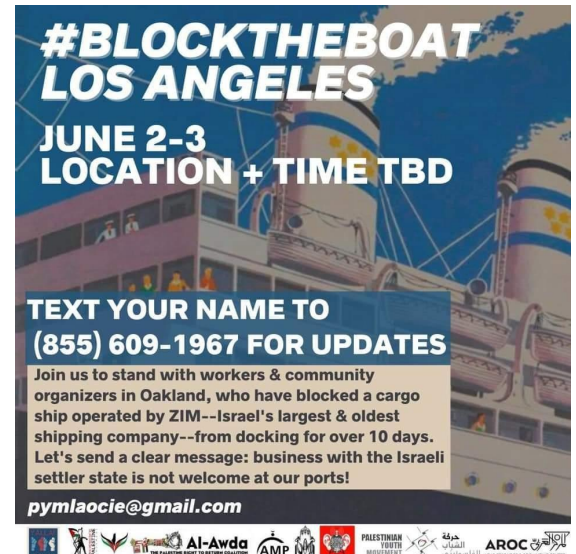


BLOCK THE BOAT: A research and tracking primer for planning an action against the Israeli Zim shipping company

This is a toolkit for tracking ships owned by Israel's Zim Shipping, and offers a starting point for organizing a port blockade with the Block the Boat movement. Although this primer was written primarily for organizing in LA, organizers in other locations can easily extrapolate the methods and apply them to other locations around the world. Tracking strategies will differ from country to country and port to port, depending on existing relationships with dockworkers, how dockworker shifts are scheduled, the legal parameters for dockers to participate in legally-protected actions, etc.



We are witnessing now a new Nakba, a rupture in a continuous and ongoing Nakba since 1948. Palestinians are under threat as they face ethnic cleansing, forced evacuation, apartheid, and genocide. Palestinian trade unions have [put out a call](#) to global action and an end to arming Israel. Blocking Israeli Zim ships has been a key tactic in this struggle. In 2014, the combined efforts of Oakland, LA, Tacoma and Houston's BTB campaigns led to Zim pulling its west coast service for many years. [In 2021, Zim returned to the US west coast.](#) They started a [new express liner](#) from China to the US to respond to the need for "time-definite" "sprinter" ships to ship high value electronic goods across the Pacific. While Zim no longer ships goods directly from Israel to the US, our research suggests that these ships are contracted with Amazon, who have a US\$1.2 billion contract with the IDF. These tactics have driven Zim shipping off the US West Coast before, and we can do it again. The steps below lay out how you can start planning a port blockade.

Research

Step 1: Find Zim schedules on the Zim website

- To find a list of all Zim ships scheduled to dock at your port, go to: <https://www.zim.com/schedules/schedule-by-port>, select your port from the drop down menu, and select a start date.
- To find a list of Zim ships that travel between Israel and your port (many Zim ships do not pass through Israel) use the "[point to point](#)" search function and enter "Haifa" for the "from" field and your port for the To field, or vice versa.

Los Angeles (CA) Schedule By Port

Location *
U.S.A.

Port *
Los Angeles (CA)

Start Date
30-May-2021

Weeks ahead
1

☐ Departure
☒ Arrival

Search

Sort By
Arrival

Los Angeles (CA) -- U.S.A.

7 Results

Port Contacts

Vessel (Code) Rotterdam Express (RES)	ZIM / Partner Voyage 27W / 25W15	Arrival 30-May-2021 04:00	Departure 31-May-2021 07:00	Line (Code) Mediterranean Pacific Service (MPS)
Vessel (Code) Navios Chrysalis (VBR)	ZIM / Partner Voyage 8W / N/A	Arrival 01-Jun-2021 07:00	Departure 03-Jun-2021 09:00	Line (Code) ZIM Central China e-Commerce Xpress (ZX3)
Vessel (Code) Zim Virginia (ZVG)	ZIM / Partner Voyage 103W / N/A	Arrival 02-Jun-2021 04:00	Departure 04-Jun-2021 03:00	Line (Code) ZIM eCommerce Xpress (ZEX)
Vessel (Code) Navios Chrysalis (VBR)	ZIM / Partner Voyage 8W / N/A	Arrival 03-Jun-2021 14:00	Departure 04-Jun-2021 14:00	Line (Code) ZIM Central China e-Commerce Xpress (ZX3)

