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Extended Timeline of Key Events in the Portland, Oregon Protests from May through August 2020, as Documented in the Media

Late May: Residents in Portland, Oregon organize and join in large demonstrations beginning in the days after George Floyd's homicide. Local and state leaders, including Oregon Governor Kate Brown, condemn the acts of some protestors who set small fires and break into storefronts, but the overwhelming majority of demonstrators, as in other U.S. cities, commit no acts of violence or vandalism.

May 29: More than a thousand people participate in a vigil in North Portland and march to the Multnomah County Justice Center ("the Justice Center") in downtown Portland, adjacent to the Mark O. Hatfield United States Courthouse ("federal courthouse") and across the street from the city parks of Lownsdale and Chapman Squares – the site of most large demonstrations since then. That night, some protestors break first-floor windows of the jail and nearby storefronts and ignite several small fires in the streets and in a first-floor office. The police declare a riot and arrest dozens of people.

May 30: Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, who is also Police Commissioner of the Portland Police Bureau (PPB), the city police, imposes a citywide curfew of 8:00 p.m. Protestors defy the order until the curfew is lifted on June 2, many gathering in downtown Portland at the Justice Center and other local parks in East and North Portland.¹ PPB use of tear gas and other crowd-control weapons (CCWs) against protestors is extensively documented.

June 1: President Donald Trump threatens to deploy the U.S. military in response to demonstrations. Federal officials are deployed in Washington, D.C. where they shove protestors with shields and fire pepper balls, chemical grenades, and smoke bombs in Lafayette Park minutes before President Trump walks that route to Trinity Church for a photo opportunity.² In Portland, authorities construct the first of several fences around the Justice Center, which then become the focus of nightly conflict between the PPB and protestors.³ When consecutive fences are torn down, authorities erect a stronger barrier with large concrete blocks. Graffiti is sprayed on the neighboring federal courthouse and first-floor windows are broken.⁴

Early June: Two Army National Guard helicopters – one emblazoned with a red-and-white cross, suggesting it is a medical aid helicopter – fly low over protestors, with the downward blast from their rotor blades scattering protestors and ripping signs from the sides of buildings.⁵ Customs and Border Protection send drones, helicopters, and planes to conduct surveillance of the protests in 15 U.S. cities.⁶

June 2: Protestors shut down the Burnside Bridge as thousands lie in the streets, assuming the position that George Floyd was killed in – on their stomachs, their hands behind their back, and holding silence for 8 minutes and 46 seconds.



June 4: The Portland Public Schools sever ties with the PPB, with the support of Mayor Wheeler, while massive largely peaceful demonstrations continue. Superintendent Guadalupe Guerrero makes the announcement to discontinue the regular presence of School Resource Officers at schools.⁷

June 8: African-American Lieutenant Chuck Lovell is named Chief of PPB after the prior white Chief, Jamie Resch, steps down.⁸

June 9: U.S. District Court of Oregon grants a temporary restraining order limiting PPB and Multnomah County Sheriff's use of tear gas during demonstrations, except when "the lives or safety of the public or the police are at risk;" the order decrees the police must first declare a "riot" before deploying any tear gas. The order is expanded two weeks later to include rubber bullets and other impact munitions.

June 17: The Portland City Council votes to reroute more than \$15 million for the police bureau to other city programs and initiatives and to disband several specialty police units.

June 25: At a demonstration in PPB's North Precinct, police use tear gas for the first time since the injunction in response to a fire being set in a dumpster. This establishes an almost nightly pattern of PPB declaring demonstrations "unlawful assemblies" and then "riots" and unleashing CCWs to disperse the demonstrators. Small groups of protestors throw fireworks and plastic bottles, and very few light small fires that usually protestors themselves extinguish.

June 26: In Washington, D.C., President Trump issues an Executive Order to send federal officers to cities around the country to protect monuments, statues, and federal property from the nationwide demonstrations.⁹ In Portland, authorities remove the fence from around the Justice Center and nightly demonstrations dwindle to a couple of hundred people.¹⁰

June 30: Governor Brown signs House Bill 4208 stating local police can only use tear gas on protestors if police declare that a "riot" is underway that could severely impact the safety of officers and property.¹¹ The police again declare a riot at a demonstration outside the Portland police union building on North Lombard, using tear gas and CCWs and making arrests.

July 1: In Washington D.C., Acting Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Chad Wolf forms the Protecting American Communities Task Force to coordinate the response nationwide. Hundreds of federal law enforcement officers are deployed to areas around the country under the Executive Order. Federal and local officials declare that the temporary restraining order (TRO) restricting use of tear gas does not apply to federal officers. In Portland, federal officers come out of the boarded-up federal courthouse for the first time, and fire pepper balls at demonstrators.¹² The majority are clad in either black or camouflage military garb without clear identification of their agency or their name.

July 2: The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Oregon asks the federal court to issue a TRO in a class-action lawsuit against the City of Portland and Portland law enforcement on behalf of journalists and legal observers. The TRO would declare law enforcement's actions unconstitutional and prohibit them from targeting and attacking journalists.

