

Minneapolis Erupts Again After Another African American Is Killed by a Federal Task Force

In Hawaii, a South African immigrant is also slain by local police in Honolulu.

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Demonstrations have taken place in Minneapolis since June 3 when news quickly spread throughout the city saying yet another Black man was gunned down by law-enforcement.

On June 3-4 numerous businesses were damaged, and property taken, when crowds gathered during a police examination of the area where the shooting occurred. Nine people were arrested in the immediate hours after the killing.

Tensions had already escalated earlier on June 3 when the city removed a barrier erected around what has become known as “George Floyd Square”, marking where the horrendous police execution took place on May 25 of 2020. Residents in the area quickly set up other barriers preventing normal traffic at the thoroughfare around 38th and Chicago.

Initial reports in the corporate media from the Uptown section of the municipality indicated that the victim wanted on a murder warrant was shot to death by County sheriff deputies. Several hours after, however, it was revealed that the man was not wanted for murder and was killed by multi-jurisdictional squad operating within a fugitive task force attempting to serve a warrant. News reports were later corrected to indicate that the victim was not wanted for murder.

The Marshals claim that the victim, identified as Winston Boogie Smith, Jr., 32, a father of three, was being arrested on a charge of being a felon in possession of a firearm. Even the local Minneapolis StarTribune was forced to print a correction in regard to the circumstances surrounding the killing of Smith.

Witnesses in the vicinity said that they heard several gunshots in connection with the incident which occurred in a parking structure. The deputies involved in Smith’s death have been placed on paid leave pending the outcome of an internal investigation by the federal agencies.

Federal law-enforcement agents claim that Smith was sitting in a parked car and purportedly failed to comply with commands by the officers. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) under which the agents are assigned have said that Smith had produced a

weapon prompting a fatal response.

Emergency medical personnel summoned to the incident later pronounced Smith dead at the scene. A spokesperson for the U.S. Marshals were quoted in the StarTribune saying that the warrant for Smith's arrest was issued in the state of Minnesota.

There was a woman in the vehicle with Smith who was injured by flying glass. No information is available about the number of police agencies involved in the task force. Media reports say two officers fired their weapons at the vehicle occupied by Smith and the unidentified woman.

A friend of Smith, Shelly Hopkins, questioned the official narrative being promoted by the Marshals. The circumstances surrounding the incident remain unclear while the federal law-enforcement agencies attempt to justify the death of Smith.

Hopkins was quoted by the [Associated Press](#) as saying:

"I wasn't there. I don't know exactly what happened. But I know him. And he didn't deserve that... He had the best heart out of anybody I've ever met in my life."

Another close friend of Smith, Waylon Hughes, told the Associated Press as well that she was not aware that the victim carried a firearm. Her assessment of Smith was that he cared very much about his children and friends.

The victim's brother, Kidale Smith, questioned the law-enforcement version of events which resulted in Winston's shooting death. Smith emphasized:

"This man had a family, and he's just like anybody else. (People) always try to pin something on a man and try to identify him as a criminal, especially if he's Black. You've got seven unmarked cars and you shoot a man in his car. You don't even give him a chance to get out... You're the U.S. Marshals. You're supposed to be highly trained men, and you can't handle a simple situation?"

Smith's family is demanding transparency in the investigation. Reports indicate that the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) and the U.S. Marshals Service does not allow its agents and officers from other law-enforcement units assigned to its task forces to wear body cams.

Activists have been protesting everyday since the killing of Smith. At least two different organizations, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and Black Lives Matter in Minneapolis, are calling for the removal of the head of the U.S. Marshals Service in the state of Minnesota. Demonstrations are being held outside the home of Ramona Dohman, the director of the Marshals Service.

[According to the Minnesota CAIR's executive director Jaylani Hussein:](#)

"The system in this state is fundamentally flawed, and the federal oversight is also fundamentally flawed. We need transparency and accountability."

Black Lives Matter Minnesota co-founder Monique Cullars-Doty described the law-enforcement killing of Smith as "reckless." She accused all agencies involved of being

“completely reckless” and acting with “an intentional lack of transparency and an intentional lack of accountability.”

Since the police killing of Smith, the U.S. Assistant Attorney General in the region has ordered the usage of body cams for federal agents. Whether this will be implemented remains to be seen.

Black Man Killed by Hawaiian Police

Meanwhile earlier during the month of April in the U.S.-occupied state of Hawaii, another man was killed by the Honolulu police. Lindani Myeni, 29, was a South African immigrant married to a Caucasian woman whose family has lived in Hawaii for three generations.

Myeni and his wife, Lindsay, had moved to Hawaii from Denver with their two children in the hopes that the racism they experienced in Colorado would not be present in the Pacific islands state. The circumstances under which he was killed by police remain obscured due to the lack of information from the state authorities and the U.S. government.

Lindsay Myeni said that apparently Lindani had entered a home in Honolulu after taking off his shoes. He was wearing a traditional Zulu head covering representing his ethnicity from South Africa. His shooting death occurred after he had exited the home.

The South African government has repeatedly demanded information on the incident from local authorities and the U.S. State Department. South African diplomatic personnel in the U.S. have persistently sought an explanation for the killing of Myeni.

South African Minister for International Relations, Naledi Pandor, [issued a statement](#) on the position of the African National Congress (ANC) led government in regard to the police killing of one of its citizens. Pandor emphasized on behalf of her ministry that:

“The department also conveyed to the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria the concerns of the government about the lack of a comprehensive report on the circumstances that led to the death of Mr. Myeni and the utterances by the Mayor of Honolulu that the police had acted correctly. A request was made that the State Department should intervene to obtain a report as soon as possible and that the personal belongings of Mr. Myeni should be returned to the family. A follow-up request was later made to the U.S. Embassy for Mr. Myeni’s belongings, including his cellphone, to be returned to his family without further delay. As of 25 May 2021, the Consul-General in Los Angeles reported that the requested police report was still outstanding. The lawyers of Mrs. Myeni undertook to inform the Consul-General once there are new developments on the matter.”

Lindsay Myeni took her husband home for burial in Richards Bay located in KwaZulu-Natal Province and is currently living with her in-laws in South Africa. She has applied for permanent residency in South Africa and does not want to return to the U.S. in the immediate future.

Failure of the U.S. Congress to Pass the George Floyd Policing Act

These two incidents of police killings of men of African descent, one from the U.S. and another from the continent, illustrates the continuing crisis in police-community relations. A George Floyd Policing Act designed to institute reforms on a national level has still not been

passed by the Senate.

The family of George Floyd visited the White House on May 25, the one-year anniversary of the brutal police execution, to push for the immediate adoption of the bill. The Act was passed by the House of Representatives along party lines in March due to a Democratic majority. It has yet to be voted on in the Senate which is evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats.

Nonetheless, the police abuse, brutality and killings continue despite the mass demonstrations and rebellions which have taken place over the last year since the killing of Floyd. What is required is the total dismantling of the existing system of law-enforcement and criminal justice which has its origins in the forced removals of Indigenous people and the enslavement and national oppression of Africans and other communities of color in the U.S.

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