

Troops to deploy in more U.S. cities as Trump reiterates crackdown on protesters



Washington, August 2 (RHC)-- The U.S. Justice Department says it will send federal agents to Cleveland, Milwaukee and Detroit amid crackdown on anti-racism protests, expanding the deployment of troops to major U.S. cities under a program authorized by President Donald Trump.

The federal agents have already been deployed to Portland, Chicago, Kansas City, Missouri, Albuquerque and New Mexico under what is known as Operation Legend as protests against racial inequality swept the nation after the police killing of African American George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25.

Oregon Governor Kate Brown claimed the federal forces deployed in Portland will start withdrawing from the city on Thursday as the crackdown has prompted rebuke, rage and more protests. But Homeland Security said the agents are staying until "violence stops" -- warning a full Portland pullout depended on the security situation "significantly" improving.

The Democratic Oregon governor said: "They (federal agents) have acted as an occupying force & brought violence. Starting tomorrow, all Customs and Border Protection & ICE officers will leave

downtown Portland."

Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf said, "The Department will continue to maintain our current, augmented federal law enforcement personnel in Portland until we are assured that the Hatfield Federal Courthouse and other federal properties will no longer be attacked and that the seat of justice in Portland will remain secure."

Trump sent armed officers, many wearing combat-like gear, to intervene in Portland after weeks of anti-racism and anti-police protests. But the protests have only intensified since the federal agents arrived, with Democrats assailing the deployment as a ploy to boost Trump's law-and-order credentials as he seeks re-election in November, AFP said.

The U.S. president told a press at the White House that federal agents would not be leaving "until they secure their city" and warned that if it was not "secure soon," the federal government will have no choice but to "go in and clean it out."

Trump later claimed in tweets that "there would be no Portland" if the federal government had not stepped in, and they will do so again if Brown and Portland's mayor, Ted Wheeler, "do not stop the crime and violence."

Trump, seeking re-election in November, has sought to crack down on anti-racism protests to highlight his focus on law and order amid unrest across the US.

Detroit U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider told a briefing on Wednesday that there would be "no federal troops" deployed to his state (Michigan) to interfere with peaceful protests.

On Tuesday last week, Attorney General William Barr had a tense hearing in front of the House Judiciary Committee, where Democrats questioned Barr's decision to deploy federal authorities to Portland, accusing agents of excessive force and of violating the rights of demonstrators.

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