



NEWS RELEASE

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George Floyd, Black leadership and unity in the global struggle for justice

Grassroots Black Left (GBL) give our solidarity to the people fighting for justice in America and internationally, including in Britain, after the police slaughter of unarmed Black man George Floyd. The callous murder has rightly sent shock waves of revulsion around the world and is a wake-up call to politicians that there must be root and branch change to tackle racism in the police, the justice system and society as a whole.

Had the sharp-eyed and brave citizen journalist Darnella Frazier, 17, not filmed the public lynching, it would probably have been covered up and police officer Derek Chauvin, who suffocated George Floyd with the full weight of his knee, would have got away with murder. This has been the case in most other instances of police brutality against Black people.

GBL give our deepest condolences to George Floyd's family and applaud #BlackLivesMatter for organising huge protests in America and Britain, the latter of which our activists have attended. We encourage everyone to join in, though it is vital Black people lead our own struggle, supported by genuine white anti-racist allies and it is inspiring that has happened. It is time for the labour movement to rise to the challenge and visibly lend their support to the protests.

We note the militancy, energy and stamina of the youth who are at the heart of all of the mass demonstrations and salute them.

Those politicians who have focused more in their opportunistic "law and order" media comments about violence on the demonstrations, rather than the legitimate expressions of grievance, should be reminded that property and businesses can be rebuilt. But a person murdered by the police cannot be brought back to life. The struggle is against a racist justice system that profits from the mass imprisonment of Black people and the arming of police and other security forces.

Instead of showing moral leadership, President Donald Trump has acted like a dictator, calling in the military to attack peaceful protestors and threatening even more violence against the American people in a cynical attempt to whip up his bigoted white supremacist support-base. We condemn his actions in the strongest possible terms.

GBL support the demand that not just Chauvin should be charged with murder but also the three other officers with him during the killing should be successfully prosecuted. It is not enough that the four men were sacked from their jobs.

In Britain, we remember Black victims – 13 of them since 2010 – who have died at the hands of the police, including Sean Rigg, who was left to die in Brixton police station after being pinned down by police officers for several minutes and Jimmy Mubenga, who was suffocated by G4S guards while being deported on a British Airways flight. His last words, like those of so many people who lost their lives in such circumstances, were: “I can't breathe”. It has become a battle-cry for people fighting for justice.

GBL remember Julian Cole, Rashan Charles, Sarah Reed, Edson Da Costa, Mark Duggan, Roger Sylvester, Jermaine Baker, Sheku Bayoh and many others.

The number of Black people killed or severely hurt by police in the UK grows every year. Increasingly, police use lethal tasers against Black people. Yet, the last time a police officer was convicted for a death in their custody was in 1969.

GBL support grieving families in their fight for justice. We call on the public to do the same by any means necessary, including by filming police acts of terror against Black people, which the public are legally entitled to do. United, we must take action together.

Without justice, there can be no peace.

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