

# **George Floyd protests continue into sixth night across United States, police fire tear gas on crowd near the White House**

## **Key points:**

- Protests have spread to smaller communities in places like North Dakota and Nebraska
- The National Guard has been activated in 15 states and in Washington DC
- Donald Trump and Joe Biden have both condemned the violence

Looters have overrun streets in Washington DC and New York City and fires have been ignited near the White House as the US experienced its sixth night of violence fuelled by the killings of black people at the hands of police.

On Sunday, nearly a week after unarmed black man George Floyd died in custody as an officer pressed a knee into his neck, protests sprang up from Boston to San Francisco.

Almost 62,000 National Guard soldiers have now been deployed across 24 states, to help authorities control civil unrest as well as deal with the ongoing coronavirus crisis and bushfires.

There have been strict curfews imposed in 40 cities and public transport systems have been shut down, but the restrictions have been largely ignored and many places have again erupted into unrest.

In some cities on Sunday night, thieves smashed their way into stores and ran off with as much as they could carry, leaving shop owners, many of them just ramping up their business again after coronavirus pandemic lockdowns, to clean up their shattered storefronts.

In others, police tried to calm tensions by kneeling in solidarity with

demonstrators while still maintaining a strong presence for security.

Earlier in the day, a truck driver drove at a crowd of demonstrators in Minneapolis.

At least 4,400 people have been arrested across the country during the days of protests, according to a tally compiled by The Associated Press.



Thousands of law enforcement officers and National Guard members have faced off with protesters in Minneapolis. *(AP: Julio Cortez)*

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## Protesters start fires near White House



Protests have flared near the White House for the third night. *(AP: Evan Vucci)*

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Looting was rampant in downtown Washington DC and elsewhere in the city as protests turned violent.

Police clashed with protesters near the White House, firing tear gas and stun grenades as fires burned nearby and looters moved through the city.

Protesters broke into a bank branch and empty boxes could be seen scattered on the sidewalk outside a jewelry store.

After protesters started looting a coffee shop, someone in the crowd yelled: "What are you looting a coffee shop for? You're messing up the whole message."

An hour before the 11:00 pm curfew in Washington DC, police fired a major barrage of tear gas and stun grenades into a crowd of more than 1,000 people, largely clearing Lafayette Park across the street from the White House and scattering protesters into the street.



Protesters stripped branches from trees and used an American flag to fuel the fire. (AP: Alex Brandon)

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Protesters piled up road signs and plastic barriers and lit a raging fire in the middle of H Street.

Some pulled an American flag from a nearby building and threw it into the blaze. Others added branches pulled from trees.

A building in the park that had bathrooms and a maintenance office was engulfed in flames.

A separate protest also broke out in the city's northwest.

The entire Washington DC National Guard has been called in to help with the response to protests outside the White House and elsewhere in the nation's capital.



Protesters near the White House as night fell in Washington. (AP: Evan Vucci)

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## **Police officers hospitalized in Boston after peaceful afternoon escalates**

A Sunday afternoon of mostly peaceful protests in Boston broke at nightfall when protesters clashed with officers, throwing rocks, breaking into several stores, and lighting a police vehicle on fire.

Boston police said at least 40 people had been arrested as of 3:00 am on Monday (local time).

Police said seven officers had been hospitalized and 21 police cruisers were damaged.



Thousands of people had protested peacefully through Boston before things turned violent. *(AP: Steven Senne)*

Republican Governor Charlie Baker called the violence “criminal and cowardly” in a tweet.

The destruction was a stark contrast to the several protests earlier on Sunday that featured thousands of demonstrations marching peacefully.

“They keep killing our people. I’m so sick and tired of it,” said Mahira Louis, 15, who was at a Boston protest with her mother on Sunday, leading chants of “George Floyd, say his name.”

## California orders state buildings in city centers to be closed on Monday

The state Department of Human Resources has sent a directive to close all California state buildings “with offices in downtown city areas” on Monday.

The sweeping mandate covers everything from the Department of Motor Vehicles offices to those that license workers and provide health care.



