

"We're sick of it": Anger over police killings shatters U.S.

By Associated Press, adapted by Newsela staff on 05.31.20

Word Count 492

Level 660L



An aerial view of volunteers cleaning trash and debris in Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 30, 2020, after riots over the death of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, at the hands of police. Photo by: Lokman Vural Elibol/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images

Over the weekend, tens of thousands of people marched peacefully. All over the country, they marched to protest the death of George Floyd. He was an unarmed black man who died on May 25. He died after a white police officer pressed his knee on the man's neck in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

At night, however, some protests went out of control. Cars and businesses near some of the protests were set on fire. The words "I can't breathe" were spray-painted on buildings.

Violence At Some Protests

The protests started in Minneapolis. Then they moved all over the United States. Many people were angry and hurt by the death of Floyd. They feel that police unfairly target the black community. These protests were fueled by these feelings of unfairness, frustration and anger.

"We're sick of it. The cops are out of control," protester Olga Hall said in Washington, D.C. "They're wild. There's just been too many dead boys."

Some people who joined the protests became violent. Some rioters set fire to police cars. Some threw bottles at officers and broke store windows. Others stole things, even as protesters urged them to stop.

Police responded with violence, too. Some used painful tear gas to push back crowds. Others used rubber bullets to make protesters flee.

Some compared the demonstrations to other historic protests. The civil rights movement of the 1960s is one example.

Politicians React To Protests

In Minneapolis, military soldiers came to help the police. President Donald Trump appeared to cheer the arrival of military. He declared, "No games!"

Joe Biden is expected to be the Democratic presidential nominee. That means he will likely run against Trump, a Republican, in the November election. Biden spoke out against the violence. However, he also said he supported those protesting Floyd's death.

Cleanup soon began in cities across the country. In Madison, Wisconsin, hundreds of volunteers gathered. They cleared litter and debris after the protest. Some people had broken windows at dozens of stores and an art museum.

Some protests did not involve any violence. In Juneau, Alaska, local police joined protesters.

"We don't tolerate excessive use of force," said Juneau Police Chief Ed Mercer. He spoke at the gathering. Most people wore masks. Some sang Alaska Native songs.

Minnesota Governor Condemns Violence

The show of force in Minneapolis came after three days. In those three days, police largely avoided interacting with the protesters.

Tim Walz is the governor of Minnesota. He spoke out against the violence. He said, "The situation in Minneapolis is no longer in any way about the murder of George Floyd."

Some residents were glad to see the police break up the rioting.

"I live here. I haven't been able to sleep," said Iman Muhammad. Multiple fires had been set in her neighborhood on the night of May 29. Muhammad said she sympathized with peaceful protests over Floyd's death but disagreed with the violence. "Wrong doesn't answer wrong," she said.