

After more than a week of nationwide protests, new charges announced against George Floyd's murderers

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4 June 2020

Thousands of youth and workers across the country have continued, despite brutal police violence and hastily imposed curfews, to demand justice for George Floyd and all victims of police violence.

The demonstrations have continued in every state and internationally with protests slated to last the rest of the week and into the weekend.

In an attempt to placate, and eventually suffocate, this growing multiracial movement of workers and youth against state violence, Democratic Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison announced Wednesday afternoon new charges against the four officers responsible for the murder of Floyd.

Derek Chauvin, who suffocated George Floyd for nearly nine minutes, was charged with second-degree murder in addition to his previous charges of third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter with culpable negligence.

Ellison also announced charges for the other three officers, J. Alexander Kueng 26, Thomas Lane, 37, and Tuo Thao, 34. All three were charged with aiding and abetting second-degree murder while committing a felony, and with aiding and abetting second-degree manslaughter with culpable negligence. The charges carry with them a possible maximum prison sentence of 40 years.

Civil right attorney Benjamin Crump, representing the Floyd family, reiterated their demand that Chauvin be charged with first-degree murder. A massive memorial is planned for George Floyd today in Minneapolis in which thousands are expected to pay their respects. They will do so while the majority of the state remains under curfew and occupation with over 7,000 guardsmen deployed, mostly in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul.

Minnesota's Democratic Governor Tim Walz, who less than a week ago denounced thousands of protesters as "anarchists" and "white supremacists" run by drug cartels "whose one goal was destruction," welcomed the new charges as "a meaningful step toward justice for George Floyd."

Walz continued, blaming Floyd's murder on the "disease of systemic racism," which "is on each of us to solve together, and we have hard work ahead." In a similar vein, President Barack Obama, in a short virtual town hall appearance, stated, "now is the time for real police department reform ... now is the time for real criminal justice reform." Why his own eight years in office, during which 8,000 people were killed by police, were *not* the time for "reform" Obama failed to discuss.

In Washington D.C., thousands of soldiers, police and troopers continue to be deployed around monuments and buildings and at intersections throughout the city. In chilling images that will define the Trump administration, hundreds of soldiers, clad head to toe in body armor, remain positioned behind steel barricades occupying the Lincoln Memorial.

New York City

In New York City, an 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew is in effect through Sunday. So far, more than 2,000 protesters have been arrested over the past six days, including some 900 Monday and Tuesday nights.

Prior to the enforcement of the curfew last night, New York police have blocked off subway stations, including Columbus Circle, preventing protesters from returning home.

On Wednesday, protests and marches were held at Washington Square Park and outside Gracie Mansion in Manhattan, Roosevelt Island, Staten Island, the Bronx, Queensbridge Park and Elmhurst, Queens, Bedford and Bay Ridge in Brooklyn, and in New Rochelle. Thousands of protesters began walking uptown from Washington Square Park at around 4 p.m. and are still on the move at the time of writing.

In Crown Heights, Brooklyn, a black man was shot multiple times and killed by police after he had allegedly shot another man. According to police, the man was found hiding behind a tree with a pistol, which he held in the air, but never fired or pointed at the police. Police state that after he refused to drop the weapon, "multiple shots" were fired, killing him.

Boston

A diverse crowd of thousands of people rallied on Boston Common Wednesday afternoon in a peaceful protest organized mainly on social media. National Guard members carrying assault rifles and Boston police bearing large sticks and riot gear stood nearby, but there was no confrontation.

In the working-class city of Brockton, south of Boston, the situation remained calm Wednesday after protests the previous day in which protesters clashed with police following a peaceful protest. After a rally of several hundred people, some protesters had marched to the Brockton police station where some in the crowd pelted police with rocks, fireworks and frozen water bottles.

Police used tear gas to break up the protest and National Guard troops were called in. Protesters moved on to a Dunkin' Donuts shop, where some broke windows and attempted to burn it down, according to police. Officers mobilized police dogs in an attempt to terrorize the protesters. A curfew put in place at the beginning of the pandemic, from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m., is still in place in Brockton.

Columbia, South Carolina

Columbia, South Carolina today had its fifth consecutive day of protests, which has been peaceful and somewhat smaller than in previous days. Thousands have taken part in the past week, gathering at the State House, marching through the streets, defying curfews and clashing with police. Three police cars were set on fire in the initial days of the protests. Thirty businesses in the downtown area were damaged.

With the banner headline May 31 that "15 law enforcement officers

were injured during the violent protests in Columbia,” the local daily newspaper, *The State*, seemed to imply widespread anti-police violence. But its article went on to explain that while three officers were reportedly “assaulted” and two received cuts on the face from broken glass, “police said the other injuries were all related to heat exhaustion.”

