

The NYPD's Strategic Response Group



NYCLU
ACLU of New York

What is the Strategic Response Group?

The Strategic Response Group (SRG) is a **militarized unit** of the NYPD known for its **abuse** of protesters and community members

Founded in 2015 as a counter-terror unit, the SRG has morphed into a protest policing unit known for its **brutality, racial bias, and misconduct.**

The SRG's initial budget of \$13 million ballooned to \$90 Million within its *first year*. **The current estimated budget of the SRG is \$133 Million per year.**

There is **no transparency** around the size, scope, function, or funding of the SRG. With no oversight, this unit operates as a rogue entity.



The problem with the SRG

Biased Training

The SRG's bike squad manual identifies two types of protester crowds: "peaceful" and "violent." Examples of violent crowds include "BLM movement, Occupy Wall Street, and Anti-Trump Demonstrators."

- Of complaints that included race between 2015-2020, 91% of complainants were POC.

Bloated budget

The SRG is overfunded and lacks adequate transparency on the funds, size, and scope of the unit.

Violence

The SRG is an escalating force that brings the threat of brutality to nonviolent protests

Misconduct & Bias

SRG officers receive an abnormally high number of misconduct complaints compared to non-SRG officers.

The Campaign

In January of 2022, the NYCLU, along with more than 60 organizations, launched a campaign to disband the SRG and re-invest its funds back into our communities.

On March 1st of 2023, City Council held an oversight hearing on the SRG. New Yorkers testified for nearly 5 hours about the trauma and harm that has been inflicted by this unit.



Why This Matters

In November, the NYPD announced that the Strategic Response Group **would be deployed to 20 precincts** across New York City, predominantly in Black and Brown neighborhoods that they consider to be “high-crime” areas.

These deployments are most concentrated in the Bronx, followed by Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan. Beyond stating that the SRG would be supporting with street enforcement, there has been **no transparency** around what this deployment will look like in communities.

After 3 years of documenting the SRG’s conduct, it is clear **this unit causes harm everywhere it is deployed**. New Yorkers deserve to know that the SRG is coming to their communities, and what that means for them.



**THE SRG IS BEING
DEPLOYED INTO
YOUR COMMUNITY.**

**HERE’S WHAT
YOU NEED
TO KNOW →**

NYCLU

Council Member Support

CM Sign-ons

- Christopher Marte
- Crystal Hudson
- Alexa Aviles
- Carmen De La Rosa
- Chi Osse
- Shaun Abreu
- Tiffany Caban
- Shekar Krishnan
- Sandy Nurse
- Carlina Rivera
- Kristin Richardson
- Jordan
- Jennifer Gutierrez
- Shahana Hanif
- Lincoln Restler
- Charles Barron
- Pierina Sanchez
- Julie Won
- Althea Stevens
- Rita Joseph
- Shaun Abreu
- Gale Brewer
- Kevin C. Riley

Open Letter From New York City Elected Officials in Support of Disbanding the NYPD's Strategic Response Group

We, the undersigned elected officials, are writing in support of the campaign to disband the NYPD's Strategic Response Group (SRG). The SRG is a notoriously violent rapid response unit responsible for inflicting violence on New Yorkers. To protect the safety and First Amendment rights of New Yorkers, the NYPD must be held accountable for the SRG's abuse, and the unit must be disbanded.

The SRG was formed in 2015 in the wake of the Ferguson uprising with a dual purpose: protest policing and counterterrorism. This conflation of terrorism with protest has led to predictable results. Time and time again, when SRG arrives on the scene, officers escalate situations and injure New Yorkers who are exercising their First Amendment rights.

After pushback from advocates, who cited concerns around the criminalization of protest and the militarization of police, the NYPD promised in 2015 that the unit would "not be involved in handling protests and demonstrations." The NYPD broke that promise just months later when the SRG made arrests at protests for Freddie Gray. By 2016, the unit's budget had ballooned from \$13 million to \$90 million. The number of officers in the unit doubled to an estimated 700. The NYPD offers very little transparency on the funding, staffing, and deployment of SRG in our communities.

During the 2020 protests, the SRG's brutalization of demonstrators came into full view. On June 4, 2020, the SRG descended on demonstrators in Mott Haven before the 8pm curfew. With demonstrators unable to escape, SRG officers brutally beat, zip-tied, and arrested 263 protesters, medics, and legal observers. Sixty-one people were injured. Human Rights Watch called this conduct "intentional, planned, and unjustified."

The SRG's violence did not end in 2020 and is not limited to protests. On June 5, 2021, the SRG was deployed to enforce the 10PM curfew in Washington Square Park. At 10:01, dozens of SRG officers clad in riot gear descended on the park, where they [tased](#), [beat](#), and kettled park-goers, people experiencing homelessness, and at least one photographer. Twenty-two people were arrested, including a pair of park-goers who were on a date. After clearing the park, SRG officers chased community members [several blocks down the street](#).

The SRG was also central to homeless encampment sweeps throughout 2022, when SRG officers were deployed to violently clear encampments and even arrest unhoused residents. In April of 2022, while the suspect in the subway shooting was at large, dozens of SRG officers were clearing an encampment [mere blocks](#) from where the shooter was apprehended. More recently, the SRG made 7 arrests of clinic defenders outside of the Bleecker Street Planned Parenthood, where the unit is regularly deployed to escort anti-abortion activists from the nearby church to the clinic.

What you can do

As an individual

- **Sign up to get involved in the campaign:** nyclu.org/srg-signup
- **Testify at March 20th budget hearing:** nyclu.org/srg-hearing
- **Call your Council Member:** Urge your representatives to support the campaign to disband the SRG

As a community board

- **Issue a resolution in support of:**
 - Disbanding the SRG
 - Keeping the SRG out of your community.
- **Distribute materials:** Connect with the NYCLU to distribute educational materials in your community.

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