

Racist Attacks on Southern Black Churches

By [Global Research News](#)

Global Research, July 04, 2015

[Fight Back! News](#) 2 July 2015

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

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In the last 11 days seven Black churches have been burned down. The first burning occurred within a week of the June 17 Charleston Massacre, where a self-proclaimed white, racist terrorist murdered nine Black people. Some of the burned down churches had "KKK" scrawled on their outside walls and investigators have concluded that three churches (Hills Seven-day Adventist in Knoxville, Tennessee; God's Power Church of Christ in Macon, Georgia and Brian Creek Road Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina) were torched by arsonists.

The fact that these church burnings came quickly in the wake of the Charleston Massacre raises serious concerns about them being acts of racist violence and terrorism. K. Marshall Williams, president of National African American Fellowship of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of Nazarene Baptist Church in Philadelphia, called for "...a nationwide outcry and action on all levels of government and society to insure that these acts of terror and hatred toward African Americans cease."

Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, characterized these fires were as "heinous acts of violence." He called for the "apprehension and prosecution" of those responsible.

The latest fire destroyed Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopalian Church in Greenleyville, South Carolina. This church was rebuilt after the Ku Klux Klan burned it down two decades ago.

Frank Chapman, Field Organizer of the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression said in a press statement released July 2, "We stand in unqualified and unconditional solidarity with the Black churches, whose places of worship are being desecrated by racist terrorists. We are familiar with the terror tactics of the KKK and other racists hate groups, for they have been visited upon us ever since the overthrow of Radical Reconstruction. These fascists, cowards have always targeted Black churches in the South. That is why we don't believe these are just random acts of violence. These are deliberate acts of terrorism designed to cripple and destroy our movement. Our response must be one of united action in support of the demands for justice put forth by the Black community and their allies. This is not a time for attacking the religious beliefs of the victims and survivors of racist terror. We must insist and demand that these racist-terrorists be brought to justice."

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