



## Portland Protests Continue For 59th Consecutive Day

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### Body

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**LEILA FADEL:** Some help from the courts this weekend in the bid to shut down protests in Washington and Oregon. Last night, a federal judge in Seattle blocked the city's ban on tear gas from taking effect. And in Portland, a federal judge denied the state's request to restrict federal police tactics against protesters. The Trump administration said it would send more federal officers to cities with Democratic leaders where protests have been ongoing. The administration says the move is aimed at quelling violence.

NPR's Kirk Siegler is in downtown Portland, where the city just marked its 59th straight night of protests, protests that began after the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Hey, Kirk.

**KIRK SIEGLER:** Good morning, Leila.

**LEILA FADEL:** So you were out at the protest last night in front of the federal courthouse, which has become the flashpoint between federal agents and protesters. Tell us what you saw.

**KIRK SIEGLER:** Well, big crowds. You had the now famous Wall of Mom standing as a human barrier in front of the protesters and the new edition joined by another human wall of military veterans last night - a lot of chanting, say his name for George Floyd and chanting - specific to Portland - feds, get out of Portland. PDX, go home.

(SOUNDBITE OF PROTEST)

**UNIDENTIFIED PROTESTERS:** (Chanting) Feds, go home. Feds, go home.

**KIRK SIEGLER:** So just picture the federal building, there are graffiti on the walls, barricaded now with a fence around it. And like previous nights last night late, things get heated - tear gas explosions. Some people disperse, and others don't.

**LEILA FADEL:** Speaking of tear gas, we saw the mayor there get tear gassed when he went to the protests. The administration claims violence in these cities is the reason for sending federal personnel. But city and state leaders say President Trump is manufacturing it in order to help his reelection.

**KIRK SIEGLER:** Well, right. There's a lot of anger here. You know, the inference is he's targeting this blue city. And the images, city leaders say, play well in conservative media. You know, the size of the nightly protests had actually been starting to die down until reports came that President Trump had sent his Homeland Security and Border Patrol officers. And things started getting big again.

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LEILA FADEL: These protests are about systemic racism, police violence. But it sounds like the attention has shifted quite a bit from those original demands, right?

KIRK SIEGLER: It has. You know, and there is some concern about that from some of the city's Black leaders that this is sort of all turned into a spectacle. This is also just a big activist town. There's been a lot of protests during the administration, throughout the Trump era. It's also largely white. And you can see that in the crowds out there. They do seem to be driven by young people, though, like Sarah Goldstein, who I met. She's Chinese American. She was holding a sign that said Black lives over white comfort.

SARAH GOLDSTEIN: People are going to be distracted by anything. I don't necessarily think that the actions that are happening with the violence towards the end of the night is avoidable.

LEILA FADEL: So, Kirk, it's been over a week now since the federal agents have been in Portland - the mood tense. Is there a sense of when this standoff ends?

KIRK SIEGLER: Not really. You know, I'd say, Leila, city leaders have ordered Portland Police to not cooperate with federal agents. And it's a pretty weird scene. It's hard to know what's going on down here at night. You know, last night, they didn't seem to be blocking off any streets like usual. So you had the public - just cars driving everywhere. And there were thousands of people on the streets. It's chaotic. And it's hard to say where this is headed.

LEILA FADEL: That's NPR's Kirk Siegler in downtown Portland, Ore. Kirk, thank you so much.

KIRK SIEGLER: You're welcome.

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC)

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