

Anti-Racist Demonstrations Continue Despite Escalating Government Repression

Mass protests are being attacked by police and national guardsmen at the urging of the White House and State Capitols

By [Abayomi Azikiwe](#)

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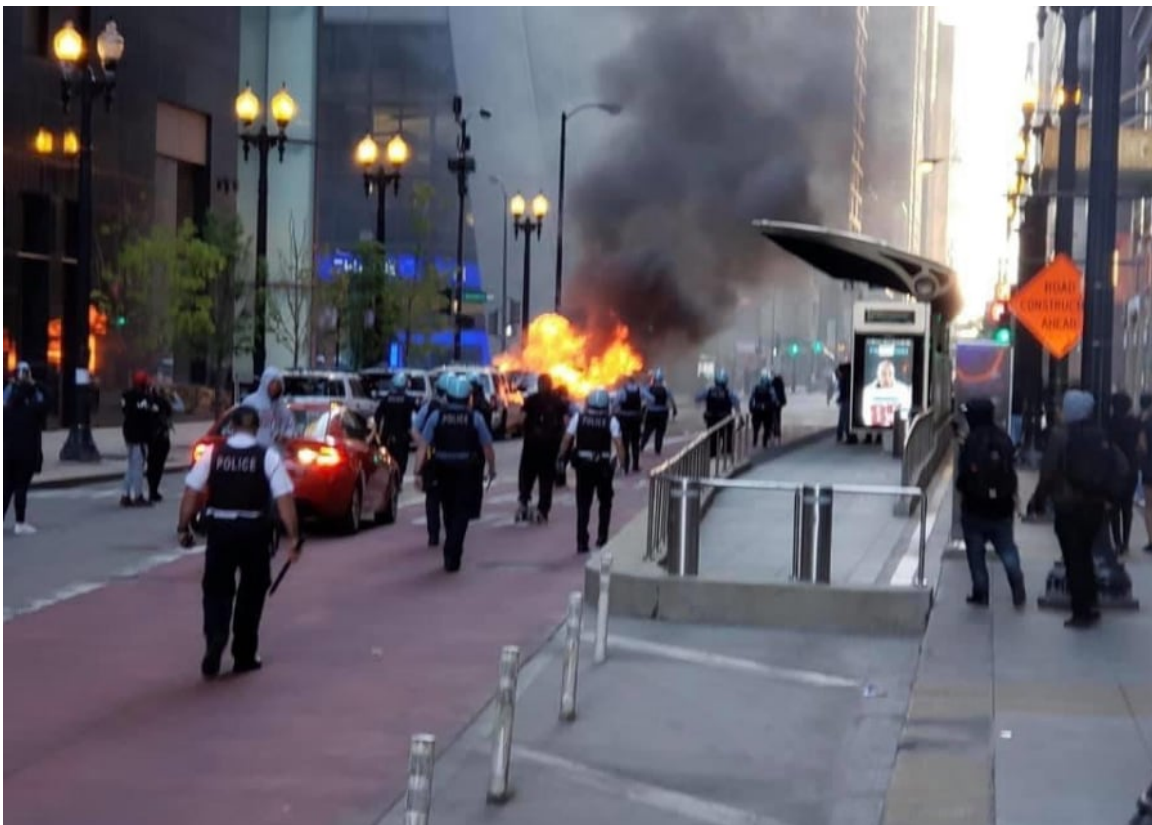
Region: [USA](#)

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When the videotaped public execution by a white Minneapolis police officer of African American George Floyd, 46, was posted in social media, a firestorm of opposition, protests and rebellion swept throughout the United States and internationally.

In just a matter of one day, the streets of Minneapolis and later the twin city of St. Paul were ablaze with militant demonstrations and denunciations.

These manifestations spread to other cities by May 27 where the response to the calls for marches and rallies were met with enthusiasm and persistence. From the western states of California and Washington to the east coast with cities such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. there has been widespread unrest where people gathered and blocked streets and highways while others engaged in direct action related to property damage and arson attacks.



Atlanta, Georgia responded to the police execution of Floyd by demonstrating in the downtown area and laying siege to the Cable News Network Center. CNN and other corporate television and print networks have consistently distorted the actual circumstances surrounding the demonstrations seeking to create divisions between those utilizing nonviolent tactics against others carrying out attacks on visible symbols of exploitation and oppression including multi-national chain retail outlets, banks and police vehicles.

The forms of resistance in Minneapolis-St. Paul represent a sophisticated level of opposition to racism and state repression. The Third Precinct police station was destroyed on May 28 while the following day unrest spread to neighboring St. Paul where over 200 businesses were impacted by the rebellion.