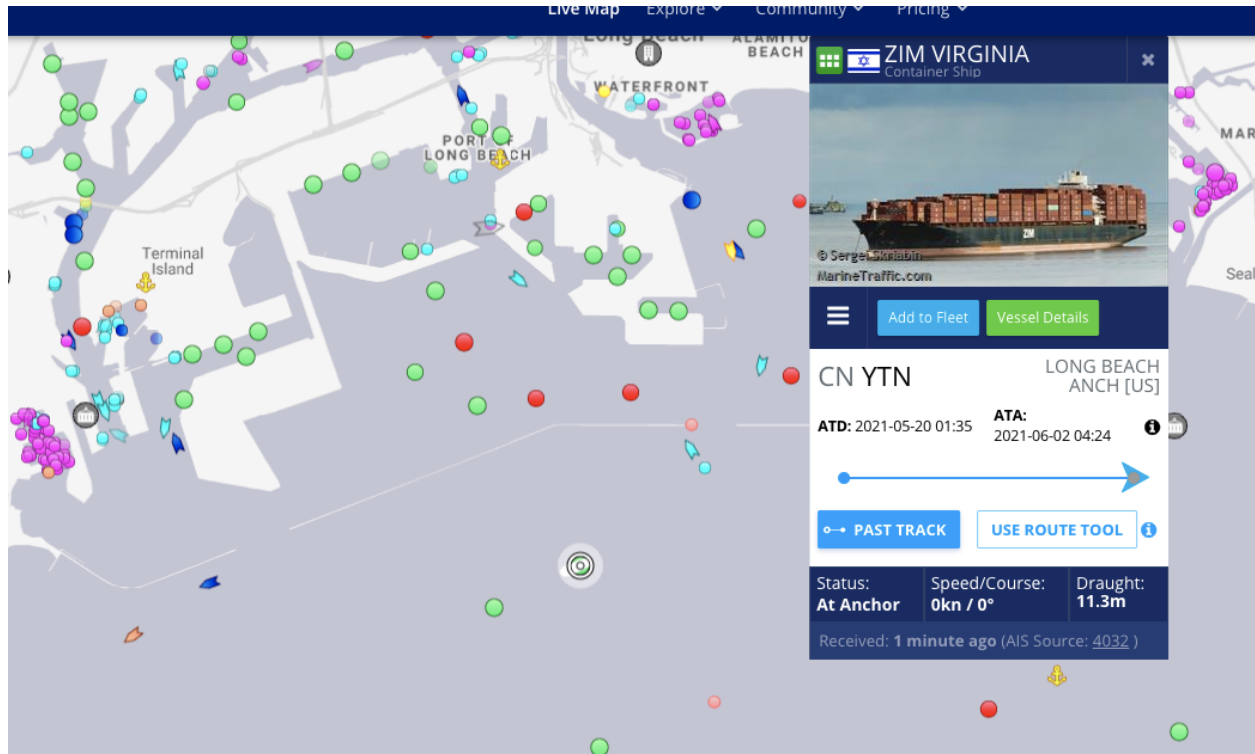
This LA schedule shows one Zim ship, The Zim Virginia, and two other ships (Navios Chrysalis and Rotterdam Express) chartered or owned by other companies, but carrying Zim containers, arriving over a 5 day period from 30 May to 4 June.

- Most ships will not dock on time; ports are experiencing a major backlog right now, so it is likely that the scheduled arrival date and time will reference when the ship arrives in the bay. Here, they will most likely drop anchor and wait till a berth is free.
- Click on the “line (code) field to see the ship’s route. Many Zim routes do not pass through Israel and if you are aiming for a direct intervention into the US-Israel trade, consider searching using the “point to point” function - see “Step 1”.