State-building in cities including Sacramento, Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego will be closed on Monday. *(AP: Jae C. Hong)*

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The directive was sent on Sunday evening but it was left up to officials at individual agencies to determine which buildings should be closed.

A state Department of Justice memo sent to employees said Attorney-General offices in Sacramento, Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego would be closed, though employees who can work from home should do so.

“Staff assigned to these offices should not report to work for any reason,” the memo said.

The Mayor of New York City's daughter was among nearly 790 people arrested in the city since the start of the protests.

A law enforcement official who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter told The Associated Press Chiara de Blasio, 25, was arrested on Saturday night.



NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio did not mention the arrest of his daughter during in his Sunday press briefing. *(AP: Wong Maye-E)*

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An arrest report obtained by The New York Post said she had refused to leave a Manhattan street ordered to be cleared by officers because people were throwing things.

Chiara de Blasio, who is black, was later given a court summons and released.

Mayor Bill de Blasio, who is white, did not mention the arrest in his Sunday press briefing.

At least five burned-out NYPD vehicles that remained near Manhattan's Union Square were towed on Sunday.

People walked around broken glass on the street to take pictures. But for hours, Sunday's protests were calm.



After calm protests throughout Sunday, people began looting in a shopping district in Manhattan. *(AP: Wong Maye-E)*

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"Compared to how things turned out yesterday, this is a lot better. This is exactly how things should be," said Domenic Manning, who spoke at a rally in Union Square.

"If you want to get your point across, this is the way to do it. Vandalizing

companies and stores, that's not the way to do it."

Resident Ken Kidd said protesters and police tried to remain peaceful at the start before the stress of a city heavily hit by the coronavirus came out.

"I think a community can only say 'enough' so many times and the words aren't heard so then they got to take action and that's what happened last night," Mr. Kidd said.

During the past few days, several news crews attempting to cover protests have been shot with rubber bullets and tear gas and/or arrested.

The arrest of CNN reporter Omar Jimenez and his camera operator was the first to make headlines but police in other cities have also moved on other news crews.

Jimenez, who is black, was covering developments in Minneapolis and had just shown a protester being arrested when about half a dozen white police officers surrounded him.

"We can move back to where you like," Jimenez told the officers wearing gas masks and face shields, before explaining live on air that he and his crew were members of the press.

"We're getting out of your way."

## **More than 10,000 National Guard members expected to be deployed**

Curfews had been imposed around the country, including in Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle.

About 5,000 National Guard soldiers and airmen were activated in 15 states and Washington, DC.

In Minneapolis, the city where the protests began, police, state troopers and National Guard members moved in soon after an 8:00 pm curfew took effect on Saturday to break up demonstrations.

On Sunday, in a display of force, long lines of state patrolmen and National Guard

soldiers lined up in front of the Capitol, with perhaps a dozen military-style armored vehicles behind them.

That came after three days in which police largely avoided engaging protesters, and after the state poured more than 4,000 National Guard troops into Minneapolis.



There were several standoffs between police and protesters in Chicago on Sunday. *(AP: Pat Nabong/Chicago Sun-Times)*

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President Donald Trump appeared to cheer on the tougher tactics, commending the National Guard deployment in Minneapolis and declaring “No games!”

He said police in New York City “must be allowed to do their job!”

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden condemned the violence as he continued to express common cause with those demonstrating after Mr. Floyd’s death.

“The act of protesting should never be allowed to overshadow the reason we protest,” Mr. Biden said in a late-night statement.



Protesters have defied curfews in Washington, DC to continue demonstrations late into the night. *(AP: Alex Brandon)*

## **Truck drives at crowd on freeway**

A truck driver was arrested on Sunday afternoon after appearing to drive at a crowd of protesters on a Minneapolis freeway.

Officials in Minnesota said no protesters were hit when the semi-trailer drove into a crowd demonstrating on a freeway near the city center.

The Minnesota State Patrol said the action appeared to be deliberate.

TV footage showed protesters swarming the truck, and then law enforcement

quickly moving in.

The driver was taken to hospital but released into police custody shortly afterward.

## Trump says Antifa will be designated a terrorist group

Mr. Trump blamed left-wing groups for causing the riots.