Even though Minnesota Governor Tim Walz ordered the National Guard into the Twin Cities, it would take a full mobilization of these military forces which spread out around the unrest areas utilizing teargas, pepper spray, igniting concussion grenades and the random firing of rubber bullets into large crowds of people to clear the streets. In Minneapolis there has been at least one death since the rebellion and demonstrations erupted. Many others have been arrested and abused by the police. Journalists and bystanders are routinely arrested and held without being charged for hours.

These repressive tactics by police agencies and the National Guard are being encouraged at the highest level of government. United States President Donald Trump has castigated governors for not enacting more drastic measures against the demonstrations. Beyond the suggestion that those damaging and taking private property from businesses should be shot on sight, the administration has offered to deploy federal troops in an effort to halt the unrest.

Trump blamed the “radical left” for the demonstrations and rebellions saying that the proliferation of protests make the state governments appear weak. Although the president initially stated that the Justice Department would conduct a thorough investigation into the Floyd killing, there was no mention of the systematic racism within law-enforcement agencies around the U.S.

During the conference call with the governors on June 1, Trump [was quoted](#) as saying:

“You have to dominate, if you don’t dominate you’re wasting your time. They’re going to run over you. You’re going to look like a bunch of jerks. You have every one of these guys on tape. Why aren’t you prosecuting them?” The tougher you are, the less likely you’re going to be hit.”

Demonstrations in Washington, D.C. have been held right outside the White House. In other areas of the nation’s capital, extensive property damage and arson attacks were carried out by angry youth. On June 1, military personnel from Fort Bragg, North Carolina were deployed to the city.

Trump has evoked the Insurrection Act of 1807 allowing for the deployment of federal troops domestically. The same Act was utilized during the 1992 rebellions in the aftermath of the acquittal of four white Los Angeles police officers in the brutal beating of Rodney King.

As of early June, thousands of National Guard soldiers are patrolling the streets of U.S. cities while demonstrations are continuing. Curfews are being imposed in Minneapolis-St. Paul and a host of other cities including New York City and Detroit.

The Escalation of Crowd Control Weapons and Tactics

In Detroit on May 31, the corporate –imposed Mayor Mike Duggan, gave a four-hour notice of a citywide curfew from 8:00pm to 5:00am. This was done after two straight days and nights of demonstrations which concluded during the evening hours with provocations by the police. The curfew has been extended for an entire week beginning on June 1. More people marched for the fourth day from the area around the police headquarters into the southwest side of the city violating the curfew.

The city administration is attempting to protect the private property interests of the leading capitalists such as Quicken Loans and Illitch Holdings. The two firms have taken over large swaths of land in downtown Detroit. Such corporations rely on tax breaks and revenue captures as a means of subsidizing their profitmaking operations. On the first night of the demonstrations, May 29, a 21-year-old youth was killed by gunfire under suspicious circumstances. Police say that the death was unrelated to the protests yet further investigation into the shooting is required in order to make a definitive conclusion.

Just 45 minutes after the curfew went into effect on May 31, riot police charged the youth-dominated crowd gathered outside police headquarters on Third Street downtown. The police used teargas, pepper spray, pellets and rubber bullets. There were unjustified arrests while several participants along with journalists were hit by the gas and rubber bullets. Several journalists were detained after they had identified themselves as media workers. (See [this](#))



New York City demonstrations against police brutality and the murder of George Floyd

New York City police were shown on television networks attacking demonstrators and journalists. Thousands have taken to the streets of the city in various boroughs since the beginning of the mass outrage in response to the police execution of Floyd. The Democratic Governor Cuomo and Mayor DeBlasio, announced a curfew on June 1 after law-enforcement agents have been documented in engaging in brutal behavior towards the demonstrations.

Despite the declaration of a curfew thousands remained in the streets of New York City. In areas such as Manhattan, widespread property destruction and the seizure of consumer goods was the order of the night. The same situation prevailed in California where from Los Angeles to Oakland the unrest was not subsiding.



New York City police attack anti-racist demonstrators

In Louisville, Kentucky where Breonna Taylor, 26, an emergency medical technician, was killed in her apartment by the police exercising a search warrant at the wrong address on March 13, demonstrations have become larger since the videotaped police execution of George Floyd on May 25. On the evening of May 31, police officers opened fire on a group of people not involved in the demonstrations killing a local small business owner David McAtee, 53. The following day the chief of police was terminated as the city attempted to halt further disturbances.

A report on the incident published by vox.com claimed that police and National Guard were fired upon from the area and the security forces responded by shooting into a crowd of people in a parking lot. Nonetheless, this same [article noted](#) that:

“Several sources say the crowd in the parking lot was not actually protesting when police arrived. One bystander told reporters they were not engaged in protest and were merely out past the city’s curfew. And McAtee’s sister told WAVE 3 News that McAtee and others meet in the area every Sunday night for food and music, and that her brother was serving food. According to NBC, Conrad did not specify who shot the man. However, the Louisville news station WLKY is reporting that he was shot by law enforcement. Police say they are collecting video and investigating the killing. Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear has ordered an independent investigation by state police. ‘Given the seriousness of the situation, I have authorized the Kentucky State Police to independently investigate the event,’ he said in a statement Monday (June 1).”