For tracking ships from other companies: every company site is different; you will need to dig a little to see if they have similar searchable schedules.

Step 2: Track current location via Marine Traffic

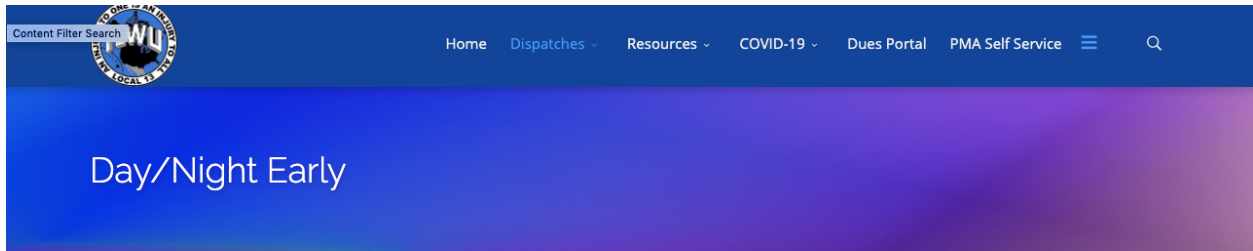
- To check the ship’s current location, go to <https://www.marinetraffic.com/> and enter the name of the ship you’ve found on the Zim site. Click on “show live map” for its location.



For example, the Zim Virginia, scheduled to arrive on June 2nd at 4am, has dropped anchor as of June 2nd, 4pm. The Zim ship is the flashing white target, and you can see it at anchor just outside the Long Beach breakwater. It is a good idea to keep this page open to monitor the ship's movements.

Step 3: Check for docking schedules, shift change, and berth on the ILWU local or dockworker site. (note: I'm not sure what the process is for unions outside of the US!)

- The best way to know *when* a Zim ship will be scheduled to dock, and *where*, is to look up the schedule dispatches for the longshore local in your city. A general rule of thumb when searching for information is to think about who is most likely to need the precise information you are looking for. In this case, longshoremen need the berth number and shift time to report to work, so their website (rather than say, a public container tracking site), is most likely to have up to date info.
- In Oakland, the longshore local is ILWU Local 10, in LA, this is [ILWU Local 13](#). On the site, You will see a tab for "Dispatches" and the one-stop shop is the "day/night early" schedule, which is released the earliest, at 11:30am on the day before (the "day final" and "night final" schedules are released only later and worth checking to confirm the final shifts).
- To find the schedule for that day, click on the "Title" hyperlink (you'll see that the schedule for 6/2/2021 is posted on 6/1, so on and so forth)



Title Filter Display # 10

Title	Published Date	Author	Hits
6/3/2021 E	02 June 2021	Written by Webmaster	Hits: 527
6/2/2021 E	01 June 2021	Written by Webmaster	Hits: 807
6/1/2021 E	31 May 2021	Written by Webmaster	Hits: 717
5/31/2021 E	30 May 2021	Written by Webmaster	Hits: 887
5/30/2021 E	29 May 2021	Written by Webmaster	Hits: 720

