

*Thousands rally against racism in  
UK amid fears of far-right  
violence*

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London, August 8 (RHC)-- British police are concerned that anti-immigration groups will continue to target locations throughout the country following a week of rioting and disorder driven by misinformation over a stabbing attack against young girls.

Police recorded more than 100 events on Wednesday, the United Kingdom's Press Association reported, citing a law enforcement source. Internet chat groups shared a list of agencies and law firms specialising in immigration as possible targets.

But in parts of London, Bristol, Oxford and Birmingham, peaceful crowds of anti-racism protesters gathered in such large numbers that they either vastly outnumbered anti-immigrant agitators – or there was no protest to counter.

The head of London's Metropolitan Police Service said officers were focused on protecting immigration lawyers and services. In addition to thousands of officers already deployed, about 1,300 specialist forces were on standby in case of serious trouble in London.

Cities and towns have been racked by riots and looting for the past week as angry mobs, encouraged by far-right extremists, clashed with police and counter-demonstrators. The disturbances began after misinformation spread about the stabbing rampage that killed three girls in the seaside community of Southport, with social media users falsely identifying the suspect as an immigrant and a Muslim.

Rioters spouting anti-immigrant slogans have attacked mosques and hotels housing asylum seekers, creating fear in Muslim and immigrant communities. In recent days, reports have emerged of violent counterattacks in some areas.

Several hundred supporters of immigrants who showed up outside a law office on a residential street in the London neighbourhood of North Finchley found themselves largely alone with several dozen police officers. The crowd chanted "refugees welcome" and "London against racism." Some held signs saying "Stop the far right," "Migration is not a crime" and "Finchley against Fascism."

Outside an immigration centre in the Walthamstow area in east London, a counterprotest leader shouted: "Fascists gone" to which a crowd of hundreds responded: "Off our streets."

Prime Minister Keir Starmer has described the previous disturbances as "far-right thuggery," rejecting any suggestion that the riots are about the government's immigration policies. He has warned that anyone taking part in the violence would "face the full force of the law."

Police have made more than 400 arrests and are considering using "counterterrorism" laws to prosecute some rioters. The government has pledged to prosecute those responsible for the disorder, including those who use social media to incite the violence.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan said in a post on X that the police, city hall and community leaders were working to protect targeted buildings and places of worship.

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