Prior to the law-enforcement killing of McAtee, on May 31, seven people were shot during mass demonstrations in Louisville just three days before. The mayor of the city stated that the shooting had nothing to do with law-enforcement. The following day on May 29, two journalists were hit with pepper balls even after they had complied with police instructions

in regard to positioning and movement.

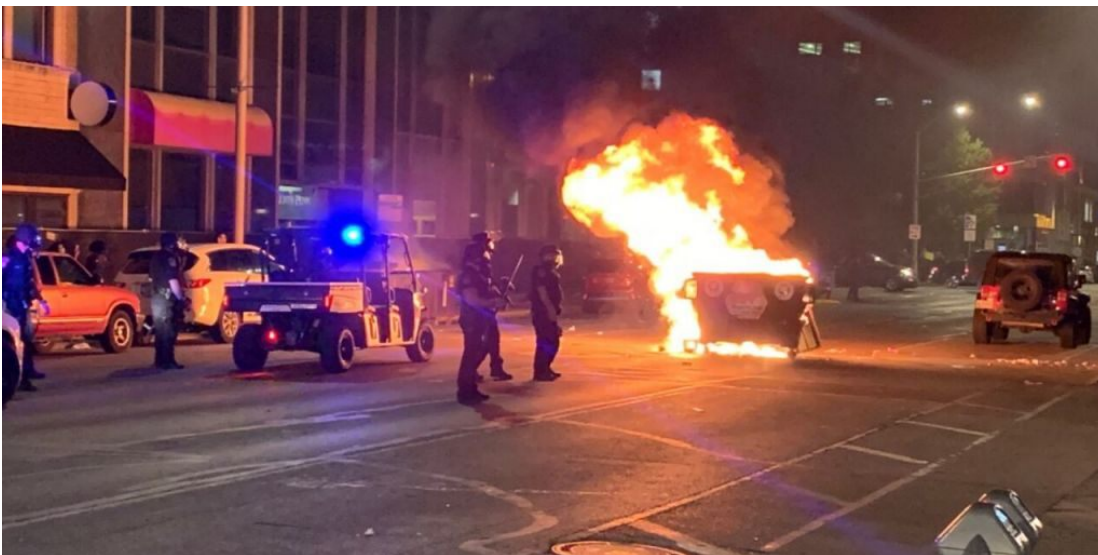
Atlanta's Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms criticized the demonstrations downtown on May 29 saying that violent acts discredited the legacy of civil rights in the city. However, that very same night, two Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCU) students were attacked without provocation by several Atlanta police officers. Two of officers were fired after a video of the assaults on the two students from Morehouse and Spellman were aired on the news as well as social media.

Officers were captured breaking the windows of the vehicle the two students, Messiah Young and Taniyah Pilgrim, were riding, in addition to slashing the tires, tasing them and placing both under arrest. Pilgrim was admitted to hospital and later released while at the time of this writing, Young is still being held by the local authorities.

According to [BET.com](https://www.bet.com), a social media post about the status of the two students said:

"As of yesterday (May 31), Taniyah was released and is now home with a family member. Messiah is still in custody at the Fulton County Jail. He is being charged with eluding/flee police and driving without a license. His court hearing is today at 2pm." The Spelman College student government association released a statement of support on social media."

Meanwhile Indianapolis police have attacked demonstrations prompting retaliatory actions against property. News reports say that 30 businesses have been damaged. Four people were shot over the May 30-31 weekend, one fatally. Police claim that their officers were not responsible although this has not been verified independently. (See [this](#))



Indianapolis rebellion leave two dead at the hands of the police

Ruling Class Propaganda on "Outside Agitators" and "Radical Leftists"

The general tone of the corporate media talking points since the advent of the widespread mass discontent over racist police violence is designed draw a wedge between demonstrators seeking an end to racist violence. The commentators from the ruling class news outlets seek to isolate those considered outside agitators and radicals.

Even the notion that white supremacists are carrying out attacks under the protection of masks and darkness is being advanced to stoke confusion and mistrust. These corporate entities are attempting to shape how the African American people and their allies feel about the police execution of Floyd and the epidemic of law-enforcement misconduct.

Obviously these talking points are aimed at ending the demonstrations through contrived demoralization and outright state repression. This line says that there are “good protesters” and bad ones. Nonetheless, the underlying systematic problems of racism and national oppression are never addressed.

Only when there is a revolutionary structural transformation in the U.S. can the historical problem of racism be eradicated completely inside the country. The current wave of mass demonstrations and rebellions could constitute a renewed struggle to end the exploitative system in the U.S. leading to a society based upon genuine equality, economic justice and social liberation.

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