

# *Baltimore Mayor Fires Police Chief After Freddie Gray Protests*

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Baltimore, July 9 (RHC)-- In the U.S. state of Maryland, Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake has fired the city's police commissioner in the wake of protests over the death of African-American resident Freddie Gray in police custody. Rawlings-Blake cited a recent crime rise and said criticism of Police Commissioner Anthony Batts had become a "distraction."

Protesters have called for the ouster of Police Commissioner Anthony Batts over his handling of the death of Freddie Gray, whose family said his spine was 80 percent severed at the neck when he died after being arrested and transported without a seat belt in a police van.

Six officers involved have been criminally charged. On Wednesday, the Baltimore police union issued a review accusing Batts of ordering officers to allow looting and property destruction during an uprising over Gray's death, which left 19 buildings burned.

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