

The arrest stems from a Jan. 18 incident at a church in St. Paul.

Former CNN journalist Don Lemon and three others have been arrested in connection with an incident in which anti-ICE protesters disrupted a service at a Minnesota church, according to officials.

The charges they are facing are not yet clear. Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche said the case has not been unsealed.

The incident unfolded on Jan. 18, when [protesters entered Cities Church in St. Paul](#). The protesters said one of the pastors is the acting field director of the St. Paul ICE field office. Protesters were heard chanting "Justice for Renee Good" inside the church.



A group of protesters interrupt services at the Cities Church in St. Paul by chanting "ICE out" and "Justice for Renee Good," Jan. 18, 2026. Speak Mpls via AP

Attorney General Pam Bondi said on social media that Lemon, Minnesota-based journalist Georgia Fort, and two others were arrested early Friday "at my direction."

At least three additional people were previously arrested in connection with the protest. Bondi said on social media last week, "WE DO NOT TOLERATE ATTACKS ON PLACES OF WORSHIP."



A group of protesters interrupt services at the Cities Church in St. Paul by chanting "ICE out" and "Justice for Renee Good," Jan. 18, 2026. Speak Mpls via AP### [Minneapolis live updates: 'We can always do better,' Noem says](#)

Lemon was at the protest as an independent journalist. Lemon posted video to his Instagram on Jan. 18 showing protesters yelling as well as his interviews with churchgoers and protesters. Lemon said on the video, "We're not part of the activists, but we're here just reporting on them."

Lemon's attorney, Abbe Lowell, said on Friday that Lemon was taken into custody by federal agents while he was covering the Grammy Awards. Federal sources told ABC News Lemon was arrested at a Beverly Hills hotel.



Don Lemon attends the Apple TV+ premiere of "The Morning Show" Season 4 at The Museum of Modern Art, Sept. 9, 2025, in New York. Evan Agostini/Invision/AP

"Don has been a journalist for 30 years, and his constitutionally protected work in Minneapolis was no different than what he has always done," Lowell said in a statement. "The First Amendment exists to protect journalists whose role it is to shine light on the truth and hold those in power accountable."

"Instead of investigating the federal agents who killed two peaceful Minnesota protesters, the Trump Justice Department is devoting its time, attention and resources to this case," Lowell said, calling the arrest an "attempt to distract attention from the many crises facing this administration."

Lowell called Lemon's arrest an "unprecedented attack on the First Amendment" and said the journalist "will fight these charges" in court.



Don Lemon arrives at THR's Empowerment in Entertainment Gala, April 30, 2019, in Los Angeles. Jordan Strauss/Invision/AP, Files

Lowell had said last week that a magistrate judge rejected charges against Lemon, and a source told ABC News that Bondi last week was "enraged" at the magistrate judge's decision to not charge the journalist.

Minnesota Chief U.S. District Judge Patrick Schiltz also wrote to the 8th Circuit appeals court last week that Lemon and his producer were "not protesters at all," and that "[t]here is no evidence that those two engaged in any criminal behavior or conspired to do so."

The Department of Justice responded to Schiltz in a filing unsealed Thursday, "The FACE Act contains no exception that would permit journalists or their producers to use or threaten force or physically obstruct worshippers who are lawfully exercising their First Amendment rights.... Nor does Section 241 afford impunity to journalists or their producers to conspire to violate those worshippers' rights. The complaint's detailed allegations speak for themselves on each agitator's role in the incident for which they are charged."

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass spoke out about Lemon on Friday, calling him her friend and saying he was arrested "simply for doing his job."

"Emmy-winning news producer and Minnesota-based journalist Georgia Fort -- another widely respected Black journalist -- was also arrested by federal agents in Minnesota for reporting on the same protest," Bass said in a statement. "The arrest of journalists for going into a church in the course of reporting is shocking enough, but what's even more alarming is that it's no secret that Don Lemon is a Trump critic."

Bass said President Donald Trump is "escalating" the situation further with their arrests.

The official White House X account posted an image Friday morning touting Lemon's arrest, with the caption, "When life gives you lemons..." and an emoji of chains.

This is a developing story. Please check back for updates.

ABC News' Alex Stone and Steven Portnoy contributed to this report.

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