

Shields Barricades and Words of Wisdom from Puerto Rico

It's very simple. You can use wood or recycle stuff from the house. Cut it to an average person's height so it can be handled with ease. See if you can run with it.

It needs handles, think of a trash can lid with a handle and you can use that. In fact, if you see a trash can, take the lid. A shield brings a lot of security for rubber bullets and tear gas. As you know, they are supposed to shoot tear gas in the air, but they've been shooting it at people so we need protection.

It's a psychological thing too, if police see shields they are less likely to charge a crowd.

A barricade makes a lot of difference too. The police's job is to remove protestors and our goal is to protest as long as possible. A barricade makes them think twice about charging the crowd. Their job is to shoot tear gas and then thousands of people run and it's a stampede.

We should build barricades farther away from the police. It gives you space to defend your people and slow the police down. We don't all have to be on the front lines with the police.

Also, just know that this kind of rebellion comes in waves. In Puerto Rico we had two weeks of people in the streets, and then we moved into general assemblies. The shock moment of clashes and protest and violence pass away and we have to figure out how to organize for the long haul. So please do that, and do not let a small minority co-opt the people's agenda when you organize large meetings.

Also, don't worry you are going to get used to tear gas and it won't bother you as much after awhile. After several days you might get used to it, though it seems to me that the police in the US are more aggressive than in Puerto Rico.

Also, one more thing, we keep thinking there is going to be an organization that organizes this, and really it's our job to. We need you to step and lead and organize. It's sometimes really important that we give leadership. For example, if people go running down a narrow street someone could get hurt. So tell folks to stay calm.