

Arrests Continue in Akron, Ohio Targeting Demonstrators Demanding Justice for Jayland Walker

Car caravan was broken up by police as local authorities fail to bring police to justice

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It has been several weeks since the police execution of Jayland Walker, 25, in Akron, Ohio on June 27.

After public outrage over the death of Walker, who was shot 46 times by a group of eight law-enforcement officers, Mayor Daniel Horrigan declared a state of emergency while numerous people have been arrested and charged with serious crimes for merely exercising their democratic rights.

Tensions remain extremely high in Akron due to the continuing anger and disgust of the shooting death of Walker. During the July 4 holiday weekend, people poured into the streets prompting police reactions which led to arrests and minor incidents of property destruction.

Nonetheless, over the last month there are lingering fears of further social unrest and violence in Akron. A National Night Out event which was scheduled in several districts of the city for August 4 had been cancelled in at least four areas.

The event scheduled to be held in Akron’s Goodyear Heights, Highland Square, Middlebury and Kenmore neighborhoods will not take place. Event planners and officials are claiming that safety concerns and potential demonstrations could occur resulting in the disruption of the celebrations.

Every municipal ward sponsors the annual gathering which is initiated by community leaders or a council member. Ostensibly the campaign is designed to facilitate police and community relations with an underlying theme of crime reduction.

In Ward 10, Councilwoman Sharon Conner made the decision to cancel the event. She indicated that everyone had a right to protest although she was concerned that many people living in the district were gun owners. Conner was concerned about a possible adverse reaction by some residents to demonstrations demanding justice for Jayland Walker.

Earlier on July 29, a car caravan designed to build support for the termination of employment and prosecution of the police involved in the brutal shooting, moved its way through several neighborhoods in Akron slowing down and blocking traffic in some instances. This action represented a form of civil disobedience which could not be ignored by the city administration and the general public.

There were dozens of vehicles which participated in the demonstration on July 29. Obviously, the protest was becoming quite effective prompting the police to use forceful tactics to put the action to an end.

An [article published by the Akron Beacon Journal](#) described the situation as follows:

“The caravan formed at about 7:30 p.m. near Inman Street and Archwood Avenue, according to police, who said the protesters blocked intersections as they moved through the city. The group traveled to a neighborhood in Kenmore, then to Lock 3 and around Main Street, according to police Lt. Michael Miller. ‘Members of the group reportedly began chanting and intentionally disturbing citizens who were downtown to enjoy the entertainment at various venues,’ Miller said in a news release.”

Therefore, according to this police version of events reported by the local media, the disruption of the entertainment areas could not be tolerated by the local authorities. Rather than risk a repeat of the police attack and arrests on July 29, the August 4 National Night Out events would pose a risk to the normal operations of the city.

This same report from the Beacon Journal continued by noting that:

“Protesters later demonstrated near the Akron Police Department on South High Street, moving south to the Polsky Building. A vehicle trying to leave the Polsky parking deck collided with a protester’s vehicle at the site, police said. Protesters said on social media that the driver of the exiting vehicle intentionally slammed into them; police say the person was attempting to get out of the parking deck.”

The names of the three people arrested had not been released by the police according to press reports. Despite these demonstrations, Mayor Horrigan and Police Chief Stephen Mylett have failed to make any public statements specifically related to the case. Eight of the officers involved in the firing of more than 90 shots have been placed on administrative paid leave pending the completion of an investigation.

City Administration and Police Have Refused to Issue an Apology to the Family of Walker

On July 15, a preliminary autopsy of Walker was released to the public by Summit County Medical Examiner Dr. Lisa Kohler. The report indicated that Walker had sustained numerous serious wounds which could have resulted in his death.

Kohler said that she could not determine the number of shots fired by the eight officers who discharged their weapons. She said that 46 bullets either struck or grazed Walker during the incident.

Walker was unarmed at the time of the police shooting. Officers claim that Walker had fired at them during a chase which lasted for several minutes. Walker exited the vehicle attempting to flee from the police when he was gunned down. Police then claimed that a handgun was found in the vehicle which Walker was driving.

Walker's family has expressed extreme skepticism over this version of the killing articulated by the police. The family and its lawyer point to the fact that Walker was fleeing unarmed and consequently posed no threat to the police.

Moreover, the administration and the police have refused to publicly apologize to the Walker family for the circumstances surrounding the death of their loved one. Such a posture has created an atmosphere in Akron which has eroded even further the general attitude among African Americans towards the mayor and the police chief.

The lawyer representing the family of Walker, Atty. Bobby DiCello of the Dicello, Levitt, Gutzler firm, emphasized in the aftermath of the statement by the medical examiner that the city administration is doing more to protect the police rather than the family of the deceased. [DiCello said](#):

"If [city leaders] were focused on protecting Jayland, they wouldn't have to protect anyone right now. Because nothing was found in his system, it underscored the senselessness [of his killing]. He panicked and paid for it with his life. They could have released the autopsy and an apology, but they didn't. The reason why is because they are afraid of the courtroom process. The subject needs to be: Where is the public apology? Enough of the quiet nice words. We are not interested in secret concern. We are interested in a public apology for taking a life that was not necessary. ... At the end of the day, there shouldn't have been a single bullet fired."

United Nations to Investigate the Police Killing of Jayland Walker

A recently created United Nations Human Rights Council division has expressed an interest in investigating the police killing of Jayland Walker. This was revealed when the International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement contacted the law firm representing the family of Walker.

This UN project was officially established during 2021. It represents an outcome of the mass demonstrations which swept the United States and the international community during mid-2020 in the aftermath of the brutal police and vigilante killings of Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick, Georgia, Breonna Taylor in Louisville, George Floyd in Minneapolis.

The UN Human Rights Council convened a full session during the summer of 2020 on the racial profiling and murders of African Americans by law-enforcement in the U.S. The hearing took place at the UN offices in Geneva, Switzerland. One of the brothers of George Floyd, Philonise, addressed the hearing on June 17 asking for the assistance of the international community in bringing justice to African Americans subjected to racial discrimination.

Several African Union (AU) member-states, including Botswana, motivated the convening of

the UN Human Rights Council hearing two years ago. The hearing was based upon a resolution passed at the aegis of Malcolm X (El Hajj Malik Shabazz) during the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit held in July 1964 in Cairo, Egypt. The OAU, founded in 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was transformed into the AU in 2002. At the time, Malcolm X was the leader of the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), which was patterned to a significant degree on the OAU formed one year before.

On the UN Human Rights Council website there is language which describes the mandate for the International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement. [The document reads:](#)

“The Expert Mechanism’s mandate is detailed in resolution 47/21. It is established ‘in order to further transformative change for racial justice and equality in the context of law enforcement globally, especially where relating to the legacies of colonialism and the Transatlantic slave trade in enslaved Africans, to investigate Governments’ responses to peaceful anti-racism protests and all violations of international human rights law and to contribute to accountability and redress for victims.”

This development represents the continuation of the legacy of [Pan-Africanism](#) and Internationalism within the African American struggle in the U.S. As Malcolm X emphasized during the last year of his life (1964-65), the plight of Black people in the U.S. must be brought before the UN and other global bodies in order to expose the human rights violations and crimes against humanity suffered by now more than 40 million people of African descent.

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