
Thousands Protest 'Unite The Right 2' Gathering In DC

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Thousands of anti-fascists protesters are demonstrating outside the White House against the 'Unite the Right 2' white nationalist rally taking place there on Sunday.

Around 20 neo-Nazis walked from the D.C. Metro's Foggy Bottom subway stop to the white nationalist rally just outside the White House surrounded by counter-protesters and members of Black Lives Matter who yelled, "Nazis go home" and "Shut it down." They held signs that read, 'No Hate' as 'Unite the Right 2' rally members and its organizer, white fascist, Jason Kessler were escorted away by police.

Sunday's event was organized to coincide with the anniversary of last year's racially charged violence in Charlottesville, Virginia at the University of Virginia campus.

Kessler, who has said he doesn't care if he's called a racist, told the media that this year's event is aimed at advocating for "free speech for everybody." He blamed last year's violence in Charlottesville on other groups and the media. "I'm not a white supremacist. I'm not a neo-Nazi," Kessler told the media on Sunday as he headed toward the Washington rally.

This year's 'Unite' event is marked by a heavy presence of police and a lot fewer neo-Nazis.

The police at Charlottesville, Virginia, where last year's event took place, was highly criticized for standing by as violence broke throughout the weekend of the first 'United' march. Prior to the planned racist rally on Saturday, several hundred white nationalists, mostly white men in their 20's and 30's, marched through UVA campus the night before carrying torches and shouting ethnic-nationalist slogans like "you will not replace us!"

The conflict culminated during the 2017 rally as Ohio resident James Fields plowed through a crowd of counter-protesters killing Heather Heyer and injuring at least 19 others.

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On Saturday President Donald Trump said there were "very fine people" on both sides of the protests, spurring bipartisan criticism that he was, once again, equating the counter-protesters with white supremacists.

"Our message is to let everyone know we support each other," said Maurice Cook, a co-organizer for the March for Racial Justice, a D.C. counter protest organizer.

Anti-fascist marchers were also present, along with heavy police brigades, in Charlottesville on Sunday morning. Black Lives Matter activist Grace Aheron, 27, along with hundreds of others gathered at the Booker T. Washington Park to mark the anniversary of last year's bloodshed.

"We want to claim our streets back, claim our public space back, claim our city back," Aheron told Reuters.

Several events were scheduled in the city including a gathering that will include veteran civil rights activist Reverend Al Sharpton and Susan Bro, the mother of the woman who was killed a year ago.

The ride-share company, Uber, released a statement to its drivers on Thursday advising them they could reject driving a white nationalist member to the rally if they didn't feel 'comfortable.'
