

Chicago police SWAT team terrorizes working class neighborhood

George Marlowe
15 July 2016

On Sunday, a Chicago Police Department (CPD) SWAT team stormed a neighborhood on the city's South Side and raided multiple houses in search of two men who they said shot at them. According to ABC Chicago, the alleged suspects were eventually apprehended by the police.

The families whose homes were raided are now raising questions and demanding answers over the conduct of the raids, which included alleged instances of harassment and mistreatment of residents.

According to reports, the alleged shooters fired at the police around 3:30 a.m. Police say the suspects then ran into a home and barricaded themselves inside. The CPD brought out its SWAT team and began raids of multiple homes in search of the suspects.

ABC News spoke to Judith Celio, one of those whose home was raided without a warrant. A police officer knocked on her door and demanded she open up. According to Celio, the officer said, "'Open the door. We gotta come in.' And my brother said 'Do you have a warrant?' Then he said 'Yeah, I have a warrant.'"

Nick Quesada, another person in the household, asked the police if they could see the warrant and other specifics such as the date and time. He also asked to see who specifically signed the warrant. The police officer walked away and said, "Oh, we'll be back soon."

A SWAT team came back in 15 minutes without a warrant. The family was immediately ordered out one by one without even being able to put on shoes. The police subsequently threw flash bang grenades into the house as they conducted the search, but they did not find the suspects.

According to ABC, Celio and her family responded angrily to the warrantless invasion by the police: "You can't apologize for this. And if police are doing their job, ok, they are doing their job. But you had no

business being in my house. The whole SWAT team had surrounded our house. They had the barricade going up, and it just got out of hand."

Police SWAT teams also terrorized other residents in the neighborhood. Quite a few residents were taken out of their homes and put in handcuffs. They were searched and patted down as the SWAT teams continued to raid other homes.

Giovani Olzao told CBS Chicago that the police kicked the door down and forcibly entered his home, claiming they were searching for a gun. Police claimed later that they found weapons in his home, a charge Olzao denied.

CPD issued a statement saying, "In reference to the incident, shots were fired at the police and there was a clear and present safety threat to the public. As such, CPD takes precautions during situations like that to safeguard the lives of the public and those of responding officers. Evidence was collected from both homes. CPD also has three persons of interest in custody in the investigation."

The SWAT raids in South Chicago take place in the context of an epidemic of police violence across the United States. They follow the mass protests over the police killings of Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, Dylan Noble and others. They also come in the wake of the shooting of five police officers in Dallas by a deranged gunman.

Warrantless and militarized actions by the police are part of the preparations by the ruling elite to deal with the social opposition among the working class and youth to ever-growing social inequality. Under these conditions the police more openly function as the instruments of repression on the part of the capitalist state against the working class.

Police forces have also been equipped with billions of

dollars in military-grade weaponry from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. SWAT teams are now deployed thousands of times throughout the year to respond to what were previously considered routine police matters.

Last fall, an entire city in northern Illinois, Fox Lake, was put on lockdown in the search for the alleged killer of a cop. It turned out later that the police officer had actually committed suicide—he was later exposed as a thief, a would-be killer and an alleged perpetrator of sexual assault.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact