

POLICE VIOLENCE IS HATE VIOLENCE

Testimonies of Police Brutality from the Streets of Portland

From May 31 through July 20, 2020



PORTLAND UNITED
AGAINST HATE



Coalition of
Communities of
Color



**Portland United Against Hate & the Coalition of Communities of Color Present:
POLICE VIOLENCE IS HATE VIOLENCE:
Testimonies of Police Brutality from the Streets of Portland**

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*Photo credit cover photo: Dana Buhl
This Photo, credit: Ernesto Fonseca*

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	3
2. Taking Stock of Portland Police Violence.....	5
3. Testimonies of Police Violence in Portland	6
4. Appendix A: The National and Local Uprisings	14
5. Appendix B: Data on Police Accountability	17
6. Appendix C: ReportHatePDX Database and Methodology.....	18
7. Appendix D: Advocating for Change.....	20
8. Appendix E: About Portland United Against Hate and the Coalition of Communities of Color.....	23

Notes

This report is a joint effort by Portland United Against Hate (PUAH) and The Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC). CCC and the authors listed on Page 1 were responsible for analyzing the data in the ReportHatePDX tool, writing this report, and styling it.

For more information about these organizations and this collaboration see Appendix E.

Content Warning: This report includes graphic images of people wounded by police munitions in Portland.

These photos were submitted to PUAH during the timeframe when data for this report were collected. We welcome further visual evidence of the harm caused by police brutality on bodies.



Photo Credit: Ernesto Fonseca

Executive Summary

The murder of George Floyd by police on May 25, 2020, sparked what may be the [largest uprising](#) in the history of the United States. In Portland, protesters have been out on the streets every day since May 30, 2020, supporting Black Lives Matter and an end to police brutality, particularly the disproportionate brutality against Black men. The Portland Police Bureau's (PPB) response has been to physically assault these protesters with rubber bullets, tear gas, pepper spray, batons, and flashbangs.

This report presents first-hand testimonials from Portlanders who have been targets of or witnesses to police violence and hate. These testimonials were reported to Portland United Against Hate (PUAH) through its crowdsourced tool called [ReportHatePDX](#), where members of the public can submit hate incident reports. This tool has been critical for capturing reports on incidents of hate reported by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) people. For data collected up to March 31, 2020, incidents of hate reported by Black folks make up 22% of all reporters; Latinx folks make up 29% of reporters; and all people of color make up 83% of the databases' incident reports.

Between May 31 and July 20, 2020, 35 incidents reported law enforcement officers as perpetrators of violence. These 35 reports represent the experiences of thousands of protesters and demonstrate that the PPB was engaging in the violent suppression of protests long before federal law enforcement officers arrived. This report is a snapshot in time. We continue to receive daily reports of new incidents of police brutality. We hope this data is useful for advancing Black-led organizing that advocates for the dismantling of systemic racism and an end to police violence. We invite Black leaders and organizations to work with us on future analysis and uses of these data in service to the movement.

Eleven of the targets of police violence (31%) are BIPOC, twenty-one (60%) are white, and three (9%) did not include their race/ethnicity. We are mindful that the majority of incidents reported on ReportHatePDX are from white protesters, and yet the prevalence of incidents from BIPOC people exceeds their proportion of the general Portland population. We are also aware that the experiences of Black protesters are less represented in this report, even though Black people are impacted by police violence in numbers vastly disproportionate to their percentage of the population. Reports from the ground and our data confirm that "less lethal" munitions are indiscriminately used as a crowd control measure, resulting in a preponderance of bodily injuries.

The data presented shows that police officers are using aggressive crowd control measures in response to nonviolent demonstrations that leave many with lasting injuries and trauma. The data also demonstrates that the police are targeting journalists, legal observers, and medics.

Executive Summary (Continued)

- **Indiscriminate use of force by the PPB:** Reports from ReportHatePDX describe, sometimes in great detail, the grotesque measures used as crowd control on protests. Despite [compelling evidence](#) that the use of force on protesters does not keep police or protesters safer, police respond with force daily. The ReportHatePDX reports include 10 reports of flashbangs; 20 reports of chemical agents (tear gas, pepper spray); 8 reports of being shoved, tackled, or grabbed by the neck; 4 reports of being hit with batons; 16 reports of the use of rubber bullets; 6 reports of the use of munitions other than rubber bullets (or when the projectiles were unknown); 4 reports of threats, intimidation, or verbal harassment.
- **Lasting injury and trauma on innocent civilians:** Though law enforcement uses “less lethal” weapons against protesters and others at or near the protests, these weapons can and do have lasting effects. [Tear gas](#) can cause pulmonary edema, permanent eye damage, and increases the risk of contracting a respiratory illness. [Rubber bullets](#) permanently disable about 15% of those struck with them. ReportHatePDX includes accounts of serious physical injuries and trauma.
- **Illegal and unethical targeting of media, legal observers, and medics:** Our data show that the police are targeting specific groups of protesters. [Journalists](#) and [medics](#) are protected in war by international humanitarian law, but this does not apply to domestic protest or civil unrest. On July 23, 2020, a federal judge prohibited federal officers from arresting or using physical force on journalists and legal observers. Medics do not have any specific protections. It is unknown if this restraining order will impact the targeting of the press and legal observers.

We call on city and elected officials to end the use of indiscriminate force by law enforcement against all protesters exercising their First Amendment rights. The specifics of this call are in Appendix D.



