End of CHAZ: Seattle police arrest remaining protesters after mayor orders violence-plagued encampment to shut down

By: RT
01/07/2020

Seattle police have begun clearing out the so-called “autonomous zone” created by Black Lives Matter protesters. Those who refused to vacate the area have been arrested, the police force said.

A live feed shows the remaining protesters attempting to hold their ground near the East Precinct, which was abandoned by police last month. At least thirteen arrests have been made so far.

Officers can be heard advising demonstrators to leave the barricaded encampment around the Capitol Hill neighborhood, known as CHAZ and CHOP, or face detention.

Mayor Jenny Durkan had earlier issued a public safety emergency order to vacate the area. Police Chief Carmen Best said in a statement that her officers were moving in after *“weeks of violence”* in and around the protest zone.

Since its formation on June 8, the camp saw four shootings that resulted in multiple injuries and two deaths.

“The CHOP has become lawless and brutal. Four shootings – two fatal – robberies, assaults, violence and countless property crimes have occurred in this several block area,” Best wrote. She stressed that her department would work with demonstrators to *“build trust”* and *“begin meaningful dialogue about reenvisioning public safety in our community.”*

Durkan had sent heavy machinery to remove concrete barricades set up around the zone by protesters, after a group of demonstrators rallied outside her residence. The mayor also called for a probe of a city council member, who allegedly leaked her private address to protesters.

Also on rt.com Now it’s personal: Seattle mayor moves to dismantle CHOP after protesters show up AT HER

HOUSE

The city has been heavily criticized for allowing the encampment to remain in place. A lawsuit brought by nearby businesses accused Durkan and her administration of *"enabling"* the protesters. Durkan herself had originally described the lawless zone as a *"peaceful expression of our community's collective grief."*

Photographs and videos show cops dressed in riot gear moving through the largely abandoned streets. In one clip, a small group of demonstrators shout at the police as they clear out the area.

The self-declared *"autonomous zone"* sprung up following nationwide protests over the killing of Minneapolis resident George Floyd, who died while in police custody. Demonstrators sealed off several streets near the police's East Precinct after law enforcement abandoned the building. Although initially praised for its festive mood, the area quickly descended into anarchy, with crime and violence becoming especially bad at night.