

Stop Cop City: Atlanta is burning

ARB Dispatch

Featuring That Summer Feeling detail by Dianna Settles, 2021,
Acrylic and colored pencil on panel 2021

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On January 18th, SWAT forces attempting to clear the Weelaunee Forest of protesters and tree sitters resisting the construction of an 85-acre police training facility known as "Cop City", shot and killed 26-year-old Manuel Paez Teran. "Tortugueta" as they were known by friends and comrades, was an indigenous anarchist, trained medic, and longtime organizer for IWW, Food Not Bombs, and mutual aid organizations in Florida and Georgia. A police officer was shot during the operation and nineteen other protesters were arrested, seven of whom were charged with domestic terrorism.

In April 2021, Atlanta activists uncovered plans between the Atlanta Police Foundation and the City of Atlanta for what would be among the largest police training facilities in the country—with a mock city where police would train with firearms, tear gas, helicopters, and explosive devices to repress protest and mass unrest.

"Cop City" would deforest up to 380 acres of the largest contiguous forest in the region. Scientists describe the forest as indispensable in protecting the area from flooding and ensuring the area's resilience during climate change. The site is also less than half

Construction was scheduled to begin June 1st, 2022, but Forest Defenders estimate crews have managed less than a week of work up to this point. On May 17, 2022 the Atlanta Police Department field investigations team was recorded over a police scanner discussing justifications for the use of deadly force against protesters.

In December 2022, one month before the murder of Manuel Paez Teran, local and state police violently attacked Forest Defenders with chemical weapons, destroyed encampments and tree sits, and charged six arrested activists with domestic terrorism.

The current movement also focuses on attacking Cop City's corporate allies and contractors, including iBank of America, Wells Fargo, AT&T, Cox Enterprises (owners of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution), Delta Airlines, the Koch brothers, and Home Depot to name a few.

"The APF wants to build Cop City," said N.N., "but they rely on general contractors