

FBI's Secret Air Force Used in Baltimore Protests



Washington, May 9 (RHC)-- The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) used its secret air force to gather intelligence during the recent anti-police protests in Baltimore, Maryland.

The spy-planes were "providing aerial imagery of possible criminal activity," Captain Eric Kowalczyk, a Baltimore Police Department spokesman told reporters. The FBI declined to comment on the issue even when pressed by local media, but authorities in Baltimore confirmed it.

An FBI official told The Washington Post earlier this week, when the revelation was still unconfirmed, that surveillance aircraft were sent to help law enforcement in the violence-hit city to spy on civil rights activists. The same aircraft that were used over Baltimore were also used overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last decade.

The FBI's program over Baltimore was supposed to be kept a secret but citizens discovered the mysterious planes over their city. Shortly after, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) demanded answers from authorities to disclose the nature and source of the constant hovering of planes over the city.

"A lot of these technologies sweep very, very broadly, and, at a minimum, the public should have a right to know what's going on," said Jay Stanley, an analyst from the ACLU with knowledge of the legal

proceedings.

The aircraft were used to spot unrest in Baltimore, a city that witnessed riots triggered after the death of Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old African American who died of a severe neck injury on April 19, a week after he was arrested by Baltimore police. The death of Freddie Gray by police in April sparked angry protests in Baltimore, Maryland.

Sometime after the riots began, the FBI allegedly got involved using aircraft, outfitted with high-definition day and night spying systems, which ultimately gave police information on civil rights activity and curfew-breakers on the streets from the sky.

The planes also used rare infrared technology. The controversial use of this technology has sparked debate on constitutional rights violations by local and federal agencies.

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