

# *U.S. police union president defends officer who pepper-sprayed 9-year-old girl*

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**U.S. police union president defends officer who pepper-sprayed 9-year-old girl**

Rochester, February 2 (RHC)-- In the U.S. city of Rochester, New York, one police officer has been suspended and two officers placed on administrative leave pending an internal investigation, after body camera video showed them handcuffing and pepper-spraying a 9-year-old girl.

The video, taken last Friday, shows the officers pressing the girl face-down into the snow as she cries out for her father. One officer says "You're acting like a child," to which she responds, "I am a child." When

the girl refuses to sit in the back of a patrol car, an officer pepper-sprays her in the face.

Rochester police union president Mike Mezzo has now defended the officer's actions. Mezzo said: "He made a decision there that he thought was the best action to take. It resulted in no injury to her."

Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren said that state law and a police union contract prevented her from taking stronger action against the officers. She said the incident had left her community rattled.

Last year, Mayor Warren fired Rochester's police chief La'Ron Singletary after internal documents showed he sought to cover up the police killing of Daniel Prude. Prude was a 41-year-old Black man who died from asphyxiation in March after Rochester officers handcuffed him, put a hood over his head and pushed his face into the freezing cold ground for two minutes while kneeling on his back.

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