

More than 100 protest police killing of Nyah Mway in Utica, New York

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More than 100 people demonstrated at City Hall in Utica, New York, on Monday, to protest the shooting death of 13-year-old Nyah Mway on Friday night by a city police officer.

The protesters brought their hand-made placards into the city council chambers, some of which had photos of the youth and others that read, “Justice for Nyah,” “Take My Hand, Not My Life! I Still Want to Go to School,” and “3 UPD Officers vs 13 Years Old Kid. Was It Necessary to Open Fire?”

The protesters were treated with contempt by city council members who proceeded with business at the previously scheduled meeting and did not address the fact that a child had been killed by a city police officer three days earlier. No public comments were permitted during the meeting.

Mway, a refugee youth and member of the Karen ethnic group from Myanmar, was shot dead with one bullet to the chest after he and a friend were questioned by three officers at around 10:00 p.m. Friday. The police reported that they were investigating two recent robberies in the area involving suspects described as Asian males and that the suspects had brandished a black firearm at their victims.

Body cam video released by the police shows three officers questioning the youth from different angles. When officers approached the youth and asked that they take their hands out of their pocket and if they can pat them down, “to see if you have any weapons on you,” the two took off running.

The officers pursued them on foot and the videos show Mway falling to the ground, being punched by an officer and then shot after shouts of “he’s got a gun” from one of the officers.

Police administered first aid on the scene and Mway was transported by ambulance to Wynn Hospital where

he was later pronounced dead.

The officer who fired his weapon has been identified as Patrick Husnay, a six-year veteran of the Utica police force. The other two officers are Bryce Patterson, a four-year veteran and Andrew Citriniti, who has been an officer for two and a half years after serving as an Oneida County Sheriff’s deputy. All three are on paid administrative leave pending a police department investigation.

The police say that they stopped the youth for questioning because one of the boys was walking in the roadway in a residential neighborhood instead of on the sidewalk, a violation of New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law.

Police have maintained that the shooting was justified because Mway had a gun and the officers feared for their lives. Police later modified this and said a replica Glock 17 handgun which was determined to be a pellet gun had been recovered at the scene.

After the city council meeting on Monday, the protesters rallied outside City Hall and were joined by more demonstrators. Kay Klo addressed the crowd and said, “Nyah will never get his due process in court. We will never know why he fled from the police that night. But here is what we know, this young child is not here to answer the questions of why he ran on what was supposed to be a routine summer night coming back from hanging out with friends. He did not deserve to be killed after a foot pursuit.”

Klo continued, “The stories that (officials) have been telling the media, telling the family who doesn’t even speak English, none of the stories add up, things don’t make sense. We need to see fully everything that happened that whole evening. We need those responsible to be held accountable.”

Mway’s brother Thoung Oo also addressed the

protesters. He expressed how he feels an emptiness with his brother not around anymore and says his parents cannot attend demonstrations or meetings with officials anymore because they are tired of hearing the stories from officials. They just want justice.

Oo said the information from police does not align with what the family was told the night of the shooting. He said the family was told Mway was shot in a shootout.

In an interview with ABC News, Mway's uncle Lay Htoo said, "This is very heartbreaking for the family because they lost a child." He said the shooting had devastated his family, who moved to Utica eight years ago after escaping civil war in Myanmar and spending time in a refugee camp in Thailand.

He said the family came to America to avoid violence, only now to be confronted by it. There are approximately 8,000 people in the Karen ethnic community in the Utica area.

New York State Attorney General Letitia James has said her office is conducting an independent investigation of the shooting.

According to Mapping Police Violence, there have been at least 645 police killings so far in 2024, on pace to exceed the 1,352 victims in 2023. There have only been nine days in which someone hasn't been killed.

The police—the armed agents of the capitalist state—continue to brutalize and kill workers, the poor and the most vulnerable members of society regardless of race. The demographic trends follow previous years with the largest share killed being white and African American men killed at a rate disproportionate to their share of the population. The largest number of killings are in more populated states, led by Texas (77), California (62), Florida (47) and Arizona (27); while the highest rate of killing is in the less populated, more rural states, Montana (7.38 killings per million); Wyoming (5.2); New Mexico (5.19) and Maine (5.14).



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