

Over 80 arrested in weekend police violence protests

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Over 80 protesters were arrested at two different anti-police violence protests in Baltimore, Maryland, and Portland, Maine.

The protests and arrests come amid growing social tension in the US over police violence. Last weekend, thousands of people protested across the country following the killings of Philando Castile in Falcon Heights, Minnesota and Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge, Louisiana by police officers.

This weekend's protests took place the night before three officers were killed and three others were wounded Sunday in Baton Rouge, Louisiana by a shooter with an automatic rifle. Last weekend, veteran Micah Xavier Johnson killed five officers and wounded nine others in Dallas, Texas, when police showed up en masse against an anti-police violence protest.

Some 65 of the latest arrests took place in Baltimore, Maryland, where over a hundred protesters joined an anti-police brutality protest that marched through the downtown area of the city to an arts festival that was underway. The protest then moved to a freeway and stopped traffic, at which time the police made their mass arrest.

The organizers of the protest said they were part of a movement called "Afromation." David Blair, a protester in the movement, told CBS Baltimore that "they stand for the liberation of black people."

The Afromation organizers presented a list of demands on Facebook. These include reallocating 10 percent of the police budget "away from militarization of local police forces and mechanisms of community control and surveillance, and towards community programming."

Also, they demanded "a civilian review board for police investigations." Their Facebook page stated that the aim of the protest was to "demand that the City of

Baltimore make a concerted effort to affirm the existence of black life and to lead the change in the nation against the unjust police practices." Most of the city and police leadership of Baltimore are black.

On Monday a Baltimore judge will issue a verdict for police officer Brian Rice, the highest-ranking officer involved in the brutal police killing of Freddie Gray in April 2015. Two of the four officers charged have been acquitted. Another's trial ended in a hung jury. Three of the six police officers involved in Gray's death were black.

At a second protest in the small city of Portland, Maine, 18 protesters were arrested at a Black Lives Matter-affiliated demonstration in a downtown market district Friday night. Several dozen protesters gathered at 6 p.m. and blocked Commercial Street. After 10 p.m., protesters allegedly surrounded a car trying to exit the street, at which time the police broke up the protest and arrested 18 people—mostly young adults in their 20s.

This protest was led by a group called the Portland Racial Justice Congress. The group staged their protest, in part, to demand that Portland Police Chief Michael Sauschuck release a statement affirming that "black lives matter" and acknowledging police brutality against blacks. They also called for a civilian oversight commission for police.

Several other protests were held throughout the country, including in Oakland, New Orleans, and St. Louis. The protests, called as part of a "Day of Rage," were smaller than expected. No arrests were reported.

The protests come amid ongoing police violence. Since July 7, another 24 people have been killed by police officers.

In response to growing popular anger over the killings and the militarization of the police, the *New*

York Times has spearheaded the ruling class response that aims to frame both police violence and the US 2016 elections entirely in racial terms.

Blacks are killed at a far higher rate than whites. However, over half of police killings are against white people, many of which have been caught on video, including Dylan Noble's murder by police last week in Fresno, California. What unifies the victims of police violence is class. Regardless of race, the overwhelming majority of victims are working class.



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