July 3: Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler calls for a review of police tactics, making no reference to the presence of federal agents in Portland.



July 4: Police declare a riot in downtown Portland at the Justice Center in response to demonstrators setting off fireworks. Police use tear gas and other CCWs and arrest 13 demonstrators. Men dressed in camouflage and other uniforms identified as those of federal agents help local police drive demonstrators blocks away from the federal courthouse.

July 10: Portland police announce on social media that federal officers are making arrests and using tear gas against downtown demonstrators – the first official announcement that federal officers are acting as the main law enforcement force in partnership with the PPB in the demonstrations. In Washington D.C., President Trump formally announces that he has sent federal law enforcement officers to Portland.

July 11: A video captures Savannah Guest, a former emergency medical services volunteer, and Christopher Durkee, a trained EMT, being beaten with batons by a group of federal agents who approached them while they attempted to provide aid to a man lying on the sidewalk.¹³ After the beating captured on video, an agent fires rubber bullets at Guest, hitting her several times and leaving abrasions and bruises on her feet and ankles.

July 12: A federal official shoots 26-year-old Donovan Labella in the head with an impact munition while he is standing on the sidewalk holding a boombox over his head across from the federal courthouse. The shot fractures his skull and requires facial reconstruction surgery. [Videos of the incident](#) circulate widely, bringing swift condemnation from local and state leaders and both of Oregon’s U.S. Senators.¹⁴ City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty asks federal troops to leave Portland immediately. The U.S. Marshals release a statement acknowledging the incident and state there will be an investigation. Mr. Labella returns to the hospital on July 30 with a severe sinus infection and undergoes another surgery to place a shunt to address a cerebrospinal leak.¹⁵

July 15: A protestor, Mark Pettibone, reports being grabbed by federal officials with no obvious markings or identification and thrown into an unmarked van after walking a few blocks away from the downtown demonstration he attended on July 14. Pettibone reports being driven around downtown and unloaded inside the federal courthouse. He was read his Miranda rights, and he requested a lawyer. About 90 minutes later, he was released without receiving any paperwork, citation, or record of his arrest.¹⁶ As more accounts of this nature emerge, incidents begin to be recorded on video and circulated on social media.¹⁷ At this time, both federal authorities and PPB forces are policing demonstrations, with extensive use of chemical irritants and kinetic impact projectiles.

July 16: Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf visits Portland. In a public statement, Sec. Wolf declares, “The city of Portland has been under siege ... by a violent mob while local political leaders refuse to restore order to protect their city.... Each night, lawless anarchists destroy and desecrate property, including the federal courthouse, and attack the brave law enforcement officers protecting it.... DHS will not abdicate its solemn duty to protect federal facilities and those within them.”¹⁸

July 17: While Daryl Turner, the president of Portland’s police union, the Portland Police Association, calls for increased coordination between the PPB and the federal officials, Police Chief Lovell disavows any coordination between PPB and federal officers. Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum files a lawsuit seeking a temporary restraining order barring DHS and other federal agencies from seizing and detaining Portland protestors, and announces a criminal investigation into the July 11 shooting of Donovan Labella.¹⁹ The ACLU files a lawsuit against the



DHS and U.S. Marshals Service to add federal law enforcement to a complaint filed in June against local law enforcement to block them from dispersing, arresting, threatening to arrest, or using physical force against journalists or legal observers. Plaintiffs include the Portland Mercury; Matthew Lewis-Rolland, a freelance photographer who federal agents shot 10 times in the back; Justin Yau, a freelance journalist who federal agents attacked with tear gas; and Doug Brown, a legal observer who federal agents threatened to shoot.²⁰

July 18: Accounts and videos of excessive use of force by federal officials against multiple protestors over the prior weeks are documented and recorded, including the widely reported beating by batons and pepper spraying of the non-resisting Navy veteran Christopher David. That beating results in multiple fractures of bones in his right hand, requiring surgery.²¹ Emergency medicine doctor and Multnomah County Commissioner Sharon Meieran joins the “Wall of Moms” linking arms in front of the federal courthouse, where they are shot at with rubber bullets and tear gas. She later describes this as an unprovoked attack in a widely viewed television interview.²²

Mid-July: By this time, Portland, Multnomah, and state elected leaders are unified in opposing the presence of federal law enforcement officers in Portland.²³ Governor Kate Brown, Mayor Ted Wheeler, city and county commissioners, and both Oregon U.S. senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden are among leaders making strong statements opposing the federal officers’ presence, introducing an amendment to a defense bill to stop the Trump administration “from sending its paramilitary squads” onto U.S. streets.²⁴ Also by this time, the number of people participating in demonstrations at the federal courthouse surges to the thousands.