Also on May 31, protesters marching toward police headquarters in Columbia were repelled by tear gas fired on them by a wall of police in riot gear, including members of the Department of Corrections Special Response Team. Protesters were also fired on with tear gas and rubber bullets at the State House. By the end of the night, an armored SWAT vehicle could be seen driving down Gervais Street, followed by a phalanx of police in riot gear.

It was reported yesterday, June 2, that during Donald Trump’s call with governors, South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster asserted without evidence that some of the agitators were being paid and even receiving bonuses in the event they were arrested. *The State* reported, “A spokesman for McMaster said the governor was referring to anecdotal evidence he has received in private conversations but would not get into the details of those conversations, including what specific evidence he heard or who he was talking to.”

Florida

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, dutifully following Trump’s demands to “dominate the streets,” has mobilized 700 National Guard and 1,300 highway patrol troopers to “support” law enforcement and “aid” police in intimidating workers and youth. DeSantis has declared that “Florida has zero tolerance for violence, rioting and looting.” He described George Floyd’s murder as appalling and called for those officers to be “brought to justice.”

On Wednesday, several groups were marching through downtown Orlando, starting at City Hall and mostly moving around Orlando Police Department headquarters; more than 2,000 people were counted at 5:20 p.m.

Atlanta

Protests in Atlanta are continuing for the sixth day in defiance of a 9 p.m. curfew imposed since Saturday night.

Police have shown “zero tolerance” towards these protesters and over the past five days, arresting at least 400 persons including journalists and legal professionals on specious charges including defying the curfew.

Cleveland

On Wednesday morning, the city of Cleveland lifted its curfew, allowing residents to travel in the city’s Downtown and Market District. Cleveland had put both areas under lockdown since Sunday in order to suppress protests that emerged on Saturday in opposition to police brutality. The city administration has also declared that it will continue to impose an 8 p.m. thru 6 a.m. curfew until Friday morning.

On Tuesday, a crowd of roughly 150 protesters converged outside the First District police station in the neighborhood of West Park. A number of officers filmed the demonstration from the rooftop and a few National Guard soldiers stood outside the station. A separate protest that occurred the same day marched from the First District station to the Downtown area, monitored by police on bicycles.

While there were no arrests from the protests on Tuesday, the city’s chief of police, Calvin D. Williams, declared that he was working with federal and local law enforcement agencies to identify and investigate individuals that broke the law at protests over the weekend. He has also reasserted claims that the police had arrested a number of people from out of state at the protests over the weekend, despite everyone that was processed at the Cuyahoga County jail at that time having an Ohio address.

Albuquerque

In the state’s largest city, Albuquerque, hundreds of protesters have gathered at several sites to hold car rallies, marches and gatherings.

Protesters marched June 1 from the Nob Hill neighborhood to the University of New Mexico chanting “Help, I can’t breathe!” and “Hands up, don’t shoot!” under the watch of well-armed police. On June 2, protesters marched from UNM downtown to gather at the Albuquerque Police Department headquarters.

San Diego

A 59-year-old grandmother, Leslie Furcron, who was protesting outside of the La Mesa police headquarters, last Saturday was shot between the eyes by police with a bean bag projectile. Furcron survived and was placed into a medically induced coma at a local hospital where she is now in stable condition. The shooting was captured on video and has gone viral. According to the family and their attorney, she may lose an eye. A GoFundMe.Com page has been set up by the family to pay for medical costs expected to reach \$1 million.

The La Mesa Police Department held a press conference on Wednesday where they refused to identify the officer involved in the shooting, citing an “ongoing investigation.”

Seattle, Washington

WSWS reporter Julio Patron spoke with an Air Traffic Controller in Seattle who wished to remain anonymous on the ongoing protests within the city and throughout the country.

Speaking about the character of the protests and Trump’s use of the military, Bob stated, “They’ve been gearing up for this for years with the militarization of the police, the expansion of executive powers, the stacking of the courts. We’re living in a future high school history book chapter.”

Bob noted the deliberate targeting of journalists: “I’ve seen at least three cases of reporters being shot or gassed. This is insane. Our president has said he wants to send the Army in, in clear violation of the law, but then laws haven’t stopped the fascists ever. The laws aren’t for them, apparently.

“I really hope that this crisis does push us towards real socialist change. I’m afraid that the crisis will be resolved or ‘dominated’ before the necessary critical mass is achieved. But all we can do is reach out and work hard.

“The actions of struggle being undertaken now are actually heartening. It gives me hope that this protest has spread as far as it has. A friend of mine in China said that US news dominates their international coverage right now.”



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