June 15, 2020. Portland Police stationed in riot gear in front of the Justice Center in Downtown. Shortly after the gathering of non-violent protesters was declared an “unlawful assembly,” police dispersed protesters with crowd control munitions. Photo Credit: Rabbi Benjamin Barnett

Taking Stock of Portland Police Violence

The police response to the national uprising following the murder of George Floyd has been brutally violent. Social media platforms have [widely documented](#) police brutality against protesters across the country. Militarized police forces have [perpetrated violence](#) against protesters, using chemical weapons, long-range acoustic devices, and so-called “less lethal” munitions against protesters to disperse crowds and protect property. More information about the local and national uprisings can be found in Appendix A.

The Portland Police Bureau (PPB) has responded to the ongoing uprising by using indiscriminate and unchecked force against protesters. The PPB’s response is not an anomaly; instead, it is a continuation of aggressive policing that the city’s Black residents have experienced for decades. Oregon’s history as a white separatist state excluded Black people from living in Oregon, making contracts, and owning land until 1926. The language of the exclusion law was not removed from Oregon’s constitution until 2001. [This construction of Oregon as a racist white utopia](#) has shaped the nature of police violence in Portland.

While the data on police violence presented in this report focus on the experiences of protesters in downtown Portland, we acknowledge that there have been many other actions in support of Black Lives Matter led by BIPOC organizers in the tri-county area. Examples include vigils, car parades, movement building, protests against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and memorials for Black folks who have been killed by Portland police. These actions, while not represented by first-hand testimonials here, are nonetheless framed by the broader context discussed in this report.

The bulk of the reports submitted to ReportHatePDX describe the excessive crowd control measures used by the PPB. A subset of these reports also describes the lasting injury and trauma caused by the use of so-called “less lethal” weapons. A testimonial submitted to ReportHatePDX describes this use of force:

“I joined the Portland community at the waterfront park and Justice Center in downtown Portland to protect and be in solidarity with my Black friends, family, and neighbors against police brutality. As the night went on the officers started mobilizing and announcing that the protest was deemed illegal, they then proceeded to shoot pepper balls and tear gas into the crowd...” (June 6, 2020)

There is no shortage of evidence that the PPB has targeted and attacked [journalists](#), [legal observers](#), and [medics](#). A testimonial submitted to ReportHatePDX describes the targeting of members of the press:

“Perhaps the most disturbing part of the night was that at least three members of the press were arrested. I saw a tweet earlier of the charges against one of them and they are an absolute lie. There was at least one felony count of assaulting an officer, but there is video of him being arrested and it is crystal clear that none of that happened.” (June 30, 2020)

The deployment of federal officers to Portland, while deeply disturbing, must not negate the violence perpetrated by the Portland Police Bureau against protesters. Moreover, this report presents clear first-hand witness accounts that describe the PPB’s [continuing collaboration](#) with federal agents. As one incident report submitted to ReportHatePDX states:

“Yes, the sight of men in fatigues patrolling the streets is chilling, all the more so the videos we’ve seen of them snatching up protesters and putting them into unmarked minivans. However, by and large the tactics being employed by the feds are the same as we have seen from the Portland Police Bureau. In addition to the indiscriminate firing of munitions and tear gas, and other kinds of violent assault, remember that PPB had been targeting and arresting members of the press well before the feds ever showed up in the streets.” (July 20, 2020)

Testimonies of Police Violence in Portland

The core of our evidence comes from reports of hate incidents gathered through ReportHatePDX. Drawing on incidents reported from May 31 to July 20, 2020¹, we analyzed the 35 incidents that indicated that law enforcement officers perpetrated the violence. The testimonials presented below are a selection from the larger sample of 35 submissions. This data is organized into the following themes:

1. Use of grotesque and unnecessary crowd control measures
2. Illegal and unethical targeting of media, legal observers, and medics
3. Lasting injury and trauma on innocent civilians

For details about the lack of police accountability data, see Appendix B. For information about PUAH’s database and our methodology for data collection and analysis, see Appendix C.



*July 25, 2020. A protester was hit in the forehead with a “less lethal” munition.
Photo Credit: Kristen Jessie-Uyanik*

¹ Reports continue to be submitted on www.reporthatpdx.com. However, in order to write this report, we identified July 20, 2020 as our cut-off date to analyze data.

1 - Use of grotesque and unnecessary crowd control measures

Reports from ReportHatePDX describe, sometimes in great detail, the aggressive measures used as crowd control on protesters. Despite [compelling evidence](#) that the use of force on protesters does not keep police or protesters safer, police are responding with force daily. The ReportHatePDX reports include 10 reports of flashbangs; 20 reports of chemical agents (tear gas, pepper spray); 8 reports of being shoved, tackled, or grabbed by the neck; 4 reports of being hit with batons; 16 reports of the use of rubber bullets; 6 reports of the use of munitions other than rubber bullets (or when the projectiles were unknown); 4 reports of threats, intimidation, or verbal harassment.

