

# Protests continue one year after Louisville, Kentucky police brutally murdered Breonna Taylor

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Protests and demonstrations took place across the US on Saturday to mark one year since three Louisville police officers brutally murdered Breonna Taylor in her apartment in the middle of the night.

Hundreds of people rallied and marched in downtown Louisville and demonstrations and vigils took place in Atlanta, New York City, Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, Detroit and Grand Rapids to demand justice for Taylor and her family.

The Associated Press reported hundreds defied a curfew set by the military in Yangon, Myanmar to gather for a candle-lit rally to mark the anniversary of Taylor's death.

Protesters began gathering in Louisville at Jefferson Square Park near the Jefferson County District Court and the Kentucky Court of Justice at noon and placed photos, signs, flowers and candles in a circle in the middle of the park. The crowd was addressed by Taylor's mother, Tamika Palmer, before it marched down Broadway chanting Breonna's name.

Reminders of the reasons for the ongoing protests against police violence were revealed throughout the day in Louisville. At first, Louisville Metropolitan Police Department (LMPD) restricted access to the protest area and contained the demonstrators with police squad cars. Later, as the demonstration continued into the evening and headed across Big Four Bridge, LMPD declared the group an "unlawful assembly" and an announcement was made by officers that the crowd had to disperse or police "may dispense chemical agents" and arrest those who refused.

There were also crackdowns on protesters by the police in Los Angeles, Seattle and Portland on Saturday night, with numerous demonstrators arrested.

According to one Twitter post, two protesters were run over by Los Angeles police cruisers in the Hollywood neighborhood where police officers in riot gear confronted demonstrators near the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

The 26-year-old African American EMT and aspiring nurse was shot and killed on March 13, 2020, after plainclothes officers Jonathan Mattingly, Brett Hankison and Myles Cosgrove executed a warrant on her apartment just after midnight by battering down the door. Thinking they were the victims of a break-in, Taylor's boyfriend Kenneth Walker fired a warning shot from his legally possessed handgun and struck Mattingly in the leg.

The officers then indiscriminately returned 32 shots into the apartment, six of them that were fired by Cosgrove fatally struck the young woman. Several of the 10 shots fired by Hankison entered an adjacent apartment where a five-year-old child, a pregnant woman and her husband were sleeping.

A coverup of Taylor's murder was immediately organized by the LMPD beginning at the scene of the crime. The facts of the shooting were falsified in the police incident report, no search of the apartment was ever conducted and Walker was arrested and charged with attempted murder.

Without the eruption of a mass movement internationally against police violence that followed the murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) on Memorial Day 2020, it is likely that Taylor's murder would have been swept under the rug by the LMPD and the justice system in the State of Kentucky.

A month after the protests that ensued from MPD

officer Derrick Chauvin choking Floyd to death—which was captured on smartphone video stream by an eyewitness and watched by more than 1 billion people—what happened to Taylor became widely known and Kentucky state authorities were forced to intervene in response.

Three and a half months after Taylor's killing, on June 23, Hankison was fired by the LMPD for blindly firing through the covered patio door and window of Taylor's apartment. However, the coverup of the murder of Taylor continued on September 23 when Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron announced that a grand jury decided not to bring any charges against either Cosgrove or Mattingly who were “justified in their use of force” while charging Hankison with “wanton endangerment” of Taylor’s neighbors.

Shortly after Cameron’s announcement, Cosgrove launched a campaign to raise money for his retirement. The day before being cleared, Mattingly sent an email to more than 1,000 fellow LMPD officers defending the shooting and subsequently sued Walker for “battery, assault, and intentional emotional distress.”

Significantly, fully aware of the socially and politically explosive nature of the case against the LMPD, the City of Louisville settled a wrongful death lawsuit by Taylor’s family for \$12 million two days before Cameron’s revelation of the grand jury decision.

Law enforcement and legal authorities made several similar announcements in advance of the one-year anniversary of Taylor’s shooting. On March 8, Jefferson Circuit Judge Olu Stevens ruled that the charges against Walker have been permanently dismissed. This means that Walker cannot be criminally recharged for shooting Mattingly. Walker is also pursuing immunity from prosecution and damages in a civil lawsuit against the city which, if successful, would mean that Mattingly’s suit would be thrown out.

Additionally, the FBI released a statement on Saturday morning saying it “remains steadfast in its commitment to bringing this investigation to its appropriate conclusion.” Blaming its inability to complete a federal investigation before the year was up on COVID-19, the FBI’s Louisville Special Agent Robert Brown claimed it had made “significant progress” since May and that the “team is actively investigating all aspects of her death” and working

“diligently until the investigation is completed.”

President Joe Biden submitted his especially meaningless comments via Twitter on Saturday afternoon, posting that Taylor’s death was a “tragedy” and that “we must press ahead with meaningful police reform in Congress” that he is committed to signing into law.

The Democrats and various pseudo-left political organizations continue to attempt to present police violence—like the horrifying murder of Breonna Taylor in her own apartment—as entirely a racial matter when in fact more than a thousand working class and poor people of all ethnicities are killed each year by police across the US.

The struggle against police violence—along with the apparatus of repression that was applied throughout the spring and summer on protesters in the form of rubber bullets, pepper spray, tear gas, baton strikes and beanbag rifles—and in defense of democratic rights requires a political movement of the entire working class based on a socialist program.



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