

Trump campaign blames protests, media for smaller turnout in Tulsa



Tulsa, June 21 (RHC)-- President Donald Trump's return to the presidential campaign trail Saturday found a smaller-than-advertised crowd in Tulsa, Oklahoma — and administration officials blamed protesters and the media for keeping more people away.

"Sadly, protesters interfered with supporters, even blocking access to metal detectors, which prevented people from entering the rally," campaign spokesman Tim Murtaugh said about an hour before Trump took the stage at the 19,000-seat BOK Center in the Oklahoma capital.

Campaign manager Brad Parscale had touted more than one million ticket requests for the rally, but said he expected about 100,000 to actually show up.

An outdoor stage was set to accommodate entertainment for an expected overflow crowd — but Trump's speech there was called off when the masses never materialized.

Just moments before Trump took the stage, his son, Eric, addressed the crowd and compared the anti-racism protesters across the United States as "animals."

During the rally, Trump told his supporters that he had asked U.S. officials to slow down testing for the novel coronavirus, calling it a "double-edged sword" that led to more cases being discovered. Trump said the United States had now tested 25 million people, far more than other countries.

"When you do testing to that extent, you're gonna find more people you're gonna find more cases. So I said to my people slow the testing down, please," Trump told a campaign rally in Tulsa, where many supporters were not wearing face masks.

A White House official later said that Trump was just joking about his call for a slowdown in testing.

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