He said anarchists and militant anti-fascists under the umbrella term Antifa were to blame for riots that formed off the back of largely peaceful protests.

Though the group, whose followers organize resistance to white supremacists, is not an official organization, Mr. Trump said Antifa would be designated as a terrorist group.



Protesters meditate before marching through Aspen, in Colorado. (AP: Kelsey Brunner/The Aspen Times)

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Attorney-General William Barr also pointed a finger at “far-left extremist” groups.

Police chiefs and politicians around the country accused outsiders of coming in and causing the problems.

National security adviser Robert O’Brien said there was no systemic racism in police forces in the US, blaming the killing of black citizens on “some bad apples”.

“I think 99.9 percent of our law enforcement officers are great Americans,” he said on CNN.

“Many of them are African American, Hispanic, Asian, they’re working the toughest neighborhood, they’ve got the hardest jobs to do in this country and I think they’re amazing, great Americans.

“There is no doubt that there are some racist police, I think they’re the minority, I

think they're the few bad apples and we need to root them out."



Protesters in Richmond, Virginia, use smoke bombs against police. (AP: Steve Helber)

## Trump 'taken into underground White House bunker by Secret Service'

The Associated Press reported that Secret Service agents had rushed Mr. Trump into an underground White House bunker as protests flared outside on Friday.

AP said its source was a Republican close to the White House not authorized to publicly discuss private matters and said the account had been confirmed by another official.

Protests had turned violent in Washington DC on Friday, with protesters throwing rocks and tugging at police barricades just outside the White House.



Security at the White House has been beefed up after nearby protests.(AP: /Patrick Semansky)

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The Friday protests had sparked one of the highest alerts at the White House complex since the September 11 terror attacks in 2001, AP said.

Security at the White House has been reinforced by the National Guard and by additional personnel from the Secret Service and the US Park Police.

On Saturday morning Mr. Trump had tweeted that "vicious dogs" and "ominous weapons" would have greeted protesters if they had entered the grounds of the White House.

# Flowers at ‘sacred space’ where George Floyd died



A memorial to George Floyd grows in Minneapolis. (AP: John Minchillo)

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At the Minneapolis intersection where Mr. Floyd was killed, people gathered with brooms and flowers, saying it was important to protect what they called a “sacred space”.

The intersection was blocked with the traffic cones while a ring of flowers was laid out.

County Commissioner Angela Conley showed up shortly after the curfew lifted, saying that police had trampled flowers and photos of Mr. Floyd.



A rifle is melted into the street where a police car was set alight in Salt Lake City. (AP: Jeremy Harmon/The Salt Lake Tribune)

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“The community needs healing, and what happened last night only exacerbated the pain that’s been felt,” she said of police action.

Ms. Conley said the demonstrations and confrontations with police would continue until the other three officers who were at the scene when Mr. Floyd was pinned down are arrested and prosecuted.

The officer who put his knee on Mr. Floyd’s neck, Derek Chauvin, was charged last week with murder. All four officers have been fired.

Minnesota Attorney-General Keith Ellison warned it would be hard to secure a homicide conviction against Mr. Chauvin.

“Prosecuting police officers for misconduct, including homicide and murder is

very difficult," he told reporters.

"If you look at the cases that have been in front of the public in the last many years, it's easy to see that is true. Every single link in the prosecutorial chain will come under attack as we present this case."

By Sunday, the fury had spread to Europe, where thousands gathered in London's Trafalgar Square, clapping and waving placards despite government rules barring crowds because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## More on this story:

- Minneapolis police officer who knelt on the neck of unarmed black man George Floyd charged with murder
  - The US protests over police killings, in pictures
  - How a call to police over a \$20 bill unleashed huge protests across the US
  - 'He didn't give me an opportunity to speak': George Floyd's brother describes a one-sided conversation with Donald Trump
  - Analysis: George Floyd's death and Minneapolis protests highlight systemic racism in the US
  - Man loads bow and aims it at protesters against police brutality after yelling 'All Lives Matter'
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Source:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-01/us-protests-continue-over-death-of-george-floyd-in-minneapolis/12306082>

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