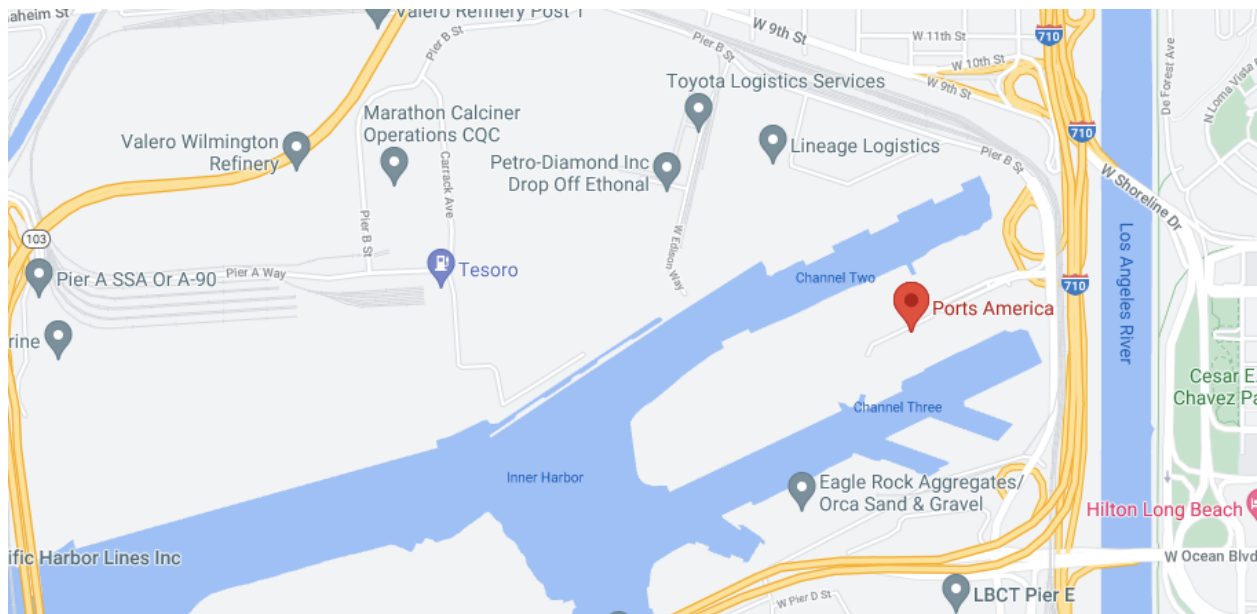
- Open the PDF and scroll down to look for the Zim ship you've found in Steps 1 and 2 above. If you don't see it on the date it was scheduled to arrive, and you see it at anchor on Marine Traffic, that means we don't have information as to when it is scheduled to dock yet. You will need to check the ILWU dispatch every day (posted at 11:30am) to look for the schedule.
- To get a best guess on what berth where the ship will dock, look for past records of docked ships. For e.g., here we see on page 4 of 14 of the May 29th ILWU dispatch, that the Zim Kingston was scheduled to dock on May 29th and a shift had been called for 6pm.

Alc. #	Start Time	Order Type	Ship Name	Company	Berth	Tags
30	6:00PM	MO	ZIM KINGSTON	PA	121	LA
<i>4S 16SL 1DS 7UTR 1UTRS 3ST/5:30</i>						
31	6:00PM	MO	ONE CONTRIBUTION	TP	136	LA
<i>12S 10SL 3DS 21UTR 6ST/6:30</i>						
32	5:00PM	MO	PRESIDENT TRUMAN	FMS	TI 304	LA
<i>12SL</i>						
33	6:00PM	MO	PRESIDENT TRUMAN	FMS	TI 304	LA
<i>8S 2DS 18UTR 2UTRS</i>						

Flex and Early

- Most shipping companies are partnered with a “terminal operator”. As such, a “Zim” terminal doesn’t exist and you will need to look for the berth on the dispatch.
- The Company and Berth give you the information on the site where your picket or blockade should be. In this case, “PA” stands for Ports America and the “LA” tag means that this is in the port of LA (vs. Long Beach).

- If you're unsure what the acronyms stand for, it's also worth checking the Zim site: go to: Zim -> Schedules -> schedule by line, select the liner route attached to your ship, and enter your port name. A grid should appear listing your port and the container terminal.
- You can find where the PA terminal is simply by searching for it on a google map. Once you have the location, it is good to send someone to do reconnaissance to figure out where the entrance of the terminal is, and where might be a good place to have a picket. Usually, you should look for where longshore workers would drive into their shift to park.



