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## **New York City Bar Association Statement on the Improper Use of Militarized Federal Law Enforcement Officers in Portland, Oregon**

President Trump’s use of armed security forces to “dominate” the streets of Portland, Oregon, is unlawful and a threat to all Americans. Federal security forces are not authorized to supplant local police enforcement except in narrow circumstances clearly not present in Portland, which is not in a state of civil unrest and where the Mayor and Governor both objected to the use of federal forces to disperse and detain peaceful demonstrators exercising their Constitutional rights. Whatever authority that may exist to protect federal property has likewise been exceeded, as these unnamed and camouflage-attired federal agents are engaged in activities unrelated to this narrow charge. Nor are federal agents permitted to abduct our citizens without explanation or identification and to transport them in unmarked vans to unknown locations. Because the President has made clear that he wishes to replicate this inappropriate and illegal use of force in other areas of the country, the federal government’s actions in Portland must be seen for what they are – a direct threat to the democratic foundation of our country and to the rule of law on which that foundation rests. The use of federal agents in this way is equivalent to the standing army that was feared by our Founders and cannot be accepted as “normal” but rather as an action contrary to our history, tradition and democratic norms. Silence by the legal profession in the face of this threat is not an option. On the contrary, lawyers everywhere have a special obligation to insist that our government comply with the laws and Constitution that embody our nation’s deepest values, and to make clear, in words and responsible action, that those federal officials who authorize, direct or carry out such violent and unlawful actions must be held accountable under the law.

### **About the Association**

*The mission of the New York City Bar Association, which was founded in 1870 and has 25,000 members, is to equip and mobilize a diverse legal profession to practice with excellence, promote reform of the law, and uphold the rule of law and access to justice in support of a fair society and the public interest in our community, our nation, and throughout the world. [www.nycbar.org](http://www.nycbar.org)*