July 22: The ACLU in Oregon files a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court in Portland against the DHS, U.S. Marshals Service, and Portland Police on behalf of four volunteer medics, including Savannah Guest and Christopher Durkee, claiming that federal agents and local police violated their civil rights by using force against them as they attempted to render aid to injured protestors.²⁵ The Portland City Council bans Portland police from cooperating with federal law enforcement agencies or intentionally using force on or arresting journalists or legal observers. The U.S. Justice Department’s independent watchdog agency announces it will investigate the use of force by federal law enforcement officers in Portland. In Portland, a fence is constructed around the federal courthouse, becoming a focal point of nightly conflict, as protestors each night try to disassemble it. Legal experts debate whether the federal agents are able to chase protestors blocks away from federal property as they are doing.²⁶

July 23: The Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) sends the federal government a letter requesting it immediately remove the fence surrounding the federal courthouse and clear the right of way. Newsweek reports that medics’ medical supplies and protective gear have been destroyed by pepper spray by law enforcement, providing video footage of supplies covered with orange liquid.²⁷ Judge Michael Simon of the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon issues a temporary restraining order for federal officers to refrain from targeting journalists and legal observers in a judgment about the ACLU case.²⁸ The judgment finds that federal official actions at the demonstrations are potential violations of the First Amendment.

July 24: The United Nations urges U.S. law enforcement agencies to avoid using excessive force against protestors, journalists, and medics, and to ensure that federal and local police are “clearly identified” in response to photos and videos with poor markings of identification or covering of badge numbers when using excessive force.²⁹ Federal Judge Mosman rejects the



Oregon Attorney General's suit seeking a restraining order for lack of standing, stating the suit had not shown that the issue is "an interest that is specific to the state itself."³⁰

July 25: Over 5,000 people join the nighttime demonstration in front of and around the federal courthouse. Participants include groups such as the "Wall of Moms" (now Moms United for Black Lives), who come carrying sunflowers and link arms to form a physical barrier to protect protestors, the Disabled Comrade Collective, "Wall of Vets" with American flags, "Wall of Dads" with leaf blowers, lawyers, teachers, health care professionals, chefs, and fire fighters. Groups such as Snack Bloc and Riot Ribs continue to provide free food.³¹

July 26: A Twitter video shows a 75-year-old Vietnam veteran and former combat medic, Mike Hastie, being pepper-sprayed directly in the face as he stands in front of a line of armed law enforcement officials in camouflage.³² Paul Swartz, a Marine veteran standing among the Wall of Vets, acknowledges that, over the course of the protests, there had been some people throwing "rocks and bricks and water bottles and fireworks." But, he said, "They're a small, small fraction of the people out here to protest. These are a handful of people among thousands, and you don't judge thousands of people based on the actions of a handful."³³

July 27: Don't Shoot Portland, Wall of Moms, Protect Democracy, a group of women-founded organizations, and other individual women file a law suit on behalf of protestors, accusing federal agents of overly abusive action against demonstrators.³⁴ The complaint alleges that federal agents grossly overstepped their stated purpose of protecting federal property with the use of pepper balls, flash bang explosives, and impact munitions.

July 28: The ACLU requests Judge Michael Simon to sanction the DHS and the U.S. Marshals Service for federal officials' failure to comply with the restraining order, citing multiple attacks on journalists and legal observers since the order was issued.³⁵ U.S. Attorney General William P. Barr defends the federal response to the protests in Portland to the House Judiciary Committee and claims that "Police casualties far exceed anything on the civilian side."³⁶ PBOT files a cease and desist order calling for the removal of the fence around the federal courthouse, alleging it impedes the city public's right of way and noting PBOT had already begun assessing a maximum fine of \$500 for every 15 minutes the fence obstructs the street.³⁷

July 29: Oregon Governor Kate Brown and Secretary Wolf release statements that Oregon and the federal government reached a deal for the withdrawal of federal agents in exchange for an increased presence of Oregon State Police. Sec. Wolf writes that the DHS will keep personnel in Portland "until we are assured that the Hatfield Federal Courthouse and other federal properties will no longer be attacked and that the seat of justice in Portland will remain secure." A legal filing from the U.S. attorney's office finds that, as of Wednesday, July 29, 114 federal law enforcement officers remain in Portland.

July 30-August 10 (time of writing this report): Small protests in Portland continue at diverse locations in the city, no longer centered downtown, with continued reported use of tear gas, mace, and force by the PPB and scattered acts of violence by some protestors.



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³⁵ Tucker Higgins, “Feds are flouting court order to stop targeting journalists and observers at Portland protests, ACLU tells judge,” CNBC, July 28, 2020, [cnbc.com/2020/07/28/portland-protests-feds-are-flouting-court-order-to-stop-targeting-journalists-aclu-says.html](https://www.cnbc.com/2020/07/28/portland-protests-feds-are-flouting-court-order-to-stop-targeting-journalists-aclu-says.html).

³⁶ Kate Conger and Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs, “Fact Check: How Violent Are the Portland Protests?” *The New York Times*, July 28, 2020, [nytimes.com/2020/07/28/us/portland-protests-fact-check.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/28/us/portland-protests-fact-check.html).

³⁷ Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, “Commissioner Eudaly's Statement on the Status of Portland's Federal Occupation,” City of Portland, July 28, 2020, [portland.gov/eudaly/news/2020/7/28/commissioner-eudalys-statement-status-portlands-federal-occupation](https://www.portland.gov/eudaly/news/2020/7/28/commissioner-eudalys-statement-status-portlands-federal-occupation).