

Protests turn violent outside Donald Trump rally in New Mexico

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Albuquerque: Protests outside a Donald Trump rally in New Mexico turned violent Tuesday night as demonstrators threw burning T-shirts, plastic bottles and other items at police officers, overturned trash cans and knocked down barricades.

Police responded by firing pepper spray and smoke grenades into the crowd outside the Albuquerque Convention Center.

During the rally, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee was interrupted repeatedly by protesters, who shouted, held up banners and resisted removal by security officers.

The banners included the messages "Trump is Fascist" and "We've heard enough."

At one point, a female protester was physically dragged from the stands by security. Other protesters scuffled with security as they resisted removal from the convention center, which was packed with thousands of loud and cheering Trump supporters.

Trump responded with his usual bluster, instructing security to remove the protesters and mocking their actions by telling them to "Go home to mommy."

He responded to one demonstrator by asking, "How old is this kid?" Then he provided his own answer: "Still wearing diapers."

Trump's supporters responded with chants of "Build that wall!"

The altercations left glass at the entrance of the convention center smashed.

During the rally, protesters outside overran barricades and clashed with police in riot gear. They also burned T-shirts and other items labeled with Trump's catchphrase, "Make America Great Again."

Tuesday marked Trump's first stop in New Mexico, the nation's most Hispanic state. Gov. Susana Martinez, head of the Republican Governors Association and the nation's only Latina governor, has harshly criticized his remarks on immigrants and has attacked his proposal to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. The governor did not attend the rally and has yet to make an endorsement.

Trump read off a series of negative statistics about the state, including an increase in the number of people on food stamps.

"We have to get your governor to get going. She's got to do a better job, OK?" he said, adding: "Hey, maybe I'll run for governor of New Mexico. I'll get this place going."

The governor's office fired back, saying Martinez has fought for welfare reform.

"The potshots weren't about policy, they were about politics," said spokesman Michael Lonergan. "And the Governor will not be bullied into supporting a candidate until she is convinced that candidate will fight for New Mexicans, and she

did not hear that today."

Trump supporters at the rally said they appreciated his stance on boosting border security and stemming the flow of people crossing the border illegally, but some said they were frightened by the violent protests outside.

Albuquerque attorney Doug Antoon said rocks were flying through the convention center windows as he was leaving Tuesday night. Glass was breaking and landing near his feet.

"This was not a protest, this was a riot. These are hate groups," he said of the demonstrators.

Karla Molinar, a University of New Mexico student, said she participated in disrupting Trump's speech because she felt he was attacking members of her family who are living in the country illegally. She said she believes Trump is using them as scapegoats for the nation's problems.

- AP