



## Violent Riots Continue in Portland

Portland has seen two consecutive nights of violent riots amid ongoing protests following the killing of a black man, Daunte Wright, in a traffic stop in Minneapolis.

On Monday, a group of about 200 people gathered near the Penumbra Kelly building that's utilized by offices from city bureaus, including the Office of Community and Civic Life, the Portland Police, and the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office. The protesters started fires and threw objects at the police that tried to protect the city property. As reported by [KATU 2 ABC](#), a violent mob used bottles, rocks, ball bearings, bricks, concrete, and large fireworks to throw or shoot toward officers. The bricks and rocks were reportedly stolen from the yards of residents. Windows at the Kelly building were broken, and police said people have attempted to break through its front doors. A dumpster was also set on fire. Just down the street from the Kelly building, the glass doors of the First Covenant Church were smashed, and a fire burned in the street.

AP Images

According to police, the events at the Kelly building led to arson, violence, riots, and "wanton destruction of public and private property." When [sharing](#) details on the Monday-night riots, the police said that destruction and violence was never a protest or peaceful Black Lives Matter demonstration, but was a "planned, coordinated attack" that was "targeted criminal behavior." The building has been a favored target of groups that have attacked and vandalized law-enforcement and judicial buildings on and off for nearly a year. "This is a small contingent of people, but they're causing mass destruction," Captain Tina Jones said.

Despite the significant damage done to the property, [no arrests](#) were made, but investigators say several people could later face felony riot charges.

[The following night](#), about 100 demonstrators gathered at a nearby park before marching to the Portland Police Associate (PPA) building, where they launched fireworks and used vehicles to block adjacent roads. The police issued numerous warnings over a loudspeaker telling the crowd that they needed to allow traffic to move through. Despite police efforts, the situation escalated: The protesters lit a fire at the back of the union office, possibly in a garbage can, setting PPA ablaze. Other members of the group were seen using accelerants on a door as flames began to engulf part of the building.

Videos posted to social media show an [inferno](#) raging in front of the entrance to the building as officers arrived at the scene. Police [declared](#) a riot and ordered the crowd to disperse. At least one arrest was



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made. The blaze was later extinguished by the city's fire department.

Portland became a hotbed of civil unrest last summer during demonstrations protesting the death of George Floyd. It experienced some of the nation's most violent riots, accompanied by widespread arson, looting, and assaults.

The unrest paired with a slashed police budget caused heretofore-unseen criminal activity, with the homicide rate [skyrocketing](#) 1,900 percent. Mayor Ted Wheeler (D) supported a cut of \$16 million to the police department budget in June of 2020, and the move was quickly followed by more than 100 consecutive days of violent riots, which have continued in 2021. In March 2021, trying to respond to a sharp increase in violent crime, Wheeler [asked](#) the City Council for \$2 million in one-time funds for gun-violence prevention programs.

Rioters in the city have on several occasions targeted the Mark O. Hatfield U.S. Courthouse, spraying it with graffiti, setting fires and destroying nearby storefronts and other property. For weeks, federal officers have been stationed outside the courthouse, where Justice Department officials have spent an estimated \$1.5 million on repairs in the last year, only to have the building targeted by the rioters [again](#). The total cost of damage to the federal property in Portland [amounts](#) to \$2.3 million.

The routine street violence downtown has [become](#) a persistent roadblock to Portland's attempts to reopen and revive its economy, despite COVID-19 cases falling and business restrictions loosened. Local officials who had supported the "racial justice" protests and pandered to protesters and criminals last summer are now pledging to crack down on those causing the destruction.

"The community is sick and tired of people engaging in acts of criminal destruction and violence," Wheeler [said](#) recently. The rioters, he believes now, are harming the cause of racial justice, and "also standing on the air hose of the economic recovery for a lot of our small businesses."

So far, neither Mayor Wheeler nor Oregon governor Kate Brown have commented on the most recent riots.



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