

Protests erupt across U.S. after video shows fatal police beating of Tyre Nichols

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Memphis, January 28 (RHC)-- The release of a graphic video clip showing five police officers in early January beating to death an African-American man in the U.S. city of Memphis, Tennessee, has prompted widespread protests in several major cities across the country.

The rallies broke out late Friday shortly after the release of police bodycam footage showing five Memphis officers violently kicking, punching, tasing, and pepper-spraying 29-year-old Tyre Nichols during a traffic

stop on January 7th.

The video also showed officers and medical personnel failing to intervene as Nichols could not sit upright after the assault, with Memphis' police commissioner acknowledging that the clip depicts "acts that defy humanity."

The officers involved in the fatal beating of the African-American man have been charged with second-degree murder. The five officers — identified as Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley, Emmitt Martin III, Desmond Mills, Jr. and Justin Smith — were charged with Nichols' murder and surrendered to law enforcement on Thursday over aggravated assault, aggravated kidnapping, official misconduct and official oppression in addition to second-degree murder.

They were fired from the department last Friday after an internal investigation found that they used excessive force and failed their duties to intervene and render aid.

Following the release of the explosive video, crowds flocked to the streets in Memphis and at least seven other major American cities of New York City, Washington DC, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Boston, and Portland.

In Memphis, about 300 protesters charged the Memphis and Arkansas Bridge and shut down all four lanes of the roadway. The protesters also climbed the sloped grass to the upper level of Interstate 55, where they caused a major backup of hundreds of vehicles on the major thoroughfare.

"I have to be here for Tyre," said Marcus Randolph, one of the protesters. "The beating of a helpless man. He was in handcuffs. You see the handcuffs? He was in handcuffs the whole time. They kicked him in these handcuffs and he was on the ground with two other officers on top of him."

There was a heavy police presence surrounding Philadelphia's City Hall as angry protesters marched down the streets that the force had blocked off in preparation for any potential violence.

In New York, several demonstrations erupted across Manhattan. The protests appeared peaceful but Black Lives Matter leader, Hawk Newsome, warned that violence isn't off the table.

U.S. officials, including President Joe Biden, have already appealed for calm in the wake of the gruesome video's release.

The brutal murder of Nichols is the latest high-profile case of police officers using excessive and deadly force against African-American people and other minorities in recent years.

A 2021 study in the medical journal The Lancet recorded 30,800 deaths from police violence across the United States between 1980 and 2018, far higher than estimates offered by the U.S. National Vital Statistics System. It said more than 55 deaths from police violence in the U.S. from 1980 to 2018 were misclassified or unreported in official vital statistics reports.

Meanwhile, according to new data released earlier this month, U.S. police killed at least 1,176 people in 2022, making it the deadliest year on record for police violence in the country since experts first started tracking the killings.

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