

Law Enforcement Report Blames Charlottesville for Violence. Virginia may Crackdown on Protests

written by GEG | October 31, 2017



An independent report from Virginia law-enforcement agencies blames the City of Charlottesville for the violence that erupted during a protest in August. The report says that the City rejected many of the state's recommendations, ignored police standards for handling violent events, used multiple-action plans instead of one, established multiple command posts instead of being unified, and placed only minimal restrictions on protesters. The investigators were denied interviews with Charlottesville officials and documents. The Governor's Civil Unrest Task Force is preparing recommendations for the permit process that includes rules for crowd capacity threshold, reasonable fees, and requiring permit holders to hire off-duty first responders. -GEG

A preliminary action report is blaming Charlottesville for the civil unrest that occurred in the city on August 12.

The [preliminary report \[pdf\]](#) was presented to the Governor's Civil Unrest Task Force in Richmond Thursday, October 26. The task force is comprised of first responders from around Virginia, elected officials, but no one from Charlottesville.

According to the report, city leaders did not take recommendations ahead of [white activist Jason Kessler's Unite the Right rally](#). Additionally, the report said Charlottesville had an inadequate permit process. [The city was taken to court](#) after it [tried to make changes to Kessler's permit just a few days before the rally](#).

International Chiefs of Police Director Jim W. Baker says we are seeing a new era of protests that involve weapons, shields and a desire to cause harm. He said

Charlottesville leaders knew this before protesters and counterprotesters clashed in and around Emancipation Park. Baker said the park was too small, noting that authorities tried to have it moved to McIntire Park, and the city was warned about extreme violence, including a potential car attack. Police have charged James Alex Fields with second-degree murder, hit-and-run, and multiple counts of malicious wounding after he apparently drove into a crowd in the area of 4th Street.

Charlottesville is withholding important planning documents and information to the state. However, the commonwealth is not sharing some of its information with the city. Officials are trying to resolve this, which could change some of the conclusions within the report.

"We would like to cooperate and work with the city of Charlottesville. Let's be united," said Virginia Secretary Brian Moran.

"I really do think that it's important for them and for us to have that exchange, and we stand by hoping that we can work that out," said Tim Heaphy, who is leading an independent review for Charlottesville.

The Governor's Civil Unrest Task Force, which has met several times, is working on recommendations for the permit process that balances First Amendment rights and public safety: That includes crowd capacity threshold, reasonable fees and requiring the permit holder to hire off duty first responders.

The task force says small localities like Charlottesville are targeted due to a lack of first responder resources. Members also say social media needs to be better monitored leading up to controversial events.

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