

As grand jury decision in Michael Brown case nears

Missouri governor vows to deploy National Guard against protesters

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Missouri governor Jay Nixon said in a press conference Tuesday afternoon that he would deploy the National Guard in response to protests in the event that a grand jury fails to indict Darren Wilson, who shot unarmed teenager Michael Brown on August 9.

“This is America,” Nixon said. “People have the right to express views and grievances, but they do not have the right to put fellow citizens and property at risk,” Nixon said.

“Violence,” he declared, “will not be tolerated.” This comes from a man under whose supervision state and local police, in concert with the National Guard, indiscriminately attacked peaceful protesters with military-grade hardware, tear gas and rubber bullets in August.

The police deployed armored vehicles, militarized tactical teams armed with assault rifles, snipers on rooftops, and set up roadside checkpoints. Over a dozen members of the media were arrested, and many more were hit with tear gas and rubber bullets.

Nixon’s announcement, given before both the protests themselves and the court decision, signifies that the ruling elite is prepared to respond to renewed protests with equal, or even greater, violence.

Nixon’s statement came as St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney Robert McCullough reiterated that he expects the grand jury to come to a decision in “mid to late November.”

The execution-style murder of Michael Brown and the unprecedented repression unleashed against protesters set a new precedent for the use of police/military repression against popular opposition in the United States. Now, the same type of military violence is being proclaimed in advance in order to

intimidate and bully the population into accepting an unpopular and undemocratic verdict.

Nixon announced that 1,000 officers had received an additional 5,000 hours of training in crowd control techniques. Indeed, local police, in collaboration with federal officials, have been preparing for renewed protests for months.

St. Louis County police have been stockpiling hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of riot gear since the end of August, and photos have surfaced on social media purporting to show armored vehicles and other military hardware being transported in and around the St. Louis area.

As late as Monday a spokesman for Missouri’s Department of Public Safety denied that these military vehicles were part of any preparations for a police crackdown, telling *The Guardian* “they have nothing to do with Ferguson or St Louis or an upcoming grand jury decision” and were probably being used for “some sort of routine training.”

Despite more than a dozen police killings in St. Louis County since he became County Prosecutor, Robert McCulloch has never filed criminal charges against any of the officers. He did present four such cases to a grand jury, but he obtained no indictments.

Contrary to the usual procedure, McCulloch has not made any recommendation to the grand jury as to whether to indict Wilson. Instead, he is presenting a voluminous amount of evidence to the grand jury, including testimony by Wilson himself, in an unusually long procedure.

Meanwhile major media outlets have been working to demonize Michael Brown and exonerate his killer. They have dutifully transcribed one-sided leaks from

elements within the state that are deliberately constructed to appear favorable to Wilson. For example, the *St. Louis Post- Dispatch* reported last month that the results of the official autopsy, which indicated that Michael Brown was shot in the hand at close range, prove that Brown was attempting to grab Wilson's gun, thus allegedly confirming Wilson's story that Brown was "charging" at him.

Brown's parents are currently in Geneva, Switzerland, where they intend to deliver a report to the United Nations' Committee Against Torture accusing the United States of violating the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The thirteen-page report they delivered yesterday morning alleges that the police murder of their son constituted torture under Article 1 of the convention, which defines torture as "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as...punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person."

Furthermore, it argues that the military-police crackdown against protesters in Ferguson violated Article 12 of the Convention, which enjoins governments party to the convention from committing "other acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment which do not amount to torture as defined in article 1."



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