

# UK protesters speak on George Floyd demonstrations

By our reporters  
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Tens of thousands of people in the United Kingdom have joined demonstrations in solidarity with the ongoing protests in America against the police murder of George Floyd, state violence, racism and the destruction of democratic rights.

**Libby**, an 18-year-old student from Sheffield, told the WSW, “I took part in today’s Sheffield Black Lives Matter protest to stand in solidarity with people who have been affected by police brutality all over the world. George Floyd’s tragic death was a trigger of the anger built up over many years.

“Although the US has seen the most atrocities and lack of response by government officials, I think almost every country has a similar problem in the police system that needs to be addressed. And so, the protests should not be limited to one country.

“America claims to be the ‘land of the free,’ but protesters are being denied their First Amendment rights outside the White House.

“I think it is incredibly important for all races and all countries to protest to show the amount of resistance against the disgusting behavior of the police.

“In demonstrations in the UK protesters have raised other injustices such as the Grenfell fire and the death of a rail worker [Belly Mujinga], who was refused PPE [personal protective equipment], from COVID-19. The connection between all these tragic events is simply the lack of care and response from people in positions of power, ultimately stemming from oppression against different races and classes. This pattern of injustices needs to stop, and protesting is a good way to start, but after that there needs to be more serious change targeted to those in power.

“These past months have really brought light on the government’s priorities and I think the protesters’ number one priority should be to unify against their criminal policies regarding COVID-19 and serious lack of care for the public’s safety, and demands for change.”

**Elliot**, 18, also a student in Sheffield, explained, “I feel it’s important to be a part of the solution and not the problem. We all share the same blood, we’re all human, we’re all equal. No one is better than anyone, no one deserves more or less than anyone just because of the colour of their skin. In today’s

modern world where everything is evolving and people are changing, something as archaic as racism should die with our generation.”

**Meghan**, a 17-year-old student from Leicester, said, “When I saw the peaceful demonstrators cleared from in front of the White House my thoughts were, what is happening to humanity?

“In America, and the UK and many other countries, we had rights, to express how we feel through protests. Now the authorities are taking that away from innocent people.

“I think it’s important now more than ever that we unite to stop racism once and for all. I’m starting to see a pattern and I have noticed a lot of the ‘incidents’ were caused by the police. The people that caused this to happen deserve to be punished for killing innocent people.”

**William**, a 24-year-old PhD student based in Lancaster, said, “Trump clearly doesn’t believe that the Constitution applies to him, and that all of the protections against the state granted by it are just obstacles to his personal rule. His descriptions of peaceful protesters as ‘thugs’ and ‘looters’ and his lies about left-wing and ‘Antifa’ violence are a clear call for more of his fascist ‘very fine people’ to follow the example of the bar owner who murdered James Scurlock and try to destroy this movement of the working class.

“The Democratic Party are too afraid to impeach Trump for what he is doing because they would do very little differently under the circumstances. The protests have the admirable goal of stamping out racism within the police, but even if they manage to deliver this and reduce the level of police violence against black Americans to that brought against whites, this will still mean that [Democratic Party presidential candidate frontrunner Joe] Biden would preside over the deaths of hundreds of working-class black men at the hands of the police, exactly as Obama did.

“The multi-racial nature of the protests is a sign that they have the power to make a significant change. The worldwide support for the protesters proves that police violence against workers and the poor is not the result of the ‘original sin’ of racism in America; it demonstrates something fundamental about the purpose of the police in a capitalist society. I believe the protests will need to recognise the links between domestic

police oppression and the military's imperialist crimes and begin to view the international working class as their natural allies in this fight."

Regarding freedom of speech and police attacks on journalists, William said, "The police know that they will have the backing of the political establishment as they violate the First Amendment, and they know that by viciously intimidating the most principled reporters who may resist it, that the corporate media can be brought into line. The liberal *New York Times*' publishing of what amounted to a fascist manifesto was the first of what I'm sure will be many betrayals of the protests by the press.

"Any journalist still brave enough to speak out, as [WikiLeaks founder Julian] Assange did, can be isolated and subjected to the same arbitrary detention, surveillance, character assassination and threats of life imprisonment or even the death penalty.

"The protesters would do well to study the case of Julian Assange now and to demand his release, as the same treatment will soon be used against any journalist who defends them. The behaviour of the liberal media towards Assange shows that it is *only* the working class which can stand in defence of journalism and the right to free speech."

**Dylan**, a student in Brighton, told us, "Working class people are rejecting the fascistic dictatorship imposed by Donald Trump, undeterred by the killings, beatings and mass arrests they're being subjected to on the streets and, instead, continuing to resist institutions founded on a racist, imperialist ideology. This has been met with solidarity from oppressed communities across the globe in the form of mass protests.

"This unrest comes at a time where 39 million Americans have become unemployed since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. These levels are unseen since the Great Depression of the 1930s. This indicates the deepening class divide in our society between the financial oligarchy of billion-dollar corporations and those on the breadline.

"The fight against racism is very much the fight against capitalism, as we have seen during this pandemic. Those who are black, most of whom are working class, lower earners, are disproportionately more likely to die from the virus.

"The Democrats' failure to enact systematic change is because they see the killing of George Floyd as an incident of purely white on black violence, completely ignoring the issue of an attack on the working class via the oppressive capitalist institution of the police force. After all, this is the same Democratic Party that under Obama's administrations increased police militarisation and budgets after the emergence of the Black Lives Matter Movement.

"In the case of the United Kingdom, the murder of George Floyd has sparked mass protests across the country, forming multi-racial solidarity with those across the Atlantic and the rest of the globe. The UK has no innocence in past and present-day systematic racism and subjugation of the working

class, whether it be the deportation of Windrush citizens or Grenfell Tower and its working-class, multi-ethnic residents, 72 of whom perished due to deliberate lack of state investment and regulations. The anger projected at the Metropolitan Police, as seen through protests in London, comes as they decided to drop any investigation into the death of Belly Mujinga."

**Kit**, a 17-year-old sixth form student from Nuneaton and a reader of the WSWS, told our reporter, "It is massive hypocrisy by Trump and the US to claim they are intervening around the world against regimes in countries such as Iran to protect freedom and then send in the National Guard against peaceful protests at home.

"There is major discontent, but there was a lot relief because workers will begin to see what capitalism is and the nature of it and will begin asking fundamental questions.

"I don't think the Democrats are any different. It's in name only; they are fundamentally the same.

"This has gone beyond just Black Lives Matter; it is class struggles that have sprung up over the whole world. The mainstream media journalists have been attacked by the police for reporting what is happening. It shows the attack on basic freedoms, which is fundamental to a democracy. Julian Assange should be freed, just as any other reporters who have been arrested.

"It has also shown the priorities of governments. They haven't got money to protect lives, like PPE for health care workers which are a far smaller cost and more essential. But they can fund all the weapons that have been used by the police against protesters."

**Janice**, who works at Virgin Media, said "Trump's actions against the demonstrators are definitely an abuse of power and an attack on constitutional rights. I believe that most individuals are not racist, and they think it's unacceptable for anyone to be treated in that way. I think most people now are gaining awareness of systemic racism.

"I put a black square on Instagram but annotated it with the words, 'It's bigger than this.' I feel that focusing on black issues is overlooking the bigger picture of how many injustices are linked."

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