



November 13, 2020

The Honorable Chad F. Wolf
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
2801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20528

RE: Amnesty International USA calls for halt to deployments of DHS agents in response to election-related protests

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf:

On behalf of Amnesty International USA and our members and supporters, we write urging you to refrain from deploying US Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) agents in response to any protests related to the recent U.S. Presidential election that may occur in the coming weeks.

Amnesty International has documented how federal agents, including DHS agents, lacked proper training in protest response and systematically violated protesters’ human rights. Following the death of George Floyd in May and the protests that ensued in cities across the country, DHS agents lacked proper training in protest response and have repeatedly used excessive force against protesters, including through physical beatings with batons, the misuse of tear gas and pepper spray, and the inappropriate and at times indiscriminate firing of so-called “less-lethal” projectiles. These actions came amidst widespread and egregious human rights violations by law enforcement officers against Black Lives Matter protesters throughout country over the summer. Amnesty International documented these violations in a comprehensive report titled “The World is Watching: Mass violations by U.S. police of Black Lives Matter protesters’ rights.”¹ Following that report, Amnesty International wrote to you expressing our alarm about your

¹ Amnesty International, *The World is Watching: Mass Violations by U.S. Police of Black Lives Matter Protesters’ Rights*, July 2020,

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/WorldisWatchingFullReport080220.pdf/>.

agents' deployment and urging withdrawal of DHS agents in Portland, Oregon, and any other cities or localities DHS planned to deploy agents engaged in protest response.²

In our previous letter to you, Amnesty International strongly denounced the deployment of these DHS agents to Portland and their excessive use of force against protesters. Their presence in the city of Portland only served to inflame tensions and increase violence. With these previous incidents and documented human rights violations in mind, we urge you to refrain from deploying DHS agents to police protests due to their lack of training on crowd control and facilitating the right to peaceful assembly. CBP agents specifically should not be deployed in these circumstances, given CBP's abysmal track record of using excessive and lethal force and violating the human rights of those it encounters, as Amnesty International has long documented.³

Please do not hesitate to contact Joanne Lin, National Director for Advocacy & Government Relations, at jlin@aiusa.org or (202) 281-0017, or Charanya Krishnaswami, Americas Advocacy Director, at ckrishna@aiusa.org or (214) 228-7157.

Sincerely,



Joanne Lin
National Director
Advocacy and Government Affairs

² Amnesty International, Letter to Acting Secretary Wolf Regarding DHS Deployment to Portland, July 24, 2020,

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/aiusa-writes-to-dhs-secretary-re-cpb-use-of-force-against-portland-protestors/>.

³ Amnesty International, *USA: You Don't Have Any Rights Here: Illegal pushbacks, arbitrary detention and ill-treatment of asylum seekers in the United States*, AMR 51/9101/2018, www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AMR5191012018ENGLISH.PDF; *USA v. Sineneng-Smith*, US Supreme Court of the United States, No. 19-67, Brief for Amnesty International as Amicus Curiae in support of respondent,

www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/19/19-67/129463/20200122130557752_19-67%20bsac%20Amnesty%20Intl.pdf

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charanya', followed by a long, wavy horizontal line.

Charanya Krishnaswami
Americas Advocacy Director
Amnesty International USA