

# “State of Emergency” declared in three states as protests continue over cover-up of Breonna Taylor slaying

By Jacob Crosse  
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Undeterred by unconstitutional curfews, vehicular assaults, mass arrests, National Guard soldiers and fascist militia—abetted by militarized police departments—thousands of protesters in major US cities continue to demonstrate against police murder and judicial injustice. The latest round of protests was touched off by the refusal of a Kentucky grand jury to bring charges against the police who murdered 26-year-old Breonna Taylor, an African American emergency medical technician, shot in her own bed last March.

As of this writing Democratic governors Kate Brown (Oregon) and Andy Beshear (Kentucky) as well as Republican Governor Mike Parson (Missouri) have declared states of emergency in response to ongoing or planned protests. In Illinois, Democratic Governor J. B. Pritzker and Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot have confirmed that hundreds of National Guard troops remain on standby to respond to any allegations of “violent” protests.

In New York City, five UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters with the Massachusetts National Guard, infamous for their role in ferrying US Army Rangers and special forces soldiers to battlefields around the globe, menaced thousands of protesters in the Bronx and Queens boroughs of New York City Friday evening, hovering and collecting intelligence on protesters.

In addition to military helicopters, Republican Governor Charlie Baker also called up 1,000 members of the Massachusetts National Guard on Thursday in anticipation of quickly growing protests. Soldiers were seen deploying military equipment and erecting barriers on Friday night as over 1,000 protesters gathered in nearby Gourdin Veterans Memorial Park in Roxbury, in support of Breonna Taylor. In addition to community members who have held ongoing protests throughout the summer, Friday’s demonstrations were joined by hundreds of recently returned Boston University college students.

In Oregon, Governor Brown declared a state of emergency and ordered the deployment of hundreds of Oregon state troopers ahead of a planned rally by the fascist Proud Boys today. As part of the deployment, Brown waived any restrictions on police use of CS or tear gas. The far-right group

was denied a permit by the city but plans to mass hundreds of fascist sympathizers on Saturday. The Proud Boys, along with the far-right Patriot Prayer group, have routinely engaged in drive-by attacks on left-wing protesters, shooting paintballs and spraying bear mace in an attempt to provoke violence.

In an interview with the *Washington Post*, Enrique Tarrío, the “international chair of the Proud Boys” thanked Brown for providing security for his group, “I think it’s great given the fact that Portland has seen over 100 days of nonstop riots.” Tarrío continued, “it looks like the governor is finally getting the message. And it excites me that they’re allowing us to practice our freedom of speech unimpeded by the domestic terrorists we’re coming to protest.”

Tarrío added, “at the end of the day, we support our boys in blue and want to make this event as safe as possible.” Just over a month ago in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Proud Boys were allowed by police to violently attack protesters and at least one homeless resident.

In Los Angeles on Thursday, two protesters were injured in two separate vehicular assaults. In each case, the driver fled the scene before being briefly detained by police and released. No charges have been announced at the time of this writing. Less than a week ago, Florida Republican Governor Ron DeSantis proposed the “Combating Violence, Disorder and Looting and Law Enforcement Protection Act,” which included a “prohibition on obstructing roadways.” The proposed law states that a “driver is NOT liable for injury or death caused if fleeing for safety from a mob.”

Despite ongoing state violence and hit-and-runs, protests and marches have continued for the third night in a row with more scheduled throughout the weekend following Wednesday’s announcement by Kentucky’s Republican Attorney General Daniel Cameron, who is African American, that there would be no charges brought against two Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPD) cops, Myles Cosgrove and Jon Mattingly, responsible for the murder of Breonna Taylor on March 13.

The protests against the blatant hypocrisy and injustice perpetrated by the state against working-class victims of police violence show no signs of receding, despite the best efforts of

the Democratic and Republican parties to snuff them out through their armed agents of the state and poisonous racial politics, which aim to blame police murders on “white racism” and thus cover up the class role of the police.

While it is true that the police recruit and foster racist, chauvinist and reactionary tendencies within their departments, their purpose is not to enforce a racial code, but to protect and defend the interest of capital and the ruling class, regardless of skin color, against the working class. Recent examples of police violence towards non-African Americans include Hannah Fizer, Jared Lakey, Andres Guardado and 13-year old Linden Cameron.

It is not a coincidence that neither Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, nor his running mate, former “top cop of California” Kamala Harris, who made her career by jailing working-class youth and expanding the use of state prisoners as virtual slave labor, have made note of any of these heinous assaults and killings of non-African Americans, it is because it cuts across their racialist interpretation of police violence, which they, no less than the Republicans, uphold to maintain the rule of the capitalist class.

Louisville police once again played this role during Thursday night’s protest. Over 100 protesters were menaced by police and at least one *agent provocateur* after police declared an “unlawful assembly” prior to the 9 p.m. curfew in. Protesters sought sanctuary from riot cops and their fascist Oath Keeper militia allies at the First Unitarian Church, which is exempt from the curfew imposed by Democratic Mayor Greg Fischer.

Despite the fact that the protesters were granted refuge by the pastor, police maintained a perimeter around the group for over two hours. Sheri Wright, an independent journalist based in Louisville, in an interview with the Associated Press, commented on the forces arrayed against the multiracial nonviolent youth.

“I’m tired, I’m in fear for my life, especially last night. Right now, we’re sitting here. Not only from LMPD and all other law enforcement authorities that have been brought in, but there are lots of white supremacists,” she wrote. Wright noted the abuse she’s suffered personally by police: “I’ve been shot at, as a member of the independent press, I’ve been shot at by pepper balls.”

While surrounded by police, protesters noticed a white man, who approached a section of the group and according to protester Eliza Thompson, who spoke with the *Washington Post*, began badgering them with strange questions.

Thompson said he kept asking them, ‘Why are you here? Where are we? Why are y’all march?’ and also, ‘Who’s Breonna Taylor?’ The unidentified man then pulled out a pair of brass knuckles and attempted to start a fight with members of the group. “I think he was trying to instigate something so the police could come into the sanctuary and start arresting people,” Thompson said. “They just need a reason to come in. If we fought, they would roll in heavy.”

After protesters surrounded the man and drove him out of the parking lot, he continued to linger, well after curfew, and even spoke to another reporter. He claimed to be a nurse who lived nearby. “I’m friendly” and “on the left,” the unidentified man said, before leaving shortly thereafter, walking through a line of riot police, unmolested.

On Friday at Jefferson Square Park in Louisville, the Taylor family and their attorney Benjamin Crump, held their first press conference since the Kentucky grand jury decision was announced by Cameron.

Crump denounced the whitewash and demanded that the transcripts of the secretive grand jury be released. “Breonna Taylor’s entire family is heartbroken ... and confused and bewildered, just like all of us, as to what did Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron present to the grand jury,” he said.

Crump then urged the family and supporters to place their hopes for justice in the hands of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with Crump tweeting: “I hope the FBI investigation finally gets justice for Bre and her family.”

Tamika Palmer, Breonna’s mother, offered a much more sober appraisal of the role of the police and bourgeois courts, writing in a letter that was read aloud during the press conference, “I was reassured Wednesday of why I have no faith in the legal system, in the police, in the law...”

Speaking on Cameron’s decision not to bring charges against either Cosgrove or Mattingly, Palmer wrote, “He [Cameron] helped me realize that it will always be us against them—that we are never safe when it comes to them.”

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