

Portland kicks off 2021 with violent protests in support of Black Lives Matter Movement



Portland, January 1 (RHC)-- The U.S. city of Portland in the northwestern state of Oregon has started the New Year with police and protesters clashing over a simmering outrage against police violence and racial discrimination against people of color in the country.

The Portland Police Bureau said the violence erupted on Thursday night during a New Year's Eve demonstration after the forces advanced on the march and prompted protesters to blast fireworks at them. Media reports said police officers used pepper balls, rubber bullets and some other types of less-lethal munitions to disperse protesters carrying flyers that read, "In solidarity with Black Lives Matter."

Police claimed in a press release that they did not use gas but utilized “inert smoke and some impact munitions” in their response. Labeling the protest as a “riot,” the police tweeted shortly after 11:30 p.m. that protesters had used at least two Molotov cocktail-style firebombs and launched commercial-grade fireworks at judicial buildings in the central city.

Police also said protesters set “multiple fires,” including in a garbage can, to a crosswalk signal and to various debris in the road. Several arrests were also made at the scene.

Portland has been the scene of anti-police brutality since the death of African American George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody in May. The 46-year-old died after a white officer knelt on his neck and pinned him to the ground for nine minutes in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Floyd’s death ignited the most widespread civil unrest in the US in decades and unleashed protests against police brutality and for racial justice in America and many world countries, rejuvenating the Black Lives Matter movement.

Demonstrators have called for racial justice for months, prompting President Trump in July to deploy federal authorities to respond, which he later withdrew. Trump repeatedly pointed to the Portland protests as he campaigned for reelection, saying he would bring “law and order” to the country more than his Democratic rival, President-elect Joe Biden.

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