

Atlanta: Community demands return of Rayshard Brooks memorial site

written by Lizz Toledo
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On June 12, 2020, Rayshard Brooks was murdered by officers of the Atlanta Police Department at the Wendy's drive-through on University Avenue. Many community members witnessed the murder and were traumatized by the sight of Brooks, a Black man and father, being shot in the back, kicked while he was down and his body stood on by a police officer as he lay dying.

This happened in a poor, working-class, Black community that has witnessed and experienced the brutality of the APD for years. This time, the community decided to take control of this sacred space as a liberated zone for justice, grieving and community control.

On July 6, Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms and the Atlanta police violently stole this liberated space from the community and destroyed Rayshard Brooks' memorial. Bottoms' excuse was the tragic nearby shooting death of 8-year-old Secorrea Turner, a tragedy that the mayor and cops falsely blamed on armed community defenders guarding the memorial site.

Bottoms' cruelty has no bounds. After a powerful march on July 11 initiated by Community Movement Builders demanded that the city return control of the site to the community, the mayor ordered the complete tearing down of the Wendy's where Rayshard Brooks was murdered.

On July 14, members of the community watched as bulldozers and other equipment leveled the site to the ground. People were crying and begging them to stop.

We are still demanding that the city give us back this space so we can turn it into a community center, in Rayshard Brooks' honor. This site was already well on the way to becoming a place of community solidarity and support. Each time I visited I saw food and water distribution, games and activities for young children, education activities for older youth, masks, snacks and a community space that felt safer to us and our children than any other space in Atlanta.

We want it back. Community control now!

A petition issued by the Atlanta Peoples Power Assembly demands:

1. Return the community property, including posters, flowers and other donations, that were stolen from the Rayshard Brooks memorial.
2. Return to the community the Wendy's site and surrounding area where Rayshard Brooks was murdered by the APD, as a healing and liberated zone. Police hands off!

[Sign the petition here.](#)

The PPA also urges people to call, email and fax these demands to:

Councilwoman Joyce Sheperd

Atlanta City Hall

Phone: (404) 330-6053

Fax: (404) 739-9255

Email: jmsheperd@atlantaga.gov

Mayor Kiesha Lance Bottoms

Mayor's Office

Phone: (404) 330-6100

Office of Constituent Services

Phone: (404) 330-6023

To get involved, you can connect with the Atlanta Peoples Power Assembly on [Facebook](#), by phone at (678) 603-6959, or by email at atlantapeoplespowerassembly2@gmail.com.