One report described the unreasonable use of force this way:

“The protesters are demonstrating nonviolently. Yes, eventually some people shake the fence, throw water bottles, and shine bike lights or laser pointers at police officers... As happens almost every night, PPB declared an unlawful assembly and then moved in with crowd control munitions such as rubber bullets, pepper balls, and flash bangs. Those who linger often get chased down, sometimes shoved and even beaten with batons. There are de-escalation techniques that can be employed which are much more effective, not to mention much more ethical, than a militarized police force using chemical weapons and munitions to disperse a crowd. A crowd of people exercising its right to nonviolent protest, that has no reason to be dispersed in the first place.” (June 15, 2020)

Another shared how police aggression worsened the situation:

“About last night - If I had to guess I'd say 3,000 and more came out. The vibe when I showed up was good. The Peace truck had speakers. Pioneer place was packed. I saw families, young teens, older adults. Then I saw a group agitate police - not unusual - not out of the norm. But the police response was so rapid and aggressive. And that reaction created a counter reaction.” (June 2, 2020)

A third incident report described confusion with police orders and the impossibility of following them, as well as police escalating the situation:

“I witnessed protests at the justice center tonight. Horrifying to see police escalate to turn downtown into as close as I've ever been to a natural disaster or war. I was peaceful, but yelling and chanting. Folks were yelling/chanting, playing music. A few bottles got tossed over a fence to land on concrete hundreds of feet from police. Police just used the tactics of military [sic] to keep trying to get people to stop protesting and go home. And then they got bored and decided to keep warning us to leave if we were peaceful so we could just leave those scary bad protesters to get arrested. So when none of us left (because... where were those bad protesters? We couldn't see em) - we were all the scary bad protesters and they sent in riot cops with guns and armor and flash bangs and seemed to enjoy it. That's what they trained for I guess- hunting down screaming people who are trying not to knock the folks in wheelchairs over- and police were yelling instructions about how to leave in between explosions, but if your car wasn't in that place there really wasn't a way to leave.” (July 7, 2020)

A clergy witness reported:

"The moms were out in full force again, as were the dads now. Clearly it did not stop federal agents from being just as aggressive and violent. As we gathered a couple blocks away, one mom I encountered looked particularly shaken, her eyes watering from the tear gas. She saw my clergy witness vest, so made a point to share with me that one of the officers had grabbed her by the neck and told her to "get the fuck out of here." (July 20, 2020)

Another person wrote:

"It is no surprise that police who kill unarmed Black people with impunity also use excessive force on unarmed people who protest and expose their violence and murder. Do not be distracted by the lies that it is the people who are causing disturbance. I am witnessing. Pay close attention to the tactics of war." (June 7, 2020)

One report describes how the police methods changed the target's perception of the police:

"And so folks were hiding and dropping on the ground and personally? I was crying and having a panic attack I honestly didn't predict. I really thought it mattered whether I was peaceful or not. But it didn't. I almost got hit in the head with a flash bang coming FROM the direction we were being told to go. I finally got it when I realized that the cops could do anything they wanted to me and it wouldn't matter because I had confirmed I was a bad person by overstaying my welcome. Glad I got home safe, but I won't be able to look at any cop the same way again." (June 7, 2020)



June 30, 2020. Protester forced to the ground and arrested by Portland Police, near the Portland Police Association building. Photo Credit: Rabbi Benjamin Barnett

2 - Illegal and unethical targeting of media, legal observers, and medics

Our data show that the police are targeting specific groups of protesters. [Journalists](#) and [medics](#) are protected in war by international humanitarian law, but this does not apply to domestic protest or civil unrest. On July 23, 2020, a federal judge prohibited federal officers from arresting or using physical force on journalists and legal observers. Medics do not have any specific protections. It remains unknown if this restraining order will have any impact on the targeting of the press and legal observers.

Media

Journalists and media photographers at the protests wear large “PRESS” badges, usually in multiple places on their torsos (front and back) and helmets. The targeting of journalists has been covered extensively by local media. One night in late June, [three journalists](#) were arrested. As with legal observers, the press needed protection through a restraining order from a federal judge. Three ReportHatePDX reports described the targeting of journalists.

One report describes the arrest and charges made against a journalist:

“Perhaps the most disturbing part of the night was that at least three members of the press were arrested. I saw a tweet earlier of the charges against one of them and they are an absolute lie. There was at least one felony count of assaulting an officer, but there is video of him being arrested and it is crystal clear that none of that happened.” (June 30, 2020)

Another report discussed the attacks against journalists more broadly:

“There are many courageous journalists out there every night, both part of established outlets and independent, staying right in the heat of things as police escalate and administer violence. They have been threatened and abused, and at times arrested, in violation of the first amendment and their essential role in helping to insure that we are an informed public. When their rights are threatened, our safety and freedom is threatened.” (June 15, 2020)

Legal observers

Legal observers are “most often law students, lawyers, or other members of the legal community” ([CLDC, 2019](#)). They attend protests not to protest themselves, but to pay attention to and document any violations of protesters’ rights. They wear obvious, visible indications of their status as legal observers, such as blue vests with large writing worn by ACLU and NLG (National Lawyers Guild) legal observers.

Three ReportHatePDX reports indicate that the police are targeting legal observers. We know from other reporting and from a [lawsuit](#) filed by the ACLU that the targeting of legal observers has been common.

One report indicates that police hit a legal observer with their baton:

“PPB had already aggressively pushed the crowd back, including use of batons on people. One ACLU legal observer was struck hard against her back.” (June 30, 2020)

Another legal observer reported being hit in a crowd of protesters:

“Police began firing at them and us indiscriminately. A bullet hit the fence and concrete block by me where I was filming and bent down... the bullet struck my left hand in the palm and on finger.” (June 10, 2020)

Medics

[Street medics](#) attend protests to tend to anyone who is injured. In Portland, medics have been rinsing eyes of those tear-gassed, bandaging wounds, icing bruises of those hit with projectiles, and assisting with other medical needs. They wear large red or orange crosses to be visible to those needing assistance and to the police.

