



June 1, 2020

Chattanooga Urban League President Warren Logan, National Urban League President & CEO Mark Morial, along with Urban League affiliate leaders from around the country, issued the following statement in response to the civil unrest sweeping the nation:

STATEMENT FROM URBAN LEAGUE LEADERS

Our communities are overwhelmed with grief. We are heartsick over the inhumanity we have witnessed in the recent deaths of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery. We are appalled by the callous response from the authorities who shrugged in the face of evil.

Cities across the nation have erupted in rage and despair. As civil rights leaders who are committed to racial justice, we share the protesters' anguish, and the heartbreak of the communities where uprisings have turned violent.

There are those who are inciting violence and mayhem. And there are those engaged in peaceful protest. No one should assume they are the same people, and we refute any attempt to discredit or dismiss the just cause for which people are marching based on infiltrators bent on sabotage. We support the right of citizens to engage in peaceful protest. We condemn the use of excessive force to dispel demonstrations.

We are hearing what Martin Luther King, Jr., famously called "the language of the unheard." When George Floyd begged for his life as Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin pressed his knee into Floyd's throat, he was unheard. The onlookers pleading with Chauvin to stop were unheard.

The cries for justice have gone unheard long enough.

The long-overdue arrests of Ahmaud Arbery's killers and one of the officers involved in George Floyd's death are merely a first step in a long journey. The other officers involved in Floyd's killing also must be held accountable.

The Urban League Movement has proposed specific recommendations for police reform and accountability. These include the widespread use of body cameras and dashboard cameras, revision of use-of-force policies, officer training and hiring standards, and the immediate appointment of independent prosecutors to investigate police misconduct.

But even more than these measures, we need a revision of our culture. It's a culture that teaches a white woman walking her dog in Central Park that racially-motivated police brutality is a weapon she can use to enforce her own preferred social code.

As we pursue these measures to reform the police in our communities, we call upon all community leaders, elected officials, corporate leaders and social institutions to join us in pursuing policies that promote racial reconciliation.

About Urban League of Greater Chattanooga

Since 1982, the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga has been an affiliate of the National Urban League, the nation's largest community-based organization movement devoted to empowering African-American and other underserved individuals to enter the economic and social mainstream. Its programmatic emphasis is on education, economic empowerment, workforce development, Inclusion by Design Diversity Program, and the Entrepreneur Center, which provides assistance to small business owners. The League's work and results are evident in the lives of the over 15,000 people it touches each year. For more information, visit www.ulchatt.net.