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## **SCLC PRESIDENT DR. CHARLES STEELE JR. CALLS FOR THE CONTINUATION OF MLK'S PRINCIPLES OF NONVIOLENCE**

**"They remain important and impactful. Strategic nonviolent protests still win!"**



*Ahmaud Arbery's mother, Wanda Cooper Jones along with his sister, joined SCLC President/CEO Dr. Charles Steele, Jr on Saturday's six county CARAVAN FOR JUSTICE*

Nationwide, our National SCLC leadership, spearheaded by our President/CEO Dr. Charles Steele Jr has been a key player in the planning and participation of the nonviolent direct-action response to the tragic and horrific deaths of Gregory Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. Their senseless and racially charged brutal murders are indefensible. They've triggered an unprecedented international outcry of pain, injustice and racism.

Mr. Floyd, as the nation watched, begged and pleaded for his life, only to be callously choked for eight minutes with Minnesota policeman Derek Chauvin's knee on his neck. "I can't breathe", Floyd's last words have become the rallying cry for protesters in all 50 states for the past 10 days.

Ms. Taylor, a 26-year-old emergency room technician, was sleeping peacefully shortly after midnight on March 13, when a Louisville, Kentucky police unit used a battering ram to burst into her apartment, unannounced, under the guise of a “no-knock” warrant. Tragically though, they were executing that said warrant at the wrong home. Taylor’s boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, unaware of who the invading intruders were, fired first in self-defense. Police returned several shots, hitting and killing Taylor with eight shots. Her life, carelessly and callously ended from a police department that did not even deem it necessary to check the address before they went in looking for violence.

Ahmaud Arbery was hunted in the streets by a hate filled trio of racist mercenaries who wanted no more than the blood of a black man who had done nothing more than go for a jog. All three have been arrested and charged with murder as the result of a revealing video and widespread protests. Dr. Steele has met with Arbery’s mother, Wanda Cooper-Jones, and his sister to console and consult them.

We pray for peace for their families, and justice for the lives they lost. We also have been and will continue to be active in the streets, standing shoulder to shoulder with communities that demand justice and our community that has hit it’s threshold. America has come to a crossroads. Our police departments, political officials, and corporate interests must all take their knees off our necks and allow us to breathe equitably. It has become too much to bear and we demand justice!

The founding President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., has a quote that echoes through history; “Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that”. These words have been embraced and amplified by a rallying cry of our current President, Dr. Charles Steele, Jr., “Love is...what love does!”

Dr. Steele, has continued to lead marches in South Georgia, calling for complete justice in the Ahmaud Arbery case as they look to recall the District Attorney who was allegedly complicit in the coverup of the murder. He also, led a march of over 1,500 people in Tuscaloosa, AL with students from the University of Alabama and surrounding area. In a fiery and passionate speech, Steele told the group that we must understand the world continues to need a mass "Movement" rooted in the nonviolent direct action that has been the cornerstone of the SCLC and the dismantling of Jim Crow. The blueprint of using *Kingian Nonviolence* remains as the most effective method for change.

As we continue the activist act of love, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference acknowledges the pain, rage and suffering of Black America. Our faith keeps us rooted in hope and the belief in God’s promises for tomorrow, but understand that it is difficult to show restraint and compassion in a country that has historically and presently treated us as less than neighbors, less than citizens and less than human. As Dr. Martin Luther King often said, "A riot is the language of the unheard." The nation, if not the world, hears Black America now and forever more if we purposefully continue our quest for justice and fairness.

“But we are more than human, we are children of God, and we will stand on his word and demand freedom, justice, and equality for all,” said Dr. Steele.

**VIDEO:** SCLC President Dr. Charles Steele, Jr. speaks to Youth Coalition Rally in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

<https://youtu.be/z0ZjkMuSeJM>