Seven reports to ReportHatePDX indicate that police are targeting medics. This is supported by accounts recorded by street medics [suing](#) the City of Portland, Department of Homeland Security, and the US Marshals for targeting and attacking them and by videos first posted to social media that depict medics identifying themselves as medics and yet still being attacked.

A medic reported being shot with a rubber bullet:

“[I was] shot in the back of left thigh walking away with hands up 100 ft ahead of police on direction instructed by rubber bullet, bruise and gash. I was 100ft ahead of cops, walking north as instructed, hands up, clearly a medic (covered in Orange duct tape crosses.)” (June 2, 2020)

Another shared a detailed account of assault when asking the police for help:

“Tonight, I attended the Portland protests downtown. I was helping protesters as a medic. I have ton [sic] of medical supplies and some decent medical skills to help out where I can. But tonight, I needed help from protesters. The exact opposite reason I was there for. I was assaulted by two or three men guarding the Nike store when I went for cover from tear gas. I was already exposed and it had blinded me and I was disoriented. So when I made my way to the entrance of the Nike store I didn't know who was there or that they'd end up hurting me. But I went to reach for my tear gas solution and the men threw me to the ground and pushed me back and when I got up I was continued to be pushed back, away from my medical supplies. I got my stuff back and was angry. I made a dumb decision, but it still shouldn't matter, I went to the police who weren't doing anything. They were just standing around, I put down my medical supplies, put up my hands, and asked if I could speak to an officer to make a report because I had been assaulted. The officers told me to back up, I told them I needed to file a report of assault and I was met by several officers running at me, threw me to the ground, and I was beat in the back with a baton. I covered my head and screamed out hoping someone would come to my rescue, thankfully people did. My back still hurts but I'm okay. I'm thankful for the protesters that ran to my rescue, to a friend, who walked me from my assault all the way back to my car and trying to help me breathe and settle. Tonight was the scariest night of my life, (and mind you last year I almost died of heart issues,) and it didn't need to be. The police could've told me where I could report. They could've walked away and let me beg to report the assault I faced in front of Nike, but No. I was shoved to the ground and hit in the back with a baton stick, just for trying to report an assault I had faced not more than five minutes before my second assault of the night. This is why I will continue to fight for Black lives and police/justice reform. I will be in the streets helping do the work, especially after tonight.” (June 3, 2020)

3 - Lasting injury and trauma on innocent civilians

Though law enforcement is using “less lethal” weapons against protesters and others at or near the protests, these weapons can and do have lasting effects. [Tear gas](#) can cause pulmonary edema, permanent eye damage, and the risk of contracting a respiratory illness. [Rubber bullets](#) permanently disable about 15% of those struck with them. ReportHatePDX includes accounts of serious physical injuries and trauma.

Serious physical Injuries

Eight ReportHatePDX accounts included details of what we call serious physical injury. These are injuries for which many people seek medical attention. These include twitching and mental impairment for hours after exposure to gas; witnessing a person needing to be taken by ambulance; a deaf protester losing track of their interpreter and becoming extremely dizzy to the point of needing help walking; being unable to work for two days after exposure to gas; rubber bullet to the knee joint; a rubber bullet wound becoming infected and requiring antibiotics; a laceration and probable concussion after being shot in the scalp with a plastic covered metal ball bearing; and a broken arm.



July 16, 2020. A medic was shot in the back with a rubber bullet while aiding a protester. Photo Credit: Jessica Shifflett

One person reported:

“[I have] scrapes and broken arm [sic] from being shoved and falling. tear gas. These were federal police.” (July 18, 2020)

Another was unable to function normally for two days:

“I joined the Portland community at the waterfront park and Justice Center in downtown Portland to protect and be in solidarity with my Black friends, family, and neighbors against police brutality. As the night went on the officers started mobilizing and announcing that the protest was deemed illegal, they then proceeded to shoot pepper balls and tear gas into the crowd, we were pushed 1 block away before the officers returned to their post. As we approached the fence perimeter around the Justice Center again, we were bombarded by officers shooting projectiles like the pepper balls and tear gas directly into the crowd, multiple canisters hit my feet, as my eye, mouth, nose and throat were burning from the tear gas we were attacked by officers from multiple directions. This was a coordinated effort to cause as much harm as possible to the protesters in front of the Justice Center. For two days, I suffered from symptoms of tear gas which affected my ability to fulfill my work and volunteer tasks at multiple Portland nonprofits.” (June 6, 2020)

Another reported being unable to think normally:

“I wasn’t in the direct line. But the wind carried some of it to me. And I’ve never reacted to it like I did last night. Within seconds my eyes were running tears like I was bawling. My nose started running. And I couldn’t breathe. I couldn’t breathe. Three amazing street medics took care of me. And my friend stayed with me till it seemed we could all go home. On the drive home, my body started twitching and my mind started feeling fuzzy. I had to concentrate in a way I’ve never had to before to just get off my motorcycle and open my front door. Once inside, I could feel I was shaking. That shaking turned to twitching. The room spun and I laid on the floor. For two hours. I talked to a friend for a bit and finally took a shower. But I couldn’t think without incredible effort. Simple tasks like opening my toothpaste - took three tries because I couldn’t remember which way to turn the cap. I don’t know why my body reacted like this. I do know I’ve never smelled pepper spray or maybe tear gas like this before. And during a viral pandemic... I question this use of chemical agents that affect the nose, throat, and lungs.” (June 2, 2020)

