



Andrew Lahodinskyj/Canadian Press

Fans cheer during the Toronto Raptors victory parade.

Police: 4 shot, 2 arrested at Raptors rally in Toronto

By **ROB GILLIES**
and **IAN HARRISON**
Associated Press

TORONTO — Four people were shot and wounded at a rally Monday for the NBA champion Raptors, and two people were arrested, police said.

Droves of Raptors fans ran from the shooting in a stampede from the City Hall square, which was packed with tens of thousands of fans. A million or more fans earlier packed downtown Toronto for a parade for the Raptors, raising concerns about safety and overcrowding.

Toronto Police Chief Mark Saunders said four people suffered gunshot wounds but said none of the injuries were life-threatening. Others suffered minor injuries as they tried to get away from the shooting, said Saunders, who asked for witnesses and people who might have video to come forward and help investigators.

"We do have people arrested with firearms and that's the start of the investigation," Saunders said.

Asked if it was a targeted shooting or terrorism-related, police spokeswoman Allison Sparkes said the investigation was ongoing.

During a speech from

one of the team owners, the host of the rally interrupted the proceedings to alert the crowd to an emergency and asked for calm. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Toronto Mayor John Tory, NBA Finals MVP Kawhi Leonard and other players were among those on stage at the time.

"I want to make sure everyone stays calm," said the host, sportscaster Matt Devlin. "This is serious. Everyone stay calm ... There is an emergency being dealt with."

Those on stage remained in place and speeches resumed shortly after.

Mike Mudidi said he was enjoying the celebrations when he heard screams behind him that someone had pulled out a gun. He said he froze as people started running in all directions.

"I just grabbed my buddies' hands and ran," he said.

Raptors fan Phil D'Souza said the violence left a bad taste in his mouth, and he questioned whether he would attend a similar event in the future.

"You couldn't see the shooter but it was that kind of chaos where you're just expecting to see somebody coming around the corner. It was that kind of vibe,"

D'Souza said.

Another fan said the stampede was scary.

"When you see a bunch of people coming at you, you don't know what to do, whether to run or not. You don't want to get stampeded over," Sam Sunday said.

Trudeau's spokeswoman declined to comment on the shooting near the prime minister.

"We never comment on matters relating to the PM's security," Eleanore Catenaro said.

Tory, the mayor, thanked police for their quick response.

"It is disappointing and I'm sure a source of anger for more than just me that anyone would carry a gun and discharge it at what was otherwise a joyous celebration," Tory said in a statement. "I hope those found responsible will be held to account to the full extent that the law permits. I want to commend and thank the millions of other people who happily and peacefully celebrated our beloved Toronto Raptors."

Tory previously urged every city resident to come celebrate the Raptors' first championship and declared Monday as "We The North Day," after the franchise's slogan.

Local governments seek to win negotiating power in opioid lawsuit

By **ANDREW WELSH-HUGGINS**
Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Lawyers suing over the toll of opioids asked a judge Friday to allow a structure for all 25,000 municipal and county governments in the U.S. to be paid — if a settlement can be reached with companies that make and distribute powerful prescription painkillers.

The approach, if approved, would create dueling negotiating systems as state governments are also in collective settlement negotiations with the drug industry.

The unified approach on behalf of municipalities would also help the manufacturers and distributors by defining a finalized group of entities benefiting from a settlement, said Joseph Rice, a South Carolina-based attorney representing local governments in the complaint.

"If you're a corporation trying to address this problem, you need to get closure, you need to put it behind you," Rice said in an interview Friday. "If you're going to put significant resources into the resolution, you've got to know it's behind you. The only way to do that is to get releases from everybody that's got a potential claim."

The action would also help address a problem that is widespread and reaches across city and county lines, Rice said. Providing assistance from a settlement to one county doesn't help the people in a neighboring town, he said.

"These pills have wheels, they move around," Rice



AP Photo/Jessica Hill

Christine Gagnon of Southington, Connecticut, protests in 2018 with other family and friends who have lost loved ones to OxyContin and opioid overdoses.

said, citing the documented cases of pain pills obtained in Florida being taken to West Virginia.

The motion filed Friday requests the creation of a negotiating class "for the specific purpose of creating a unified body to enter into further negotiations with defendants," according to the filing. "It is neither aimed at being the vehicle for litigation or settlement."

Hundreds of local governments and other entities, such as hospitals, have accused pharmaceutical companies of downplaying the addictive nature of opioids and prescription painkillers largely blamed for one of the deadliest drug crises in U.S. history. Opioids include prescription and illicit drugs.

The complaints are being overseen by Cleveland-based U.S. District Judge Dan Polster. He previously ruled that lawsuits filed by the Ohio counties of Cuyahoga, which includes Cleveland,

and Summit County, which includes Akron, will be heard first this October.

A trial on claims made by West Virginia's Huntington and Cabell counties will be next, followed by Cleveland and Akron's claims.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says opioids are the main driver of drug overdose deaths. Opioids were involved in 47,600 overdose deaths in the U.S. in 2017, according to the agency.

Attorneys general fighting for compensation in separate legal actions are likely to have mixed reactions to the filing, said Paul Nolette, a Marquette University political scientist.

With the lone exception of Nebraska, every state has sued, filed administrative charges or promised to sue the companies blamed for the national crisis, which played a role in the deaths of more than 390,000 Americans from 2000 through 2017.

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