



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

# Atlanta activists rally for Rayshard Brooks Peace Center

written by Lizz Toledo

September 4, 2020





Atlanta — The Sleep-In Activists, Community Movement Builders and many other organizations, including the Socialist Unity Party, are calling for the Wendy's restaurant parking lot where Rayshard Brooks was murdered by Police Officer Garrett Rolfe to be turned into the Rayshard Brooks Peace Center.

At a rally for the Rayshard Brooks Peace Center on Aug. 30, activists called for an end to police brutality, solidarity with Jacob Blake and the Kenosha protesters, and an end to racist capitalism. They called for unity among organizations and encouraged those not yet involved in an organization to join one, because together we will find our freedom.

Speakers also reminded the audience of mostly Black and Brown young people that we can't expect the Democratic Party or electoral politics to give us our freedom. In fact, Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms was a speaker at the Democratic National Convention two weeks before. She never even mentioned Rayshard Brooks' name, while she pontificated about how much she cares about justice for Black lives at the hands of racist police.

While Mayor Bottoms and other politicians make assumptions about what the community wants in place of the burned-down Wendy's, the Sleep-In Activists have

been going door to door, speaking directly to people in the Pittsburgh and Peoplestown neighborhoods, and asking them what they thought about replacing the Wendy's with a community peace center in honor of Brooks.

"The response has been overwhelmingly favorable," said organizer Lady A, a longtime resident of this community. Activists have collected over 1,200 signatures. "I did not get one negative response. Everyone I asked to sign, signed it," she added.

## **Fighting for community control**

On June 12, Rayshard Brooks was killed by officers of the Atlanta Police Department at the Wendy's drive-through on University Avenue. Many community members witnessed the murder and were traumatised by the sight of Brooks, a Black man and father, being shot in the back, kicked while he was down, and a police officer standing on his body 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.

"In this space, people were barbecuing and feeding their neighbors. We had children's activities and community gardens," another longtime resident and activist told Struggle-La Lucha. "In this space, you could see the roots of community control sprouting."

Armed community defenders protected the area from white supremacists who occasionally drove by and shot at the crowd.

But on July 6, Mayor Bottoms and the Atlanta police violently stole this liberated space from the community and destroyed the people's memorial for Rayshard Brooks. Days later, the mayor sent her goons to demolish the site.

Now, the community demands that not only this space, but all spaces and agencies in the neighborhoods of Pittsburgh and Peoplestown, be placed under community control. They are calling for a Rayshard Brooks Peace Center, to defund the APD, and to distribute these funds to community-controlled organizations serving the people. And not use them to benefit corporations like Wendys that contribute nothing to the community, or the capitalist agenda itself.

We are the only ones who will make liberation for all possible. By staying in the streets, fighting united, protecting and defending each other, we will make a world where Black, Brown and Indigenous people are free to live up to our full potential. A world where our communities have full control of policing and all public safety agencies. A world where people are more important than profit — a united socialist world.

Follow the link for more information and to sign the petition for the [Rayshard Brooks Peace Center](#).

