



PRESS RELEASE



## The International Dockworkers Council (IDC) Marks Its 25th Anniversary in Charleston, Reaffirming Its Global Commitment to Solidarity and Union Struggle

- *The event was endorsed by Pope Leo XIV and featured a congratulatory message in Times Square, while paying tribute to historic figures such as Björn Borg, Mauricio Zarzuelo, and the veterans of the MUA.*
- *The IDC reinforced its fight against port automation and committed to global union training, with new partnerships, including an upcoming meeting with unions from Shandong (China).*
- *Throughout the gathering in Charleston, more than 300 delegates shared experiences and strengthened the bonds of brotherhood and solidarity that have defined the IDC since its founding.*

**IDC. Charleston (South Carolina, USA), June 30, 2025** – The International Dockworkers Council (IDC) commemorated its 25th anniversary with an extensive program of activities held from June 23 to 27 in the city of Charleston, South Carolina, United States. The event coincided with the 25th anniversary of the Charleston Five conflict—a historic milestone for the dockworkers’ union movement—and was organized in collaboration with ILA Local 1422, the host union in the city.

Over 300 delegates from various countries and ports across the globe came together during these days to share experiences, strengthen bonds of brotherhood, and advance the collective defense of dockworkers’ labor rights. The atmosphere was marked by unity, commitment, and solidarity among peoples and dockworkers.

On Thursday, June 26, the central day of the IDC commemoration, an official ceremony brought together union representatives from all the regions where the IDC is present. Speakers included IDC General Coordinator Dennis A. Daggett; International Labor Coordinator Jordi Aragunde; European Coordinators Andy Green and Marc Storms; Latin America and Caribbean Coordinator César Luna; Asia-Oceania Coordinator Paul Keating; West Coast U.S. Coordinator Ed Ferris; and East Coast Coordinator Kenneth Riley, who also serves as President of ILA Local 1422.

During the ceremony, the commemorative book celebrating the IDC’s 25th anniversary was presented. All proceeds from its sales will go towards the second edition of the international solidarity and charity football tournament organized by the English

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dockworkers of Tilbury, in which 15 teams formed by international delegations will compete.

The event was further distinguished by the heartfelt support of a congratulatory message from Pope Leo XIV, the first American pontiff, as well as a greeting displayed on the iconic Times Square screen in New York City.

The IDC reaffirmed its commitment to continue the united struggle against port terminal automation—one of the main threats to decent employment in the sector—and highlighted the ongoing fight of Australian comrades. In addition, bilateral meetings were held between various delegations to develop union training programs for IDC members, recognizing that education and training are key to facing future challenges.

Throughout the conference, the latest initiatives of the Youth, Sports, and Equality working groups—strategic pillars of IDC's global action—were presented. Tributes were also paid to the Veterans of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), to Argentine trade unionist Mauricio Zarzuelo, a prominent IDC member, and posthumously to Swedish dockworker Björn Borg, one of the IDC's founders and former European Coordinator—a key figure in the history of the organization.

Another highlight took place on Tuesday, June 24, with ceremonies marking the 25th anniversary of the Charleston Five conflict, a symbol of union resistance and the fight for the release of five dockworkers unjustly prosecuted for defending labor rights.

On Wednesday, June 25, delegates visited the International African American Museum, where they took part in an emotional ceremony honoring the rich history and cultural legacy of this southern city.

Finally, the IDC announced that an international delegation will soon travel to China at the invitation of unions in Shandong. The goal of this visit is to strengthen ties of cooperation and solidarity with the country's union movement, as reported by Jordi Aragunde to the attendees.

The International Dockworkers Council bids farewell to Charleston with the determination to continue strengthening its role as the global voice of dockworkers and to persist in its fight to defend port workers against present and future challenges.

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