One person reported being unable to walk for four blocks:

“More riot cops, we ran some more to the point I became really dizzy, disoriented and coughed some more. My friend grabbed my arm on my friend's shoulder and carried me as I struggled to walk straight. About four blocks later, I became clear and was able to walk on my own.” (May 31, 2020)

Another reported that even a seemingly straightforward rubber bullet injury caused lasting injury:

“Someone wasn’t masked- fell over from tear gas-I tried to help and I got shot... shot in left shin-a week later and it’s infected- going to get antibiotics tomorrow.” (June 3, 2020)

Trauma

A local journalist, experienced at covering protests, [wrote](#) about shaking for 36 hours and experiencing trauma after covering one July 2020 protest. They wrote that they jumped when hit with a water bottle cap. “We’re all gonna have some serious PTSD from this shit one day,’ a dude standing nearby said Friday night with a laugh.” This journalist’s response is not unique. Numerous social media posts from protesters in our networks have asked for mental health support recommendations to address trauma from being attacked by police. During an international pandemic and associated social isolation and economic crises, police violence can be especially traumatic.

One reporter noted that their traumatic experience has reinforced their anger:

“Yes I’m traumatized, emotional, and hurting from tonight, but it has only made me angrier at the system that has allowed too many Black and brown lives to be taken from us.” (June 3, 2020)

Another report describes feeling dehumanized:

“I thought I had some idea of what to expect. But I had no lived context for natural disaster and war. While witnessing at the Justice Center, nonviolent protesters were advised criminal acts were taking place. We had to leave or we would be criminals. We thought, “Why do we need to leave? Nothing feels violent.” But too many ignored warnings about shaking a fence and throwing water bottles onto concrete and time was up. And then my body tensed seeing police cars come with police in riot gear come towards us holding various weapons. We walked at a reasonable pace (no panicking - we aren’t bad people - we are “good people!”), and the police start hitting at us with flashbangs. Are we getting bombed? How can I listen and respond while I’m being bombed? Is the gas coming? The rubber encased metal bullets? I’m crying, even though I don’t want to cry. I’m screaming because I can’t help but scream. But I feel like my deepest clarity was when I understood that there I could not be good enough for these police to see me as a person instead of a criminal. Violence is dehumanizing and traumatic. It is unacceptable for police to use these tactics to kill unarmed Black people or silence protesters who will change this system for the better.” (June 7, 2020)



Portland Police point a gun at protesters. Photo Credit: Dana Buhl

Appendix A: The National and Local Uprisings

National Uprising: Overview of Police Response

The murder of George Floyd by police on May 25th sparked what may be the [largest uprising](#) in the history of the United States. Floyd's death was shocking to so many because of the casually brutal way that officer Derek Chauvin took this man's life over an alleged counterfeit \$20 bill. Chauvin, who had his knee on George Floyd's neck for nearly nine minutes, as Floyd pleaded "I can't breathe," was only charged after several days of massive protests. Ten weeks before George Floyd's murder, Breonna Taylor was murdered by police in her home. Those police officers have had no charges filed against them (as of the date of this report). A grand jury did not indict the police officers who killed Eric Garner and Tamir Rice in 2014. The list can go on.

The ongoing uprising in large cities and small towns across the country has drawn hundreds of thousands of people into the streets supporting Black Lives Matter. Protesters are also demanding fundamental changes to our institutions of policing, which target Black and Brown communities and do not hold police officers accountable for their misconduct. Police are [indicted](#) in less than 1% of killings, whereas the indictment rate for citizens is 90%. Police officers are protected by a legal doctrine known as qualified immunity, which shields law enforcement officers and other government officials from lawsuits over misconduct. This denies victims of police violence the ability to access justice and civil rights.

The police response to the uprising has been brutally violent. Incidences of police brutality against protesters have been [widely documented](#) (and [here](#)) on social media across the country. Militarized police forces have more often than not [initiated violence](#) against protesters, using chemical weapons, long-range acoustic devices, and so-called "less lethal" munitions against protesters to disperse crowds and protect property. These tactics produce [lasting injury](#) and trauma on innocent civilians. Police are also illegally and unethically targeting [journalists](#), [legal observers](#), and [medics](#). These attacks violate the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

The first-hand testimonials presented in this report are from community members who have been targets of or witnesses to police violence and hate. Based on data collected by Portland United Against Hate (PUAH), these testimonials span over seven weeks from May 31 through July 2020 during which time thousands of Portlanders participated in daily protests.

What these testimonials demonstrate is that police violence is a form of hate violence. Local, state, and federal law enforcement are [inciting and escalating](#) violence indiscriminately against the overwhelmingly nonviolent assembly of people calling for an end to racism and police brutality.



