

Demonstrations across the US against Michael Brown decision

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In defiance of a nationwide police mobilization, demonstrations against the grand jury exoneration of the policeman who murdered Michael Brown took place across the United States on Monday and Tuesday.

Protests, involving youth, students and working people of all races, took place in scores of cities, including New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Dallas, Detroit, Seattle, Boston, St. Louis, Minneapolis, Oakland, Washington D.C., Atlanta, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Orleans. Demonstrations were also held in small towns, among them Duluth, Minnesota; Burlington, Vermont; Superior, Wisconsin; and Asheville, North Carolina.

Dozens of campus protests, some counting hundreds of protesters, took place at a wide variety of schools—public and private, elite schools and community colleges, and colleges both predominantly black and majority white. A small sample of these include protests at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Princeton University, the University of Washington in Seattle, the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, the University of Michigan, Grand Valley State University and Central Michigan University in Michigan, Virginia Commonwealth University, Ohio University and Kent State in Ohio, Xavier University in Chicago, the University of North Carolina, North Carolina State University, the University of Kentucky, Stanford University and Tulane and Loyola Universities in New Orleans.

High school walkouts and sit-ins also took place in major cities, including Philadelphia, Seattle, and Minneapolis, and in smaller cities and towns, including White Plains, New York.

The demonstrations took place in spite of an unprecedented mobilization of the police and other

security forces. With the clear intention of intimidating workers and youth in advance of the ruling, the Obama administration, mayors and police chiefs across the country had warned that security would be on “high alert” to handle “disturbances”—pronouncements that also implicitly threatened the possibility of police infiltration and provocation. There were few reports, however, of violence.

In St. Louis, along miles from the site where Ferguson cop Darren Wilson murdered 18-year-old Michael Brown on August 9, hundreds of protesters blocked downtown intersections and a bridge over the Mississippi River linking the city to Illinois. Police used pepper spray to disperse the peaceful protests on Interstate 44 near the Edward Jones Dome.

In Seattle, thousands of students walked out of their high schools. Some converged on the University of Washington campus, while other protesters blocked roads. There were at least five arrests after police attacked demonstrators.

“Out of nowhere, the cops started pushing us back with their bikes, started pepper spraying us in the face,” said young protester Todd Peralta. “I got sprayed. He got sprayed. A group of people got sprayed that were right there in front. We were just protesting. Simply protesting.”

The University of Southern California in Los Angeles was placed on “lockdown” on Monday night after “a large contingent of protesters” gathered on campus after the ruling, according to a local news report.

In Oakland police arrested 43 protesters Monday night. A crowd that gathered at an intersection near city hall grew to over 500. Protesters lay in the middle of an intersection in silent protest, then marched down Broadway shouting, “Hands up, don’t shoot,” and “Black lives matter—all lives matter.”

Oakland was the site of the 2009 police murder of 22-year-old Oscar Grant, which was captured on videotape. Nevertheless, the killer, officer Johannes Mehserle, was not convicted of murder.



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