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Attorney General Addresses Violence Against Law Enforcement Officers Working to Protect the Public

(MONTGOMERY) - Attorney General Steve Marshall voiced support Thursday for law enforcement in their efforts to protect the public from violence spurred by anarchists attempting to hijack peaceful protests.

As has been widely reported, the Huntsville Police Department used tear gas Wednesday evening to disperse a crowd of protesters. Given the infrequency with which this tool is employed, the Attorney General believed that it was his duty to examine what necessitated its use.

“The appropriateness of police actions must always be judged by the circumstances in which they occur,” said Attorney General Marshall. “After talking with the Huntsville Police Department and the Madison County Sheriff’s Department, I am well-satisfied that the actions taken by police were reasonable under the circumstances.

“After a peaceful protest, hosted by the local chapter of the NAACP—which abided by the law and should not be blamed for what came after—hundreds of hostile demonstrators ignored multiple requests by law enforcement to leave the area. Rather than leaving, those demonstrators put on gear and readied for battle.

“After an hour and a half of warnings and with daylight dwindling, law enforcement dispersed the crowd with the least amount of force possible and using no lethal weapons. This, despite the fact that the crowd was found to have backpacks full of weapons and spray paint, and which attacked officers with rocks and bottles full of frozen water.

“Alabama is fortunate in that most protests taking place in recent days have been conducted peacefully. At the same time, over the last 10 days—and even as we speak—law enforcement intelligence from around our state indicates the intent of some to infiltrate protests with violence, property damage, and targeting of law enforcement officers.”

The Attorney General’s Office has zero tolerance for aggressive acts against law enforcement. As a reminder, taking the life of a law enforcement officer carries the penalty of death in our state. Attempting to take the life of a law enforcement officer will guarantee prolonged incarceration of up to 99 years. The Attorney General will personally oversee the prosecution of any such perpetrator, in any judicial circuit of this state, if necessary, to ensure maximum punishment.

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