More tracking info:

- Unless you have a container bill of lading (i.e. a container code) it is hard to track what cargo is being held on the ship. Usually, unless you're a direct client of the company, you can only find out what the ship was carrying *after* the ship has docked, not prior. There are numerous tracking sites with free trials, but they eventually charge expensive subscription, so be careful about what you sign up for:
 - <https://panjiva.com/>
 - <https://www.datamyne.com/>
 - <https://www.importgenius.com/>
- There are also free sites but info is a bit more belated (6 months ago or older)
 - <https://portexaminer.com/> (US only)
 - Import Yeti
- Often, some guess work will need to be involved. The world of shipping is highly complex, and it is par for the course that shipping companies like Zim staff their crew from one region, charter a ship that is not "Zim" branded, bring goods that

are not directly from Israel, and so forth. The ships coming to the US West Coast, for example, only ship back and forth between China and the US. If you are trying to find which route the ship moves along, a good way to do this is to go to the main Zim website, and scroll down to their route map or search for ships by route. You can zoom into the general area where your port is located, or search by port arrival, and find the liner route listed on the rightmost column. If there is an N/A code listed by the route, email me at cc258678@gmail.com and I'm happy to help figure things out.

Outreach and Tactics

Here are some ways to think about outreach:

Building Relationships with Labor:

Longshore: Building relationships of deep solidarity with the ILWU, the International longshore and warehousing union, is absolutely crucial to the success of a blockade. A port blockade works most successfully when community organizers, working with willing longshoremen, form a picket line in front of a terminal, and when longshore workers respect and refuse to cross the picket line to unload Zim ships.

- How does a work stoppage happen? The ILWU contract has a no strike and work stoppage clause, so ILWU workers cannot simply walk off the job as they please. However, **there are a few options for ILWU rank and file to respect the picket line.**
- Option 1: Dockworkers call in an arbitrator to invoke a health and safety clause. This can happen if there is already a community picket line forming at the entrance to the berth where they are reporting for work, allowing workers to claim concerns about safe work given the presence of people in the roadway. ILWU Local 10 in Oakland, for example, has a longer tradition of honoring community pickets by invoking a safety concern; this however is not the case in LA and should not be assumed for other ports. Building relationships with your ILWU or dockworker local is essential for understanding how and under what conditions they might be inclined to honor your picket line.
- Option 2: ILWU has a one day per month built into their contract for work stop meetings. In 2015, Local 10 in Oakland used one of these work stop meeting days to call for a one day work stoppage in solidarity with Black Lives Matter. In 2020 after the George Floyd Uprising, ILWU locals across California coordinated their work stop days and stopped work in unison. This option, however, requires a lot of political will, and since it is a more public demonstration of the ILWU's support, often is a tactic employed in the context of labor struggles, human rights abuses, or forms of injustice that draw wide international attention. A long term, close relationship with leadership and consistent demonstration of community solidarity is the starting point for a conversation about such an action, which requires the local to pass a resolution with their membership

- How do we get in touch with longshore workers about respecting our picket line? This is a very hard question. The short answer is long-term, sustained, relationship building. It's worth noting that the structural conditions for building relationships with longshore locals differs greatly across ports; Local 10 in Oakland has a long history of progressive and radical workers who have stopped work in protest of Apartheid, in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, and for numerous other struggles. Local 13 in LA is more conservative. In 2014, our efforts to build relationships in LA were not very effective, and we should have been working to continue establishing good solidaristic relations with ILWU in the years in between then and now.
- At present, Local 13 in LA is broadly a conservative local. In the immediate term, flyering at the hiring hall or attempting outreach is still important, but it's worth preparing for hostile reactions, or at best, for it to have little effect. Longer term, more thinking needs to be done about building a BDS campaign that has stronger relationships with longshore workers.
- If you are in another city, it's worth thinking long term about how to build stronger relationships with the longshore local. Sometimes, having just 1-2 people in leadership who are on the left can make a *lot* of difference; a lot more difference than flyering or leafleting for weeks can.
- For e.g., In Oakland, the success of mobilizing Local 10 in solidarity with blockades has come about in no small part due to the leadership of former ILWU leadership such as Clarence Thomas and Jack Heyman. Working with progressive leaders can be much more effective than flyering, so think long-term about how your coalition can work to support progressive leadership in the union.