Killed by Racism
George Floyd, May 25, 2020
Ahmaud Arbery, Feb, 23, 2020
Breonna Taylor, March 13, 2020
Photo Credit: Ernesto Fonseca

Portland Uprising: Overview of Police Response

The uprising in Portland, Oregon has been one of the most consistently organized actions in the country. Every day since May 30, 2020, protesters have been out on the streets in support of Black Lives Matter and an end to police brutality. Throughout the protests, the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) has frequently responded by physically assaulting protesters with rubber bullets, tear gas, pepper spray, batons, and flash bangs. In addition to the excessive use of force, the PPB has targeted and attacked [journalists](#), [legal observers](#), and [medics](#). A [lawsuit](#) filed against the PPB by Don't Shoot PDX states:

“The Portland Police Bureau...has responded with indiscriminate, unchecked, and unconstitutional violence against protesters... In particular, PPB has repeatedly used chemical agents (‘tear gas’) against crowds of protesters, including plaintiffs who had committed no criminal acts, posed no threat of violence to any person, and were merely engaged in protected speech.”



*July 17, 2020. Some of the munitions fired on protesters in one night.
Photo Credit: Jessica Shifflett*

The police have justified the use of these tactics by blaming the actions of a few -- largely those throwing water bottles and other small projectiles at police -- on the larger group of protesters that have been nonviolently assembling.

Police in Portland are permitted to use violence to engage in crowd control and suppress protests when authorities declare a “civil disturbance” or “riot.” However, the decision to determine whether a gathering of people is a civil disturbance rests on the interpretation of what constitutes a “clear and present danger,” which is embedded in city policies on [crowd control](#).

The deployment of federal officers to Portland has brought national and global attention to police brutality in the city. Video footage of [federal agents](#) in camouflage uniforms, with name badges covered, taking people into custody in unmarked vehicles has demonstrated that the Trump administration has little regard for people’s civil and constitutional rights. Federal officers have used similar violent tactics as the PPB to suppress the protests. In [one incident](#), a federal officer shot a crowd control device -- a so-called “less lethal” munition -- that left one protester, Donavan LaBella, with facial and skull fractures. Journalists, legal observers, and medics have not been spared from being targets of federal police brutality.

Although the federal occupation of Portland is deeply disturbing, the Portland Police Bureau has been, and continues to be a consistent perpetrator of violence against protesters. It is the PPB that has been illegally and unethically violating first amendment rights by targeting journalists, and by using monstrous crowd control measures. Furthermore, there are clear first-hand witness accounts that the PPB has been [cooperating](#) and working in tandem with federal officers to disperse protesters, despite elected officials publicly saying otherwise.



Photo Credit: Anonymous

POLICE VIOLENCE IS HATE VIOLENCE
Testimonies of Police Brutality from the Streets of Portland

Appendix B: Data on police accountability

Accurate and comprehensive data on police use of force is not available to the American public. There are no [comprehensive databases](#) that exist to capture the scale of police use of force, misconduct, and brutality. While some police departments share data publicly, these data must be approached with caution and skepticism. It is [well-documented](#) that police departments reporting their own data on use of force incidents may underreport or manipulate the data to appear favorable in the eyes of state and federal governments to secure funding. Furthermore, data on police misconduct can be notoriously [difficult to find](#). This data is housed in antiquated public record portals, or access to this data requires a tedious, formal public data request process.

The lack of transparency and accessibility around accurate police data creates a barrier to holding police accountable for their misconduct. Crowdsourced tools and databases, where members of the public can report incidents of police violence, are becoming increasingly critical in understanding the extent and nature of police brutality.



A 16-year old protester suffered injuries, including significant hearing loss, when a grenade exploded just off her left ear on July 25, 2020. Photo Credit: Nat West

Appendix C: ReportHatePDX Database and Methodology

ReportHatePDX Database

Portland United Against Hate (PUAH), which was founded in 2016 in response to an increase in incidents of hate crimes and intimidation in our community, has created a crowdsourced tool called [ReportHatePDX](#) where members of the public can submit incidents of hate crimes. Since its inception in 2016, around 600 incidents have been reported through the tool. In early June 2020, PUAH specifically called for testimonials on police violence and has since become a tool for reporting incidents of police brutality, in addition to documenting reports of other hate crimes (racist, xenophobic, homophobic, transphobic, etc.).

Drawing on the ReportHatePDX reports of incidents from May 31 to July 20, 2020, we created an analysis of the 35 incidents where the report indicated that law enforcement officers perpetrated the incident. There were additional reports (which are not included in this analysis) in which the reporters believe the perpetrators were likely undercover cops, but could not know for certain.

The incidents were reported to PUAH by clergy, legal observers, medics, and protesters themselves. Twenty incidents (57%) were reported by the target of the hate, six (17%) by witnesses to the incident, and nine (26%) by others, including PUAH staff to whom incidents were verbally reported. The targets ranged from 16 to 62 years old. Seven (20%) of the targets are women, sixteen (46%) are men, one (3%) is genderqueer, and ten (29%) did not report their gender. Eleven of the targets (31%) are BIPOC, twenty-one (60%) are white, and three (9%) did not include their race/ethnicity. We are mindful that the majority of incidents reported on ReportHatePDX are from white protesters, and that the experiences of Black protesters, in particular, are less represented in this report. While reports from the ground and our data confirm that “less lethal” munitions are indiscriminately used as a crowd control measure, we recognize that Black folks have long been the targets of police violence in Portland and across the country.



