

Evers authorizes 500 Guard troops to assist federal, state and local law enforcement in Kenosha

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Gov. Tony Evers today doubled the number of National Guard members available to help law enforcement rein in violent protests in Kenosha as Republicans slammed him for doing too little and the White House moved to provide additional federal assistance.

The moves all came against a backdrop of Wisconsin playing a pivotal role in the upcoming election and violent protests this summer emerging as a key issue in the race.

A White House official said the president authorized up to 2,000 National Guard troops from neighboring states to assist. But it will ultimately be up to Wisconsin National Guard Adjutant General Paul Knapp on how many will be utilized.

The official said the president also approved up to 200 officers from agencies such as the FBI to help.

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Protests began Sunday after a Kenosha police officer shot Jacob Blake in the back. President Trump tweeted this afternoon, “We will NOT stand for looting, arson, violence, and lawlessness on American streets.”

The president added he would be sending law enforcement and the National Guard to Kenosha to “restore LAW and ORDER.”

Not long after the tweet, Evers announced he had upped the available Guard members to 500 after authorizing 250 yesterday. He also yesterday declined an

offer from the White House to send U.S. Homeland Security agents to aid in the ongoing violent protests.

An Evers spokeswoman confirmed he spoke with White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows this morning.

“The federal government is planning to assist in facilitating conversations with other state partners and provide FBI support to our state response,” said spokeswoman Britt Cudaback.

In a statement on the ongoing violence in Kenosha, Evers offered his condolences to the families of the two people shot and killed last night. He also said the shooter “must be held accountable.”

“We must turn from violence and remember that any single act of injustice against one person is less justice for us all,” Evers said. “We cannot let the hateful actions of a few designed to create chaos distract us from our pursuit for a more fair, equitable, and accountable state and country for Jacob Blake and the many others who deserve justice. We must work to find strength in each other and our communities to rebuild and move our state forward, together.”

During a news conference in Kenosha, Sheriff David Beth said representatives from the FBI, ATF and U.S. Marshals Service were already on the ground, along with the National Guard, state DNR, Wisconsin State Patrol and other law enforcement agencies from around the state.

Beth, a Republican, said the southeastern Wisconsin city of 100,000 is “not accustomed to riots” and has been improving its response each day since the first protests Sunday night. He also said the state has been responsive to requests from local law enforcement for assistance.

“Everyone is helping,” he said.

Knapp said Guard personnel will remain in Kenosha as long as civil authorities require their support, but he declined to discuss troop numbers. He said the Guard was mobilizing in accordance with local requests and under Evers’ direction was working to bring in resources from surrounding states.

Local officials imposed a 7 p.m. curfew in Kenosha County east of Interstate-94, an hour earlier than it had been the night before. Beth said it was done to ensure law

enforcement would be working in daylight to disperse those gathered in violation of the curfew. He added law enforcement plans to strictly enforce the curfew.

“We’re not going to put up with what we saw Monday night. We’re not going to,” Beth said, referencing fires that were set to a series of businesses.

Two people were killed and one was injured in shootings in Kenosha last night.

Antioch, Ill., police today arrested a 17-year-old village resident Kyle Rittenhouse after Kenosha County authorities issued a warrant for him with charges of first degree intentional homicide. The suspect was in custody of the Lake County Judicial System, pending an extradition hearing.

He was among the armed militia members who showed up in Kenosha last night following calls from some to protect businesses following Monday night’s damage.

Kenosha Mayor John Antaramian, a former Dem state lawmaker, urged those thinking about doing the same tonight to stay away.

“No, I don’t need more guns on the street in the community when we are trying to keep people safe,” he said.

AG Josh Kaul today also urged “opportunists” who have come to Kenosha to “spur chaos” to leave.

He also said sowing division — “especially at the highest level of government” — must be condemned.

“While those who seek to divide people may have the biggest megaphones and attract the most attention, they do not speak for the vast majority of us who seek greater unity, common ground, and justice,” Kaul said.

See Kaul’s release:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2020/ag-kaul-statement-on-kenosha-shooting-2/>

See Evers’ release:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2020/gov-evers-authorizes-additional-wisconsin-national-guard-support-for-kenosha-county/>

See Trump’s tweet:

<https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1298671449968959490>

See the release from the Antioch Police Department:

<https://www.facebook.com/Village-of-Antioch-Police-Department-1834833836736099/>

See the criminal complaint filed against Rittenhouse:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Rittenhouse-Complaint.pdf>

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