Trucking: Another option is to work with truckers moving Zim containers out of the terminal. More research needs to be done on how to track which trucking companies are contracted to move Zim containers, and who might organize those companies. It's worth considering that it takes over 4000 trucks to unload a single Zim ship, so the extent to which a truckers' work stoppage might be effective relies on mobilizing them at a much more massive scale. However, if we can find and conduct research on which trucks are scheduled to arrive to unload the Zim ship, and have a way to reach them, it could be an important target.

Outreach tactics / how-to:

- Outreach to ILWU workers is crucial, and short term flyering is not a substitute for long term coalition building that is necessary for sustained solidarity. Nevertheless, flyering and leafleting is *much* more effective outside a hiring hall than at a terminal, on the road side, or at the entrance road to the port. This is because ILWU is a hiring hall union: workers gather at the hiring hall every morning and evening to see if their shift is called; you are much more likely to reach a large number of workers at the hall than at the berth.
- When you do outreach, you'll want to find out what the dispatch times for the hiring hall is. Workers usually gather a couple hours before the start of their shift, so you can confirm shift start times on the ILWU local site, where dispatches are published.

- Come ready with flyers, leaflets, and a basic script of what you want to say, but most of all, invite folks into conversation. Be friendly and ask them questions!
- You'll want to keep flyers short: a page or less. Possible content might briefly describe the current conditions of the Palestinian people, the ongoing nakba, and calling for solidarity. Keep it brief for a flyer! The following might be important content to include:
- #4 of ILWU's Ten Guiding Principles "Labor solidarity means just that. Unions have to accept the fact that the solidarity of labor stands above all else, including even the so-called sanctity of the contract. We cannot adopt for ourselves the policies of union leaders who insist that because they have a contract, their members are compelled to perform work even behind a picket line. Every picket line must be respected as though it were our own."
- Historical precedents: ILWU passed a Convention resolution in 1988 characterizing Israeli oppression of Palestinians as "state-sponsored terrorism". ILWU's 1991 resolution condemns Zionist "suppression of basic freedoms of speech and assembly" of Palestinians and calls for the "right of self-determination".

Scale / Mobilization / Turnout: In Oakland, success has been in large part because of long term coalition building with rank and file workers in Local 10. There, pickets have stopped ships with a smaller number of community members, because of the solidarity of workers who respect the picket line. In larger ports, consider the number of people you would need to mobilized. For example, LA's port is spatially more distributed, it is less of a chokepoint, and from our experience in 2014, successfully blocking the entry point may need more than 300 people.

Social media: A campaign that effectively makes enough of a fuss and goes viral on social media can have a deterrent effect on Zim's business; having a good social media team that can make graphics, videos, and broadcast the blockade is crucial to a successful action

Blockade and Picket Line

- The best place for blockade itself is in front of the terminal where the ship is to dock. For LA, this is Ports America 121.
- Size - If you're not able to make good contact with your ILWU local, it will be crucial to have as large a turnout as possible. The entrance to Ports America 121 is very wide; in 2014 we had a Block the Boat turnout of 200 but it was not large enough to block the entire roadway. ILWU workers can invoke a health and safety clause if they are concerned about not being able to get to work (this is the only viable way they can stop work in relation to a political protest) - but the protest needs to be as big as possible to push them to take this action.
- Build coalitions! By the time you are ready for a blockade, it is important to have already built relationships with longshore workers, and with coalitions in your city to mobilize people to show up.
- Text alert system: consider subscribing to a text alert system and putting out a flyer on SM so that people in your city can sign up for on time alerts.

Comments? Corrections? Questions? Please feel free to email cc258678@gmail.com to offer feedback or get help with further research.