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USA

# Five Years Since George Floyd's Murder

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**GEORGE FLOYD WAS murdered on May 25, 2020 when a white Minneapolis police officer pressed his knee on Floyd's neck for 9-1/2 minutes while Floyd was handcuffed, pleading that he couldn't breathe.**

**Floyd's death was captured on video by a young female bystander, as other Black people shouted at the police to release Floyd.**

His murder led to nationwide and international protests and a reexamination of societal and institutional racism, including policing. Five years later what is the legacy of Floyd's death and movement for justice and police accountability?

## From BLM to Counterrevolution

Simply put: the rise of the Black Lives Matters Movement (BLM) that won some modest gains, and change in consciousness for millions, is now in the crosshairs of Donald Trump's MAGA counterrevolution.

Trump is a lifelong racist who says diversity, equity and inclusion is "reversion discrimination" and "white genocide." Yet it was in his first term that Floyd was murdered. He supported excessive police brutality including against BLM protesters.

President Joe Biden and the Democrats, who depended on the Black vote, promoted limited police reforms while praising cops "doing their jobs." The modest changes included Biden's Justice Department imposing a consent decree for the Minneapolis police department.

The cop who murdered Floyd, Derek Chauvin, was convicted in both state and federal trials. It is significant since President Trump cannot issue a pardon on the Minnesota conviction.

Trump's new Justice Department recently ended consent decrees in Minneapolis and other cities and is pushing anti-Black lies calling teaching of truth about racism as "racist."

Five years later, much of the progress won through mass street protests is either rolled back or under fire. White supremacists openly run the White House and Congress.

## Long History of Denial

Soon after Trump returned as president, he forced the Washington, DC city government to remove George Floyd Plaza.

But today's openness to defend white privilege against Black rights is not new, but a return to what existed for most

of U.S. history. Only during two periods in 400 years were Black Americans hopeful of being accepted as full citizens: for 20 years after the Civil War, and the 50 years following the Civil Rights revolution.

There is broad agreement in the Black community about racist violence by police and the need for real reform — little of which happened over the last five years. It became lip-service support for reform by Democrats and liberals, knowing it would never really succeed.

Both Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. in the 1960s pointed out how white segregationists at least were open about their racism, while most white liberals lectured Black leaders to “slow down” the fight for fundamental change.

## Minneapolis Today

The Minneapolis site where Floyd was murdered faces tense debate over how best to honor his legacy, according to Melissa Hellmann of The Guardian, who joined many out-of-town reporters on the May 25 anniversary date.

A mural is at 38th Street and Chicago Avenue in Minneapolis, the area called George Floyd Square.

“Last May, Roger Floyd and Thomas McLaurin walked the lengths of 38th Street and Chicago Avenue in Minneapolis, passing a roundabout with a garden, and a vacant gas station with a large sign that read: ‘Where there’s people there’s power.’”

“Now, five years since George Floyd’s murder, the future of the square where he died remains uncertain, as the city council deliberates on development plans.

“McLaurin and Roger Floyd want the area to be commemorated as a historic site that launched a global racial justice movement and served as a rallying call for police accountability.”

The Guardian reporter added: “Minneapolis was home to the oldest Black-owned and operated newspaper in Minneapolis, as well as more than 20 Black-owned businesses from the 1930s to 1970s.”

Michael McQuarrie, the director at the Center for Work and Democracy at Arizona State University, who conducted research at the Minneapolis square during the 2020 protests, said the city has been divided on how to move forward with the area for the past five years.

He sees the street closure from 2020 to 2021 as transformative for the community. But some community members, city council members and members of Floyd’s family say there’s no way to rush healing.

Council member Jason Chavez of Ward 9, where part of the square is located, said it needed to be recognized as “a historical component in our city history that will never be forgotten.”

“We can’t sanitize what happened here in the summer of 2020,” Chavez said.

# Fundamental Reckoning Must Happen

Keka Araujo of Black Enterprise magazine explained the sentiments of many African Americans:

"Five years after Floyd's tragic and preventable murder, the struggle for authentic accountability and equitable justice is far from concluded; indeed, in many respects, it feels like it is recommencing, with exigencies more pressing than ever...

"May 25, 2020, remains a stark inscription in our shameful shared history, igniting a worldwide insurrection against racial inequity and law enforcement malfeasance that only a fundamental reckoning could fix.

"Yet, as this somber anniversary arrives, the initial fervor of outrage and the urgent calls for systemic overhaul have yielded mainly to a troubling stillness, a creeping tide of regression that leaves many to question if the very conditions leading to Floyd's death are being tacitly allowed to re-emerge."

## Araujo eloquently reminds us:

"(A)s history consistently reminds us, the path to justice is rarely linear. The nascent impetus for comprehensive police reform at the federal level largely stalled, with legislative efforts failing to gain bipartisan traction...met by a persistent counter-current, a discernible pushback against the very conceptualization of systemic racism and the demands for accountability."

What he and many others don't identify is the root of the source of racism, police violence and white supremacy practiced by the state: the capitalist system. There can never be an end to racism including police violence, unless the system is overturned.

Until that reckoning of the system takes place, we must continue to fight and resist — and we must do so with our eyes wide open. That's the chief lesson of the legacy from May 25, 2020 to today. The Black community knows this better than any other oppressed population.

Source: [Against the Current](#).

PS:

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