to the ground and kneeling on their neck. As the day continues, protesters continue documenting and live-streaming the ways BP threatens the treesitter and endangers crowds of people by rushing through construction. BP uses various tactics to force protesters farther back into private property and create space for the unlawful construction of the wall, including by dragging protesters through a barbed wire fence, blatantly punching them in the face and beating them to the ground, and pepper spraying multiple protesters while they are handcuffed in an enclosed vehicle. Another protester throws their body in front of a large drill as it is about to penetrate the earth, interrupting construction until they are arrested and dragged away. Five of the people arrested this day are held overnight in crowded detention facilities, sharing cells with families who had been hunted down, captured, separated, and held for deportation to Mexico the next morning. Some of the protesters are verbally threatened with felonies including assaults of officers, but all are released in Tucson in a McDonalds parking lot, without paperwork or any clear understanding of their charges or legal futures.

October 7th: A protester locks down on a cement truck that is filling trenches with cement for panel installation. This lockdown effectively blocks the road and halts construction for the rest of the day. BP attempts to force the protester to unlock herself by using pain compliance, driving the cement truck with the protester precariously locked on the back, and constructing a makeshift gas chamber with a mylar sheet, enclosing her and the exhaust pipe, forcing her to inhale carbon monoxide. After about five hours, BP cuts the protester out of the lockbox and takes her into custody. Throughout the afternoon and evening, BP holds unarmed protesters at gunpoint and deploys tear gas and pepperballs at protesters who are standing behind barbed wire on private property. Other lockdown attempts are made, but those protesters are quickly extracted and arrested.

October 8th: BP sits or kneels on, arrests, and drags away multiple protesters, some of whom remain sitting or lying on private property while interrupting border wall construction. Using a cherry-picker parked on the US side of border, Mexican state police ascend and approach the Abuela tree in an attempt to remove the treesitter, but she climbs out of reach of the cherry-picker. Mexican state police cut down the treesitter's platform and steal all her supplies, possibly damaging the life-safety climbing rope in the process. The treesitter is stranded in the Abuela tree without a platform, food or water. At this point the treesitter has already been without adequate water for over 24 hours due to BP and Mexican State Police preventing resupply.

October 9th: After the treesitter endured 58 hours of the desert heat without water and began showing signs of late-stage dehydration, strong advocacy on the ground and widespread public pressure via a phonezap convince BP to bring her limited water and electrolytes. Later in the afternoon, after 20 hours perched in a tree without a platform, the treesitter chooses to descend

safely to the ground. BP evaluate her for dehydration and injuries, arrest her, and then take her directly to detention (where she will be held for 5 days) after she declines a trip to the hospital. This night, camp celebrates the treesitter's safe descent with song and communion and maintains a ceremonial fire for her protection until she is home.

October 10th: Camp O:Shad receives notice that due to significant pressure from various law enforcement agencies, one of the landowners who had been hosting Camp O:Shad asks the campers to leave. Lochiel's sheriff repeatedly refuses BP requests for aid in removal of protesters, and states that "the only violent physical encounters in the area involved large numbers of mask-clad federal officers gassing and dragging protesters away". In an open letter published October 9th, sheriffs in the surrounding area make it clear they will step in to support BP and suppress protesters as needed. Camp O:Shad packs up and evacuates under threats of raids and evictions.

Camp O:Shad and all who participated from near and far successfully halted border wall construction in Lochiel for 75 consecutive days. The total impact of these 75 days will never be fully known. What plans and dreams were inspired by this struggle and are being formulated right now? How many opportunities did this delay create, to prepare the resistance of border wall construction in neighboring areas? What was possible elsewhere in the desert in BP's absence, while their attention was fixated on this camp?

Border violence continues everywhere – in the kidnappings and murders by ICE and BP, in the escalation of surveillance, and in the wall construction progressing just 70 miles west of Lochiel on Tohono O'odham land. Camp O:Shad has provided a variety of tools to aid anyone, anywhere, in participating in border resistance, such as this power map of the contractors and other actors constructing the border wall and this calendar of events. There is also an ongoing need for donations to the legal fund for the 36 protesters who now face charges due to their resistance at the wall, and a call for lawyers who are willing to take on cases.

Currently, construction is rapidly approaching Tadai Mei, a prayer camp that is resisting the construction of the border wall on sovereign Tohono O'odham land. In June, the Tohono O'odham tribal government filed a lawsuit against the US government for taking its land and water to construct a border wall that would sever over 3,000 enrolled nation members from their schools, clinics, families, ancestral sites and ceremonies. Portions of the wall that were constructed nearby have already damaged the culturally sacred and environmentally protected Quitobaquito Springs, and many more sacred sites and vulnerable species are in danger. See the Tohono O'odham website and Tadai Mei instagram page for more information about this resistance and ideas on how to support.

Finally, for anyone able to travel, Tierra Libre organizers are inviting all compelled by border wall resistance to come to southern Arizona November 11th-17th for continued skill-sharing and dreaming. The week ends with an international call to action on Tuesday, November 17th, and people everywhere are encouraged to take action in the communities and places they call home. Truly, the potential for action and escalation extends far beyond where the

movement currently is!

In the tougher moments at Camp O:Shad, people reminded each other of a parable that originated with the Quechuan people and has been passed along through many places of resistance. The parable tells the story of a forest full of life, that is one day threatened by a raging forest fire. While all the forest animals are frozen by fear, a tiny hummingbird fills her beak with a single drop of water and drops it on the forest fire. She returns again and again, each time depositing another drop of water on the fire. The other animals question her, insisting on the futility of her efforts. But as the hummingbird continues her mission, she tells them, “I’m doing what I can do.” Camp O:Shad and the legacy of the Grandmother trees is a call for all of us to summon the will of the hummingbird in our respective corners of this earth, and act fully in our power.

All walls will fall! ¡Libera la tierra y liberas el pueblo!