



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on July 8, 2020

## Georgia Governor Says “Peaceful Protests Were Hijacked by Criminals,” Sends National Guard to Atlanta

Georgia Governor Brian Kemp, responding to weeks of violent protests in Atlanta that have seen 30 people wounded and five killed by gunfire over the July 4 weekend, issued an executive order on July 6 declaring a state of emergency across Georgia and authorizing the activation of up to 1,000 Georgia National Guard troops. Among those killed was an eight-year-old girl, Secoria Turner.



In a statement issued on July 6, Kemp said:

Peaceful protests were hijacked by criminals with a dangerous, destructive agenda. Now, innocent Georgians are being targeted, shot, and left for dead. This lawlessness must be stopped and order restored in our capital city. I have declared a State of Emergency and called up the Georgia Guard because the safety of our citizens comes first. This measure will allow troops to protect state property and dispatch state law enforcement officers to patrol our streets. Enough with the tough talk. We must protect the lives and livelihoods of all Georgians.

The Georgia Guard was assigned to protect the Georgia State Capitol, the Georgia Department of Public Safety Headquarters, and the Governor’s Mansion. By relieving state law enforcement personnel of these duties, more state police will be available for patrols on roadways and throughout communities, especially in the city of Atlanta.

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Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms said that she strongly disagreed with Kemp’s decision and at “no time” requested the help.

“The irony of that is I asked Governor Kemp to allow us to mandate masks in Atlanta and he said no,” Bottoms said early on July 7 on *Good Morning America*. “But he has called in the National Guard without asking if we need the National Guard.”

Bottoms made a statement in response to the girl’s killing:

“You can’t blame this on a police officer,” Bottoms said on July 5 in a news conference. “You can’t say this is about criminal justice reform. This is about some people carrying some weapons who shot up a car with an 8-year-old baby in the car for what?”

“Enough is enough,” Bottoms said. “If you want people to take us seriously and you don’t want us to lose this movement, we can’t lose each other.”

While Bottoms did not specify which “movement” she was referring to, given the prominence of the Black Live Matter movement in recent months it is very likely that is what she meant.

Secoriya Williamson, the father of the girl who was shot and killed in Atlanta over Fourth of July weekend, sent a strong message to Black Lives Matter activists after her death.



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“They say black lives matter,” the girl’s father said. “You killed your own. You killed your own this time.... They killed my baby because she crossed the barrier and made a U-turn. You killed a child. She didn’t do nothing to nobody.”

*Photo: AP Images*

*Warren Mass has served The New American since its launch in 1985 in several capacities, including marketing, editing, and writing. Since retiring from the staff several years ago, he has been a regular contributor to the magazine. Warren writes from Texas and can be reached at [wmass@thenewamerican.com](mailto:wmass@thenewamerican.com).*

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