

Two officers shot outside Ferguson police HQ after chief quits

Written by JPNN

JPNN |Ferguson| March 12, 2015|Two police officers were shot during a protest outside the Ferguson, Missouri police headquarters early on Thursday, police said, just hours after the city's police chief quit following a damning justice report into his department. St. Louis County Police Chief Jon Belmar told reporters that a 41-year-old officer from his department was struck in the shoulder and a 32-year-old officer from the nearby Webster Groves Police Department was hit in the face around midnight as the crowd was starting to break up. He said he did not know the conditions of the officers, whom he did not identify, but said they were both conscious and being treated at a local hospital. "These police officers were standing there and they were shot, just because they were police officers," Belmar said. The St. Louis County Police Department Twitter account had earlier said both of the shot officers were from their department. A few dozen demonstrators scrambled following the sound of gunfire around midnight, with some screaming, "They hit a cop," according to a Reuters photographer at the scene. Several dozen protesters had gathered in front of the Ferguson police department earlier on Wednesday night, just hours after the city's police chief, Thomas Jackson, announced his resignation. The demonstration was largely peaceful, but later on some two dozen officers clad in riot gear faced off against the protesters, who had relocated to the street. At least two people were taken into custody at the time. Belmar said that the shooter was "embedded" in the group of demonstrators who were standing across from the officers at the time. Prominent activist Deray McKesson said on Twitter that he was at the scene and that the gunfire did not appear to come from the gaggle of protesters. "The shooter was not with the protesters. The shooter was atop the hill. We can live in a world without guns," McKesson said. Protesters had called for Jackson's removal since the fatal shooting of unarmed black 18-year-old Michael Brown by white Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson on Aug. 9, 2014. The killing triggered nationwide protests and drew scrutiny to police use of deadly force, especially against black men. Neither a grand jury nor the federal probe led to charges against Wilson. Jackson's departure was the latest in a string of officials who have stepped down following a scathing report from the U.S. Justice Department that found widespread racially biased abuses in the city's police department and municipal court. Reuters