*Protesters consistently displayed Black Lives Matter signs in support of the movement on July 25, 2020.
Photo Credit: Ernesto Fonseca*

In the ReportHatePDX tool, incidents are classified as “physical assault,” “physical threat/intimidation,” “vandalism/property damage/graffiti,” “robbery, burglary, or theft,” “verbal harassment,” “negative or insulting comments,” “unfair treatment,” “actions or speech that made me feel unwelcome,” “lack of cultural sensitivity,” or “other activity not listed.” Only one of these options can be selected. The reports in this analysis included twenty-seven physical assaults (77%), four physical threats/intimidation (11%), one verbal harassment (3%), and three other activities (9%). In the descriptions, reporters of other activities indicated that their incidents included attacks by chemical agents and projectiles, but they did not classify it as a physical assault.

The 35 reports included in this analysis represent the experience of thousands. Many of the reported incidents involved an entire crowd of protesters assaulted with chemical agents and munitions. Others involved an individual target. Our findings are supported by crowdsourced narratives and videos from social media and local journalists. Of the [861 incidents](#) of police brutality reported across the country, as of July 31, 2020, 220 occurred in Portland. By contrast, in Los Angeles, a city with over five times the population of Portland, 50 incidents of police violence have been reported over the same period. In New York City, with over thirteen times the population of Portland, 113 incidents of police violence have been reported over the same period.

Methodology

We copied the responses to the open-ended questions into qualitative data analysis software (MAXQDA). Some responses were only a few words, and others were several paragraphs long. We then coded them for any specific groups being targeted, the types of weapons used by the police, and the impacts people are experiencing as a result of police violence. We identified the three themes in the main body of this report from the data reported through ReportHatePDX, and then looked for relevant data from local journalists and crowdsourced social media incidents.

Appendix D: Advocating for Change

Police brutality targeting Black, Indigenous, and communities of color has escalated over centuries. The violent response of police to the current uprisings against racism requires immediate action from local, state, and federal governments. In Portland alone, there have been 220 reports -- as of July 31, 2020 -- of police responding to protesters with unnecessary force and brutality since the start of the global movement for Black lives in late May. Portland has, by far, the [highest number](#) of incidents in the country.

On July 28, 2020, a sweeping set of policy demands to dismantle systemic racism in Oregon was released by The [Reimagine Oregon Project](#), a coalition of Black-led organizations, community activists, and protest organizers. These demands cover education, police divestment, housing, health and well-being, transportation, economic development, the legislative process, and community safety. The leadership of the Coalition of Communities of Color and the leadership of Portland United Against Hate (PUAH), along with many of their members, support the policy demand recommendations found on The Reimagine Oregon Project [website](#).

Furthermore, we would like to uplift the PUAH initiated and community-supported list of demands from nearly 1,500 sign-ons, including 1,300 individual signatories plus 66 organizations and leaders and 92 clergy. The list was sent to Mayor Ted Wheeler on July 16, 2020. The full list is presented on the following page.



*Drummers uplift the energy of protesters on July 25, 2020.
Photo Credit: Ernesto Fonseca*

POLICE VIOLENCE IS HATE VIOLENCE
Testimonies of Police Brutality from the Streets of Portland

We Demand

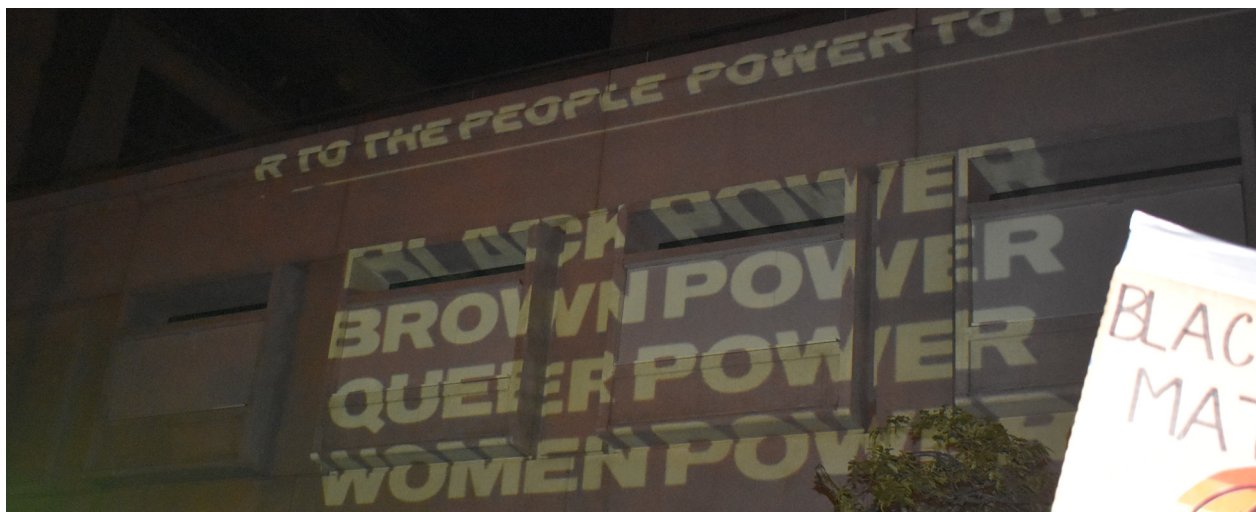
- The immediate removal of all Federal Marshals from Portland.
- The end to falsely declaring gatherings to be ‘civil disturbances’ or ‘unlawful assemblies’ or, most outrageously, a ‘riot.’ These declarations allow police to act violently towards protesters and imply that protesters are putting lives in danger when the truth of the matter is protesters are exercising their First Amendment right to free speech.
- The end to the false narrative that protesters are violent and are precipitating the violent response of the police. Rather, protesting is one way we exercise our Constitutional right to ‘petition the government for redress of grievances.’ This is especially urgent in the call for Black Lives to Matter. We believe the first hand testimonies of dozens of ACLU and NLG Legal observers, medics, media, clergy, and around 40 reports to PUAH’s ReportHatePDX. PUAH’s testimonies describe police repeatedly seeking to end protest with violence, or in the words of the police (on their loudspeaker or Long Range Acoustic Device), “use of force.” First hand witnesses testify that protestor initiated violence is rare and never worthy of the violent police response.
- The end to the use of all crowd control munitions against protesters, including but not limited to: projectile rounds, CS and OC skat shells, 40mm munitions of Saf Smoke, 60-Caliber Rubber Ball Rounds, 40mm munitions of foam and rubber rounds, triple chaser separating canisters, as well as kettling and non-weaponized physical assault.²
- Compliance with court orders against the use of tear gas and other chemical agents at a time when people are dying of COVID 19 and protesters in other cities have died from the inhalation of tear gas.³
- The end to targeting ACLU and National Lawyers Guild Legal Observers, Medics, and Journalists.⁴ If it does not trouble you that the Portland Police Bureau wants no witnesses to their actions, it should.
- Eliminate the Rapid Response team as well as all associated units that work with them for crowd control. Ensure that no police wear riot gear.
- Restrict the use of overtime, especially when monitoring protests.
- Hold the city attorney accountable for police actions of crowd control that violate constitutional rights.

