

Protesters decry military recruitment at Bronx job fair in New York City

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New York, March 22 (RHC)-- In New York City, dozens of community organizers, parents, teachers and students rallied at a Bronx high school Monday, protesting a military recruitment and job fair event hosted by U.S. Congressmembers Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Adriano Espaillat.

The so-called student services fair featured representatives from military service academies for the Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. Advocates accused Ocasio-Cortez of backtracking on her antiwar campaign promises and policies opposing predatory military recruitment tactics that predominantly target Black, Brown, Latinx and low-income students.

In 2020, Ocasio-Cortez proposed a ban against military recruitment on the online gaming platform Twitch, while she later pushed for an amendment that would have halted federal funding for military recruitment in middle and high schools.

Richie Merino, an organizer with the Bronx Anti-War Coalition, at a rally which took place on the 20th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, said: “A lot of youth here are struggling to find jobs. Many youth here are not prepared to go to college. Instead of bringing military recruiters here, we should be having a jobs fair, we should be having a college fair. You’re saying this is a student services fair. Where are the services for the youth?”

Organizers also demanded justice for Vanessa Guillén and Ana Basaldua Ruiz, two Latina women who were killed after they reported being sexually assaulted at the Fort Hood U.S. Army base in Texas — Guillén in 2020 and Ruiz last week — and 21-year-old Abdul Latifu, who was murdered in January by another soldier at Fort Rucker in Alabama.

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