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USA: JOURNALISTS FACE CHARGES FOR COVERING MINNESOTA PROTEST

MARCH 20, 2026

Journalist Georgia Fort and other members of the press face criminal charges for documenting a protest on January 18, 2026, inside a church in Minnesota. The demonstration took place at a church where one of the pastors also serves as an Immigration and Customs Enforcement field office director.





The U.S. Department of Justice is prosecuting Fort and other journalists, bringing serious charges that violate their privacy and interference with rights. These charges stem from their presence at the protest, where they were reporting as members of the press.

Since January 2026, authorities have increasingly targeted journalists for covering protests linked to immigration enforcement. As a result, these prosecutions risk creating a chilling effect on press freedom.

Authorities must drop all charges against members of the press. Prosecuting journalists for doing their work undermines the right to freedom of expression and the public's right to information.

([HTTPS://AMNESTY.CA/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2026/03/UA-16_26_USA.PDF](https://amnesty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/UA-16_26_USA.PDF))

Here's what you can do:

Write to the US Attorney for Minnesota urging him to:

- drop the charges against Georgia Fort and the other press individuals in the case of United States v. Levy Armstrong (0:26-cr-00025) in the District Court of Minnesota.

Write to:

US Attorney for Minnesota, Daniel Rosen
U.S. Courthouse
316 N. Robert Street, Suite 404
St. Paul, MN 55101 USA
Email: usamn.pressoffice@usdoj.gov
Salutation: Dear US Attorney Rosen,

And copy:

His Excellency Peter Hoekstra
Ambassador
Embassy of the United States of America
490 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1N 1G8
Tel: (613) 238-5335 / 688-5335 (24h)
Fax: (613) 688-3082

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In December 2025, the Trump administration launched a federal immigration crackdown known as “*Operation Metro Surge*” in the Minneapolis–St. Paul region. The Department of Homeland Security deployed more than 3,000 federal immigration agents, who used aggressive tactics that created fear across local communities. As a result, many residents began organizing protests and other forms of resistance.

Some residents described the situation as being “*under siege*” due to the heavy and hostile presence of federal agents. Tensions escalated further on January 7, 2026, when ICE agents killed Renee Good, a community observer monitoring immigration operations in Minneapolis.

Protest, reporting, and arrests

Following her death, demonstrators gathered inside a church in St. Paul on January 18, 2026. They protested because one of the church’s pastors was serving as an acting ICE field office director. Journalist Georgia Fort and other members of the press attended to document the protest.

Video footage shows peaceful demonstrators calling for justice for Renee Good. However, authorities arrested protesters within days. Initially, courts denied government requests to arrest journalists. A magistrate judge, a district court judge, and an appellate judge each rejected those efforts.

Despite this, the Department of Justice pursued a grand jury indictment. As a result, authorities charged Georgia Fort and two other journalists with three felony offences, including a hate crime. Officers arrested them in the early morning of January 30, 2026. Authorities later indicted another journalist in February.

Targeting journalists and wider press freedom concerns

After the arrests, President Trump posted several messages on social media targeting journalist Don Lemon. In one post, he called for a 40-year sentence and mocked the arrests. At the same time, Georgia Fort livestreamed federal agents arriving at her home to arrest her.

More broadly, these arrests raise serious concerns about press freedom. Three of the four journalists facing charges are Black Americans. They were reporting on protests and public opposition to “*Operation Metro Surge*.” However, authorities charged them under laws that were originally designed to address violent acts by groups such as the Ku Klux Klan.

Since January 2025, the administration has repeatedly targeted journalists. For example, authorities deported journalist Mario Guevara, seized devices from a reporter in Washington, DC, and launched a website attacking media outlets. In addition, officials have used regulatory powers to pressure me





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Taken together, these actions reflect a wider pattern. Authorities are increasingly targeting journalists and discrediting the media. As a result, these actions risk silencing dissent and limiting public access to information. Protecting freedom of expression and press freedom remains essential to ensuring accountability and preventing abuses of power.

Topics:

Please take action as soon as possible, until May 10, 2026. The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.
([CENSORSHIP & FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION \(HTTPS://AMNESTY.CA/TOPI/](https://amnesty.ca/topic/censorship-freedom-of-expression/)) ([PRESS FREEDOM \(HTTPS://AMNESTY.CA/TOPI/](https://amnesty.ca/topic/press-freedom/))

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