

The Washington Post

Democracy Dies in Darkness

Live Updates

Live updates: D.C. protesters push back against Trump's show of federal force; fifth day of protests mostly peaceful

By **Dana Hedgpeth**

June 3, 2020 at 11:30 a.m. UTC

 **Refresh for updates**

As many as 2,000 demonstrators descended on Washington on Tuesday, the largest and most boisterous crowd to gather in the nation's capital during five straight days of protests over George Floyd's death in the custody of Minneapolis police.

Banging on fences erected near the White House and marching through the city to the U.S. Capitol, the largely peaceful protesters included high schoolers and stay-at-home moms, young parents and toddlers, elderly couples and large families. But tensions also flared at multiple flash points during the day, as protesters faced an even larger contingent of federal law enforcement authorities than on Monday.

Here are some significant developments:

- As the 7 p.m. curfew passed on Tuesday, protesters remained peaceful, and authorities did not take any action. But by nightfall, many families had left and the crowd had thinned to a much younger group. That increased tensions, and some began throwing water bottles and shaking fences.

- Many protesters said they came out because of what happened Monday, when hundreds of peaceful demonstrators were forcefully cleared from Lafayette Square — one of the country's most symbolic places of protest — by federal forces at the behest of Attorney General William P. Barr before President Trump walked across the square to pose for photos at St. John's Episcopal Church. Many protesters were struck with pepper balls; others were pushed and hit.
- The closed Lafayette Square was one of many signs of tightening restrictions by federal forces. Armored vehicles blocked streets around the White House as scores of federal law enforcement officers patrolled on foot. Meanwhile, city police patrolled neighborhoods that had seen five straight nights of vandalism, fires and looting — all of which prompted the president to order a crackdown.
- Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper asked state National Guards to send some of their troops to supplement the local and federal police and the D.C. National Guard. Dozens of federal forces lined the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Maryland sent 116 National Guardsmen to the District on Tuesday, according to a spokesman for Gov. Larry Hogan (R). D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) said she had not requested help from outside the city.

11:30 a.m.

Photos: The fifth day of protest in the nation's capital

Banging on fences erected near the White House and marching through the city to the U.S. Capitol, the largely peaceful protesters on Tuesday in Washington included high schoolers and stay-at-home moms, young parents and toddlers, elderly couples and large families. Here are images from the fifth day of protests in the nation's capital.

By **Fredrick Kunkle and Rebecca Tan**

AD

10:31 a.m.

Protester steps in after flag is lit near the White House

When a protester lit a flag on fire at the White House long after curfew took effect, another protester beat out the flames with her hands.

Ebony “Chantelle” Sherman became worried when other protesters started chucking water bottles at the police and military line in Lafayette Square.

It was about 12:10 a.m., hours after the city curfew had gone into effect, and Sherman, an office worker who lives in the District, said she feared the projectiles might provoke a violent response against her and other demonstrators.

“I want to keep everybody safe — even those that don't know how to keep themselves safe. I don't think they realize what they're up against,” Sherman said.

A person throwing water bottles shoved her after she tried to intervene. But that didn't stop her from stepping in again moments later when another protester stuck a U.S. flag up to the eight-foot fencing in front of the police line at Lafayette Square and set it on fire. Sherman grabbed at the flag and beat out the flames with her hands.

"I was scared, and I didn't know what they were going to do to me," said Sherman, 25.

It was lucky she also had hairstylist gloves on, which she uses when she does her hair. She said she wore them to the protests to protect her from the pepper spray or other crowd-control irritants that law enforcement has used, and the flames singed the fabric. She felt the heat on the back of her legs as the burning flag fell to the ground.

Meanwhile, several law enforcement officers hustled toward the same spot, as if a confrontation might occur. But then they dropped back just as quickly. She doesn't consider herself very patriotic, and the flag itself wasn't what motivated her.

"I've been watching the news, and I've been seeing the police being really violent with us," Sherman said. "And I don't want to do anything that makes them do anything violent against the crowd. Most people out here are peaceful, as you can see."

Sherman said she has plenty of rage for what happened to George Floyd and the discrimination that African Americans, including her, have experienced. But she also felt empathy for the people behind the badges and shields in the line behind her.

"When they take off their uniforms, they could walk amongst us and we would take them as us. And we should," Sherman said. "I bet a lot of them over there are young kids — like 19, 18, 20 — not all of them, but there's young people mixed up back there."

She added: "I don't know what fear they have, what fear is going through their bodies. A lot of them, this is probably their first time out here, you know? They take orders. And they could be afraid of those orders. But they have to do what they're supposed to do."

By **Fredrick Kunkle**

AD

10:14 a.m.

Trump's use of religion as a political tool draws rebukes from some faith leaders

Standing in front of the historic St. John's Episcopal Church as the scent of a chemical irritant hung in the air, President Trump had no words to share Monday from the book in his right hand.

Instead, he posed silently for photos, holding a closed Bible slightly above his head as reporters shouted questions at him. The spectacle, which took place after authorities forcibly removed seemingly peaceful protesters from an area near the White House, highlighted Trump's complex and at times openly transactional relationship with religion.

Trump, who rarely goes to church and has attended services at St. John's only a handful of times since he became president in 2017, used the church as a backdrop for a photo op that critics say defies the faith he claims. The White House quickly released a video of the visit in the style of a campaign ad, and Trump's allies praised him for standing up for faith a day after part of the 200-year-old church was set ablaze during protests.

But several religious leaders, including the Episcopal bishop of Washington, as well as Democrats and some Republicans voiced their dismay about the nakedly political optics of the president brandishing a Bible after threatening to deploy the military to crack down on protesters. Several have accused Trump of exploiting religion for political benefit while holding little if any personal allegiance to religious tenets.

See the full story.

By **Toluse Olorunnipa and Sarah Pulliam Bailey**

AD

10:05 a.m.

On Swann Street, D.C. protesters needed a refuge from police, so one

resident ‘just opened a door’

From his front steps on Swann Street, Rahul Dubey watched uneasily as D.C. police in riot gear moved in on a throng of protesters.

There had been no sign of violence from the group of several hundred. But they were violating a newly imposed 7 p.m. curfew as they marched from the White House on Monday night to protest the death in Minneapolis police custody of George Floyd.

Now, dozens of police officers had them surrounded on Dubey’s narrow side street in Northwest Washington, cutting off each end of the block with bikes and transport vans.

Cornered and afraid, some protesters knelt. Others chanted, “Let us through!” Police drew closer.

After a tense 15-minute standoff, the officers pounced.

A volley of pepper spray and chemical projectiles sent the group scrambling for cover as police charged forward from both sides, grabbing some protesters and dragging them away.

See the full story.

By **Derek Hawkins**

AD

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