

By: Cipher

As we mourn the recent ICE murders of Lorenzo Salgado Araujo and Joan Sebastian Guerrero, we must continue to resist this fascist violence, and take inspiration from those who have been engaged in this battle with their full selves. This spring, ICE and police assaulted, injured, captured, and denied the rights of Dr. Catherine Esperanza for standing outside the Portland ICE facility, as she advocated for the safety of our immigrant community members. While ICE and the administration who is responsible for these harms continue to evade all accountability, Dr. Esperanza now faces trial to defend herself against the class A misdemeanor charge of “interfering with a peace officer” (IPO). **Her supporters are calling all community members to attend her trial on August 10th, 11th and 12th at the Multnomah County Courthouse (1200 SW 1st Ave, Portland). A large community presence at the trial will show the circuit court that we stand with Dr. Esperanza against genocides overseas and here in the US, against the presence of ICE in our community, and against state repression. Can't attend the trial? Send an email to the Portland City Government telling them to drop the charges.**

On May 1, 2026, Dr. Esperanza stood outside the ICE facility in Portland as she had many days before, alongside other protesters advocating for immigrant rights. Despite Portland's status as a sanctuary city, Portland city riot police and state troopers came to aggravate the crowd on ICE's behalf, firing pepper balls at close range and hitting protestors with batons. At the time, Dr. Esperanza was wearing a medical boot because she was healing from a broken fibula (calf bone) caused by ICE munition just two months prior. Despite the obvious injury, two Portland Police Bureau (PPB) officers tackled Dr. Esperanza and pressed her into the ground, belly down – a position known to cause positional asphyxia. One officer held his knee on her neck in the same maneuver that killed George Floyd in 2020. Dr. Esperanza told

the officers her leg was broken, told them repeatedly she couldn't breathe, and begged for help for fear of losing her life. The officers then took Dr. Esperanza to jail, where she was told she would be held without bail for four days after refusing to speak with anyone in the absence of a lawyer. Jailers detained Dr. Esperanza in a cell the size of a parking spot and denied her out-of-cell time along with the other women in her unit. They also denied Dr. Esperanza her medication and interrupted communication sent to her containing contact numbers for her family and legal defense.

Dr. Esperanza's 24 hours of captivity was terrifying, cruel, and unjustified. It fuels her empathy and rage while advocating for people enduring solitary confinement and routine torture in ICE detention facilities throughout the country. The American Civil Liberties Union, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch have repeatedly documented instances of forced dehydration, sleep deprivation, medical neglect, physical abuse, sexual violence, stress positions, exposure, and solitary confinement in facilities across Florida and Texas.

In Dr. Esperanza's case, her allies at Doctors Against Genocide, Portland 4 Palestine, Portland Contra Las Deportaciones, and the Revoke the Permit Coalition organized a rapid phone zap and protest outside the jail to call attention to her denial of bail and medical neglect. Shortly after this pressure began to build, Dr. Esperanza was released from jail after 24 hours of captivity.

The IPO charge Dr. Esperanza faces has commonly been used to silence people speaking out against the state and to suppress Oregon's most over-policed and vulnerable populations. As the Oregonian documented in 2020, IPO is the most common protest-related charge, used to criminalize and deter protestors exercising their First Amendment rights. Black people in Multnomah County are four times as likely to be charged with IPO as people who aren't Black. Since 2014, IPO has been one

of the top charges applied to unhoused people, and 52% of arrests in Multnomah County are of unhoused people. In 2017, the Oregon Supreme Court hearing determined passive resistance to a police officer's orders wasn't grounds for IPO conviction – someone would have to be violent or “actively” resist (like running away) in order to be convicted of IPO. However, this charge continues to be applied inappropriately for the kind of resistance Dr. Esperanza demonstrated at the federal building.

Further evidence of suppression lies in the way the state has been approaching this case. Thousands of ICE agents and US cops have trained with Israeli Occupying Forces since the early 2000s. In 1988, the Israeli Defense Minister at the time told his soldiers, “Go in and break their bones. If they will be beaten, hurt them, and the demonstrations will stop.” During Dr. Esperanza's arraignment, when Senior Deputy District Attorney Keven Demer evoked this same sentiment by asking, “What was she doing back at the ICE facility after ICE broke her leg?” As if implying that the power of the states' repression had been so effective, the fact that she had not yet succumbed to state violence and repression was a subject of curiosity.

Dr. Esperanza is currently in her postdoctoral fellowship in Psychology, a career she has pursued with dreams of expanding healthcare access to those historically denied it. As a member of the Oregon chapter of Doctors Against Genocide, Dr. Esperanza has been outspoken on many US policies to fund genocide and warfare over healthcare, as well as to terrorize, deport, and murder marginalized and immigrant communities. She is spreading her story in the hopes that it will call attention to the litany of rights violations and abuses of power that are faced by so many people targeted by ICE and police for their citizenship status, appearance, or their activism. Dr. Esperanza says, “I am proud to say I have stood by my values in the face of government violence and repression, whether in a cast or in a cell. It is an honor

and a privilege to continue the fight for justice, equity, and dignity for my loved ones, my clients, and my communities. And I will continue advocating until Portland revokes the ICE permit and protects our valued immigrant community from ICE terror. And I will continue advocating until all people can live with dignity and freedom from Portland to Palestine.”