

Thousands March in St. Louis Demanding Justice, End to Police Violence

[Jon Queally](#) | [Commondreams](#)



Photo: Light Brigading

Several thousand community members marched alongside activists from around the country in downtown St. Louis on Saturday as they demanded attention be paid to a national trend of police violence and called for justice in the case of Michael Brown, a local unarmed black teenager who was shot and killed by a white police officer, Darren Wilson, in the suburb of Ferguson on August 9th.

Though more than two months have now gone by, local citizens and their allies from across the country expressed anger, frustration, and sadness that so far no charges have been brought against Officer Wilson. "Arrest him now! Arrest him now!" was both a stated demand and a chanted refrain during



the march. Protesters march towards Kiener Plaza during the Ferguson October march in downtown St. Louis on Saturday, October, 11, 2014. Thousands of people took part in the march down Market Street and rally in Kiener Plaza. (Photo: David Carson/ St. Louis Post Dispatch)

Part of a four-day convergence that organizers have called [Ferguson October](#), the afternoon march brought forth a mix of messages that hinged on the racial politics of policing that have been exposed in a series of high-profile and shocking examples in recent months, with the case in Ferguson being only the most well-known.

As the New York Times [reports](#):

They came from places far from Ferguson, Mo., states like California, New York and Oregon. And while the story of a white police officer's shooting of an unarmed black teenager in Ferguson in August was what drew throngs of people to the St. Louis area for a weekend of protest, some also came with sweeping messages about income inequality and the minimum wage, race relations, immigration policy and distrust about

police procedures nationwide.

“The killing of innocent black youth is systemic,” said Adeline Bracey of Chicago, who marched here on Saturday in a crowd of demonstrators down the middle of Market Street, not far from the Gateway Arch. “It has to stop – everywhere.”

In the two months since the shooting death of Michael Brown, 18, in suburban Ferguson, a steady stream of demonstrations has often been local and personal, but the events this weekend, and expected to continue through Monday, were a test of the wider reach of efforts that have grown out of the case.

The result was a mix of races and ages. It brought a blur of signs with messages referring to the police officer who shot Mr. Brown, “Indict Darren Wilson Now,” but also broader notions, “Protest then vote.” Among an array of interests gathered: seminarians, voting rights advocates, college students and, perhaps most notably, a sizable contingent from labor unions, many wearing yellow T-shirts with the words: “Justice for all of us.”

And the St. Louis Post [reports](#):

Saturday’s march included a large papier-mâché likeness of Michael Brown with his hands up. It’s a pose that’s become common at protests since Brown’s shooting.

Antonia Cuffee, 30, drove 13 hours from Baltimore with six others to join in the protests.

“We felt we had to come out here to be part of change,” Cuffee, a policy worker, said.

“It’s a shame so many black people are getting killed by police,” she said. “Just by the nature of being black we are targeted, we are suspect.”

The crowd was peaceful and jovial, and organizers implored them to stay that way. "We need you to show discipline and respect," one organizer said.

Small groups came from as far away as Washington, D.C., and California to join the events.

Marlene Sinquefield and her two sisters arrived in St. Louis from Oakland, Calif., Friday night.

"There's no way we weren't going to come here for this," Sinquefield said. "It matters. It's important. When I have kids someday, I want them to know I stood up for their future."

LaDarius Torrey, 19, a sophomore at Georgetown University in Washington, said he and his two friends came for similar reasons.

"There's been a lot of mischaracterizations made about young black males in this country," he said. "We need to have serious discussions on race or it could get worse. I don't want to be next."

Later in the night, a smaller protest marched in the Grove district of Ferguson and clashed with police officers as they attempted to stage a sit-in at a local convenience store. As police fired tear gas to disperse the grounds, several people were arrested.

As NBC News [reported](#):

Protesters clashed with police at a St Louis gas station convenience store early Sunday, hours [after a peaceful day of marches and rallies marking two months](#) since the fatal police shooting of unarmed black teenager [Michael Brown](#). A group of about 200 marched on a QT (QuikTrip) in the Grove district, where some briefly staged a sit-in. A police car was attacked, prompting at least 10 arrests, and tear gas was

released to disperse the crowd.

St Louis Police Chief Sam Dotson said on Twitter to say that protesters were “throwing rocks” at officers and that arrests had been made for “continued illegal behavior.” That prompted campaigners to mock Dotson using the hashtag #tweetlikethechief.

#TweetLiketheChief:

[#TweetLiketheChief Tweets](#)

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 License

[More from Comondreams](#)