July 20, 2020

Dear President Solan,

We are writing to you today with alarm and concern about this weekend’s events in Portland: the arrival of Federal Law Enforcement to address local protests and usurp the authority of local law enforcement to address the public safety impacts of the protests.  It is our sincere hope that you have neither met with federal law enforcement, nor collaborated with federal law enforcement, regarding recent protests in Seattle. We ask you to confirm, in writing, that you have done neither.

Seattle’s leaders are united in saying federal law enforcement is neither wanted nor needed here.

* On June 8th, Seattle City Council passed [Resolution 31948](http://clerk.seattle.gov/search/results?s1=federal&l=200&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESON&Sect3=PLURON&Sect4=AND&Sect5=LEGI2&Sect6=HITOFF&d=LEGC&p=1&u=%2Fsearch%2Fcombined&r=10&f=G) condemning the use of military force in jurisdictions such as “Seattle that have not requested and do not intend to request federal interventions.”
* Mayor Durkan, on June 1 issued a statement that “no U.S. Military troops are needed nor will they act as police in Seattle.” And today she [signed a letter with Mayors from several other cities](https://durkan.seattle.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2020/07/07.20.20-Letter-to-DOJ-and-DHS.pdf) to call on the Trump administration to immediately halt plans to send federal forces to major American cities and withdraw any forces currently in cities.

* The Seattle City Council’s Public Safety and Human Services Committee Chair, Lisa Herbold, has confirmed that Seattle Police Chief Carmen Best has not met with Homeland Security about plans to deploy Federal Law Enforcement in Seattle.

We are alarmed to learn through recent reporting that police and federal officers are working together to respond to protests in Portland, in contravention of the city’s elected leaders. [City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty issued a public statement saying that, “We know that Portland Police Association President Daryl Turner met with DHS Secretary Chad Wolf…  We know Portland Police are collaborating with this federal occupying force.”](https://www.oregonlive.com/news/2020/07/evidence-shows-portland-police-working-with-federal-officers-at-protests-contradicting-city-officials.html)

Acting Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Ken Cuccinelli said in recent days that the administration intends ”[to continue not just in Portland but in any of the facilities that we’re responsible for around the country.](https://www.npr.org/2020/07/17/892393079/dhs-official-on-reports-of-federal-officers-detaining-protesters-in-portland-ore)” As City Councilmembers, we must make it clear to you and SPOG that this occupation is not welcome in Seattle.

Our urgency in reaching out to you is further heightened by your interview today on the Dori Monson show where you said:

“Maybe this is the opportunity where we’ve seen the success of what’s going on in Portland as far as the law enforcement ability to hold these criminals accountable by arresting them. And you saw the success that the federal officers had….when they moved in to Portland. Perhaps this is a time now in Seattle where we might need some federal intervention here.”

As the Mayors’ letter states:  “The majority of the protests have been peaceful and aimed at improving our communities. **Where this is not the case, it still does not justify the use of federal forces.**Unilaterally deploying these paramilitary-type forces into our cities is wholly inconsistent with our system of democracy and our most basic values.” Not only is unilateral deployment of federal force unjustified; as SPOG president, we hope you recognize that you are not authorized to invite the presence of these forces to Seattle, nor to collaborate with them.  We emphasize, with as much urgency as we can muster, that you not replicate the reported actions of Portland Police Association President Daryl Turner.

We look forward to receiving your response.

Best,



Lisa Herbold, Councilmember, Public Safety and Human Services Committee Chair

 

M. Lorena González, Seattle City Council President