² *Rise of the Warrior Cop: the Militarization of America's Police Forces* by Radley Balko <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGbd-cm3bio>
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/yizo1hv6p5zlboc/Complaint%20Green.pdf>

³ <https://nypost.com/2020/06/09/ohio-woman-dies-after-exposure-to-tear-gas-pepper-spray>

⁴ <https://www.change.org/p/mayor-ted-wheeler-mayor-wheeler-protect-the-first-amendment>
<https://aclu-or.org/en/news/ortland-police-must-demilitarize-its-response-protests>

- Compliance with recommendations of the [2018 Portland Auditor’s Independent Police Review Report on Crowd Control](#).⁵ We especially draw your attention to the following pages in that report:
 1. *Forbidding mass detentions (pp 12, 14)*
 2. *Providing better recorded evidence (pp 13-14)*
 3. *Prohibiting the detention of media and legal observers (p 14)*
 4. *Updating intergovernmental agreements to require law enforcement entities present in Portland comply with Portland rules of engagement and court orders (pp 13-14)*
- Compliance with and mandatory training on verbal de-escalation tactics, proven to be the only approach that works for crowd management. As experts say: “There’s 50 years of research on violence at protests, dating back to the three federal commissions formed between 1967 and 1970. All three concluded that when police escalate force --using weapons, tear gas, mass arrests and other tools to make protesters do what the police want — those efforts can often go wrong, creating the very violence that force was meant to prevent.”⁶
- Required mental health services for officers staffing crowd control to ensure that they are not operating out of years of PTSD and to ensure that their families do not suffer as a by-product of the militarized work they are being ordered to engage in.⁷
- Defund Portland Police by \$50 million -- see strategies laid out by [Unite Oregon](#) and [PAALF](#) for further details.



Black Power, Brown Power, Queer Power, Women Power, Power to the People, is projected on the wall of the Justice Center, on July 25, 2020. Photo Credit: Ernesto Fonseca

⁵ <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/ipr/article/686119>

⁶ <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/de-escalation-keeps-protesters-and-police-safer-heres-why-departments-respond-with-force-anyway/>

⁷ <https://money.yahoo.com/data-suggests-40-percent-cops-145601125.html>

Appendix E: About Portland United Against Hate & The Coalition of Communities of Color

Portland United Against Hate (PUAH) was founded in 2016 as a response to an increase in incidents of hate crimes and intimidation in our community. We are a coalition of more than 80 community organizations, neighborhood groups, agencies, and local governments working together to support those targeted by hate. We manage ReportHatePDX, a reporting and tracking tool where people can record hateful acts, and we analyze the data quarterly to help focus community leaders on solutions. Our partners provide trauma-informed care and social services to those impacted by hate. We offer 20 workshops a year to educate people about how to reduce or avoid harm, empower those most impacted, understand more about those targeted, know our rights, and bring our best selves to civic life. We use our resources, assets, and relationships to support an inclusive city that embraces and celebrates diverse communities.

For more information about PUAH, please visit: <https://www.portlandunitedagainsthate.org/>

The Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) was formed in 2001. We are an alliance of 19 culturally-specific community-based organizations with representation from the following communities of color: African, African American, Asian, Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Slavic. The CCC supports a collective racial justice effort to improve outcomes for communities of color through policy analysis and advocacy, environmental justice, culturally-appropriate data and research, and leadership development in communities of color.

For more information about the CCC, please visit: <https://www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org>

*Getting killed by police is a leading
cause of death for young black men in
America.*

*One in every 1,000 black men are
expected to be killed by the police in the
United States of America.*

LA Times, August 16, 2019

*Back Cover: Protester Calling to Action at Naito
Parkway. Photo Credit: Ernesto Fonseca*

No Justice, No Peace!

Portland United Against Hate & the Coalition of Communities of Color Present:
POLICE VIOLENCE IS HATE VIOLENCE:
Testimonies of Police Brutality from the Streets of Portland
From May 31 through July 20, 2020

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