



NATIONAL ██████
██████ COALITION
AGAINST ██████
██████ CENSORSHIP

July 17, 2020

DRAD & NCAC JOINT STATEMENT ON REPORTS OF UNIDENTIFIED FEDERAL OFFICERS IN PORTLAND, OREGON

Unidentified federal law enforcement agents in Portland, Oregon, have detained protesters, whisking them away in [unmarked cars](#). This shocking practice is evocative of repressive methods used by authoritarian governments.

Over the objections of local elected officials, the Trump administration recently deployed a variety of federal agents to Portland, including U.S. Marshals and Customs and Border Protection officers, purportedly to protect federal buildings during demonstrations. However, detentions have reportedly occurred elsewhere. It is not immediately clear which federal agency is responsible.

Since the arrival of federal agents, local officials have complained that they are using excessive force against protesters. On July 6, a U.S. Marshal [shot](#) a protester in the head with an "impact munition" fracturing his skull and leaving him critically injured. U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon) has [condemned](#) the federal deployment, saying, "These shadowy forces have been escalating, not preventing, violence."

Federal officials have rejected the calls for de-escalation. On July 16, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad Wolf [criticized local officials](#) for failing to curb "lawless anarchists." "This failed response has only emboldened the violent mob," he said.

Since the murder of George Floyd by police, Americans across the nation have taken to the streets to exercise their First Amendment rights. Many times these peaceful protests against police violence have been met with more violence, including by the Portland Police Department. The continued deployment of federal forces in Portland, against the wishes of local elected officials, is the latest example of the Trump administration's policy of demonizing the protesters and peddling conspiracy theories about outside agitators.

Reports that PPD may be formally or informally coordinating or sharing information with federal agencies raise additional concerns.

Everyone has the right to protest freely and to speak out for a better world. Individuals do not forfeit this right, even when others engage in vandalism or similar unlawful acts. Officers are only legally authorized to arrest a person based on individualized probable cause that the individual has committed a crime.

The use of unidentified militarized federal forces against the wishes of local officials, the exercise of excessive force against peaceful demonstrators and the seemingly arbitrary detention of some of them without a clear reason for arrest are designed to intimidate protesters into surrendering their First Amendment rights.

We condemn these practices. We call for all unwanted federal forces to be removed from Portland and urge Congress to investigate the pattern and practice of abuses against protesters.

ORGANIZATIONAL CO-SIGNS

Advocacy for Principled Action in Government	Green Amendments For The Generations
American Friends Service Committee	International Corporate Accountability Roundtable (ICAR)
American Muslim Empowerment Network (AMEN)	MediaJustice
American Society of Journalists and Authors	MPower Change
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)	Muslim Justice League
Asian American Advocacy Fund	Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)
b34rd tech	PDX Privacy
Campaign for Liberty	PEN America
Center for Constitutional Rights	People For the American Way
Civil Liberties Defense Center	Portland Rising Tide
Climate Defense Project	Project Censored
Climate Disobedience Center	Project South
Coalition for Civil Freedoms	Restore The Fourth
Common Cause Oregon	South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Delaware Riverkeeper Network	The BlackOUT Collective
EarthRights International	Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center
Electronic Frontier Foundation	Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
Fight for the Future	UnKoch My Campus
First Look Media Works	Whistleblower & Source Protection Program at Expose Facts
Free Press	Woodhull Freedom Foundation
Free Speech Coalition (FSC)	X-Lab
Friends of Human Rights	
Government Accountability Project	
Government Information Watch	