

Thousands of protesters gathered Jan. 23 in downtown Minneapolis to oppose the Trump administration's aggressive immigration enforcement. Police arrested about 100 clergy demonstrating at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. (AP/Angelina Katsanis)

by Associated Press

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Police arrested about 100 clergy demonstrating against immigration enforcement at Minnesota's largest airport Jan. 23, and several thousand gathered in downtown Minneapolis despite Arctic temperatures to protest the Trump administration's crackdown.

The protests are part of a broader movement against President Donald Trump's increased immigration enforcement across the state, with labor unions, progressive organizations and clergy urging Minnesotans to stay away from work, school and even shops. The faith leaders gathered at the airport to protest deportation flights and urge airlines to call for an end to what the Department of Homeland Security has called its largest-ever immigration enforcement operation.

The clergy were issued misdemeanor citations of trespassing and failure to comply with a peace officer and were then released, said Jeff Lea, a Metropolitan Airports Commission spokesman. They were arrested outside the main terminal at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport because they went beyond the reach of their permit for demonstrating and disrupted airline operations, he said.

Rev. Mariah Furness Tollgaard of Hamline Church in St. Paul said police ordered them to leave but she and others decided to stay and be arrested to show support for migrants, including members of her congregation who are afraid to leave their homes. She planned to go back to her church after her brief detention to hold a prayer vigil.

"We cannot abide living under this federal occupation of Minnesota," Tollgaard said.



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The Rev. Elizabeth Barish Browne traveled from Cheyenne, Wyoming, to participate in the rally in downtown Minneapolis, where the high temperature was minus 9 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 23 degrees Celsius) despite a bright sun.

"What's happening here is clearly immoral," the Unitarian Universalist minister said. "It's definitely chilly, but the kind of ice that's dangerous to us is not the weather."

Protesters have gathered daily in the Twin Cities since Jan. 7, when 37-year-old mother of three Renee Good was fatally shot by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer. Federal law enforcement officers have repeatedly squared off with community members and activists who track their movements.

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Sam Nelson said he skipped work so he could join the march. He said he's a former student of the Minneapolis high school where federal agents detained someone after

class earlier this month. That arrest led to altercations between federal officers and bystanders.

"It's my community," Nelson said. "Like everyone else, I don't want ICE on our streets."

Organizers said Jan. 23 that more than 700 businesses statewide had closed in solidarity with the movement, including a bookstore in tiny Grand Marais near the Canadian border and the landmark Guthrie Theater in downtown Minneapolis.

"We're achieving something historic," said Kate Havelin of Indivisible Twin Cities, one of the more than 100 participating groups.

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This story appears in the **Immigration Protests in Minneapolis** and **Immigration and the Church** feature series.