



SCOTTISH POLICE FEDERATION

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MEDIA RELEASE

The Scottish Police Federation represents all police officers in the ranks of constable, sergeant, inspector and chief inspector, police cadets and special constables; over 18,500 people, 98% of all police officers in Scotland.

To: News Editors
Date: 18 June 2020
Subject: Coronavirus – What Coronavirus?

Speaking in response to the latest protests and disorder in George Square during the early evening of Wednesday 18th June, David Hamilton, Chairman of the Scottish Police Federation said;

“When our politicians fail to condemn the actions of those who defy the law, we cannot be surprised that it is increasingly difficult for police officers to enforce the law.

The public cannot expect the police service to turn a blind eye to those who break the law in the name of a particular cause whilst demanding different treatment for opponents.

Events across Scotland over the weekends of 6th and 13th June, and those in George Square yesterday evening have laid in tatters any suggestion that non-compliance with the Coronavirus restrictions is a serious issue. At the same time as these protests, demonstrations, and general thuggery take place on our streets, we are expecting our citizens to believe that compliance with wider public health guidance matters.

It is simply unacceptable that individuals and groups can consider that gathering together under the guise of any particular cause in the midst of a global health pandemic is in any way justifiable. Those who gather are breaking the law pure and simple. It ought to be the easiest thing in the world for all politicians to coalesce behind this simple message without equivocation. For the past few weeks we have seen too much mealy mouthed language to avoid the stating of the obvious. At the same time as a family is unable to have more than 10 people mourn the death of a loved one, hundreds (and thousands) are able to gather with impunity and without criticism, simply by carrying a banner or a placard.

There is no moral high ground to be claimed. Right or left; green or blue; unionist or nationalist; statue wrecker or statue protector, your side is as guilty as the other. There is no hierarchy of culpability. The sad reality is that there are too many opposing factions who need no excuse to use a protest as an opportunity to cause disorder.

Police officers should not be used as political pawns to advance or decry the actions of a particular group. The sooner our politicians decide what matters more, appeasement or the health of our nation, the sooner we can stop wasting valuable resources on the managing of illegal gatherings.

Notes for Editors:

1. Gatherings in public places were made illegal under the section 6 of the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 as amended
2. There is NO exemption for gatherings for the purpose of protest (political or otherwise)