

# Protesters, police clash in Portland

State and federal leaders seek investigation

Associated Press

PORTLAND — With unrest continuing, the federal government is coming under increasing scrutiny for the activities of agents trying to clamp down on protests in Oregon's largest city — demonstrations that President Donald Trump says are led by "anarchists and agitators."

Protesters outside Portland's U.S. courthouse set a fire in the building's entryway early Monday in yet another night of conflict with federal agents who repeatedly tear gassed the demonstrators to drive them away, officials said.

Authorities over the weekend erected large fences around the building in an effort to keep away the protesters who have been on Portland's streets daily since the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis nearly two months ago.

But video posted online showed protesters taking down the fencing and a statement from Portland's city police department described the protesters' tactics as they repeatedly headed toward the courthouse and were repelled by federal agents who emerged from inside.

Hundreds of protesters were at the scene Sunday night into early Monday morning and at one point "dozens of people with shields, helmets, gas masks, umbrellas, bats and hockey sticks approached the doors" of the courthouse until federal officers came out and dispersed them, Portland police said in a statement.

The protesters later lit a fire at about 1:30 a.m. Monday within the portico of the courthouse, Portland police said, who stressed



A protester burns an American flag outside the Mark O. Hatfield U.S. Courthouse on Monday in Portland.

Noah Berger/AP Photos

that their officers were not involved in any crowd control measures, did not fire tear gas and "were not present during any of the activity described."

Other people added wood and debris to the fire to make it larger and federal agents came out of the courthouse and "dispersed the crowd and extinguished the fire," according to Portland police.

The violence happened as local and state leaders expressed anger with the presence of the federal agents, saying that the city's protests had started to ease just as the federal agents started taking action on the streets of Portland.



Graffiti outside the Mark O. Hatfield U.S. Courthouse on Monday.

Speaking on CNN's "State of the Union," Democratic Mayor Ted Wheeler said federal officers "are not wanted here. We haven't

asked them here. In fact, we want them to leave." Top leaders in the U.S. House said Sunday they were "alarmed" by the

Trump administration's tactics against protesters in Portland and other cities, including Washington, D.C. They've called on federal inspectors general to investigate.

"This is a matter of utmost urgency," wrote House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-New York, Homeland Security Committee Chairman Bennie G. Thompson, D-Mississippi, and Oversight and Reform Committee Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney, D-New York, in a letter to the inspectors general of Department of Justice and Department of Homeland Security.

The Democratic lawmakers are seeking an investigation "into the use of federal law enforcement agencies by the Attorney General and the Acting Secretary of Homeland Security to suppress First Amendment protected activities in Washington, D.C., Portland, and other communities across the United States."

Trump has decried the demonstrations, and Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf labeled the protesters as "lawless anarchists" in a visit to Portland last Thursday.

"We are trying to help Portland, not hurt it," Trump tweeted Sunday. "Their leadership has, for months, lost control of the anarchists and agitators. They are missing in action. We must protect Federal property, AND OUR PEOPLE. These were not merely protesters, these are the real deal!"

Late Saturday, Portland police said protesters broke into the building of the Portland Police Association labor union that represents officers. Dumpster fires were also set and fencing was moved and transformed into barricades, police said.

Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum sued Homeland Security and the Marshals Service in federal court late Friday, alleging that unidentified federal agents grabbed people from Portland's streets "without warning or explanation, without a warrant, and without providing any way to determine who is directing this action."

Rosenblum said she was seeking a temporary restraining order to "immediately stop federal authorities from unlawfully detaining Oregonians."

It was not immediately unclear whether anyone was arrested or detained during the protest that started Sunday night.

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