

Prominent Christian Leaders Across the US Cry Out for Justice for Ahmaud Arbery

UPDATE: This story was updated to reflect that Gregory and Travis McMichael were arrested Thursday, May 7, in the killing of Ahmaud Arbery and charged with murder and assault.

Christian leaders across the United States are calling for justice for Ahmaud Arbery, a young black man who was shot to death after being chased by two white men in February.

Arbery's family and advocates have expressed their concern that the case has not progressed as quickly or thoroughly as possible. A former law enforcement officer and his son have been arrested in Arbery's killing and have been charged with murder and aggravated assault. Police say more arrests may be forthcoming.

Time reports that police have had footage of the murder since Feb. 23, the day 25-year-old Arbery was killed, but did not release it to the family or the public until Tuesday, May 5. The video shows Arbery jogging in a neighborhood near Brunswick, Georgia, according to CNN. Gregory McMichael, a former police officer, and his son, Travis, are seen chasing Arbery. During a struggle over Travis' shotgun, two shots were fired and Arbery fell wounded. McMichael later told police that Arbery matched the description of a break-in suspect in the area.

Arbery's mother says her son, a former high school football player, was unarmed during the incident. She tells First Coast News that he was working to become an electrician. The young man's father says, "All I want to do is get justice for my son."

Since the video's release, posts calling for justice for Arbery have swept social media, sparking outrage and debate.

Christian leaders have joined in the public cries for justice, including Jentezen Franklin, pastor of Free Chapel in Gainesville, Georgia.

"After viewing this video, there's one thing that should be crystal clear now to all Georgians: the authorities must expeditiously complete their investigation of the circumstances surrounding the death of Ahmaud Arbery and take all appropriate measures in response to what appears to be a horribly heinous crime," Franklin says. "I am calling upon the authorities to act now; COVID-19 cannot be an excuse for injustice. I will be watching these developments closely along with thousands of leaders throughout our state who stand for justice. I pray for justice, and I pray for the family of Ahmaud Arbery as they still bear the pain of their loss."

Producer and motivational speaker DeVon Franklin shared a photo of Arbery on Instagram that displayed the words: "I was murdered by an armed father and son who hunted me down and shot me as I jogged in a Georgia neighborhood. Neither of my killers have been charged. My name is Ahmaud Arbery."

On Wednesday, May 6, Christian music artist Tauren Wells also called for justice on Instagram, saying: "Ahmaud Arbery. Followed, shot and killed by 2 men while out for a run around the neighborhood. An on-going investigation with no arrests. If the roles were reversed, the shooters would be in jail RIGHT NOW. God let justice run like a river. My prayers are with the Arbery family. America, we have a problem. Who will raise their voice?"

Christian rapper Lecrae shared a tweet simply saying, "God be with the family of #AhmadArbery." A commenter who goes by "Truth Seeker" responded to his tweet, saying, "Once again Lecrae pushing a lying liberal agenda. The dude ran at 'm sure

there's more to the pushing lying racist narratives. You wonder by you've lost a ton of supporters with your music..."

Lecrae posted a photo of the commenter's response to his tweet on Instagram.

"I'll never understand how people politicize care and concern," he said in the photo's caption. "This is the language and processing that exhausts people and CREATES division. Are we here to expand political empires or the Kingdom?"

After reviewing the evidence in the shooting, a Georgia prosecutor is calling for a grand jury investigation into the matter, saying he is confident it should be presented for consideration of criminal charges.

On Wednesday, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation pledged to resolve the matter with a thorough investigation.

"Our goal in every investigation is to seek the truth," GBI Director Vic Reynolds told reporters. "And that's exactly what we intend on doing in this matter. I realize that emotions are running high in this community and they're running high throughout the state, and the last thing anyone wants to do is extend us any patience. But I also realize that this investigation must be done correctly and therefore I must ask for a little of your patience."

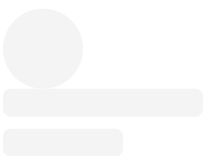
Meanwhile, Christians continue to express their grief over the shooting.



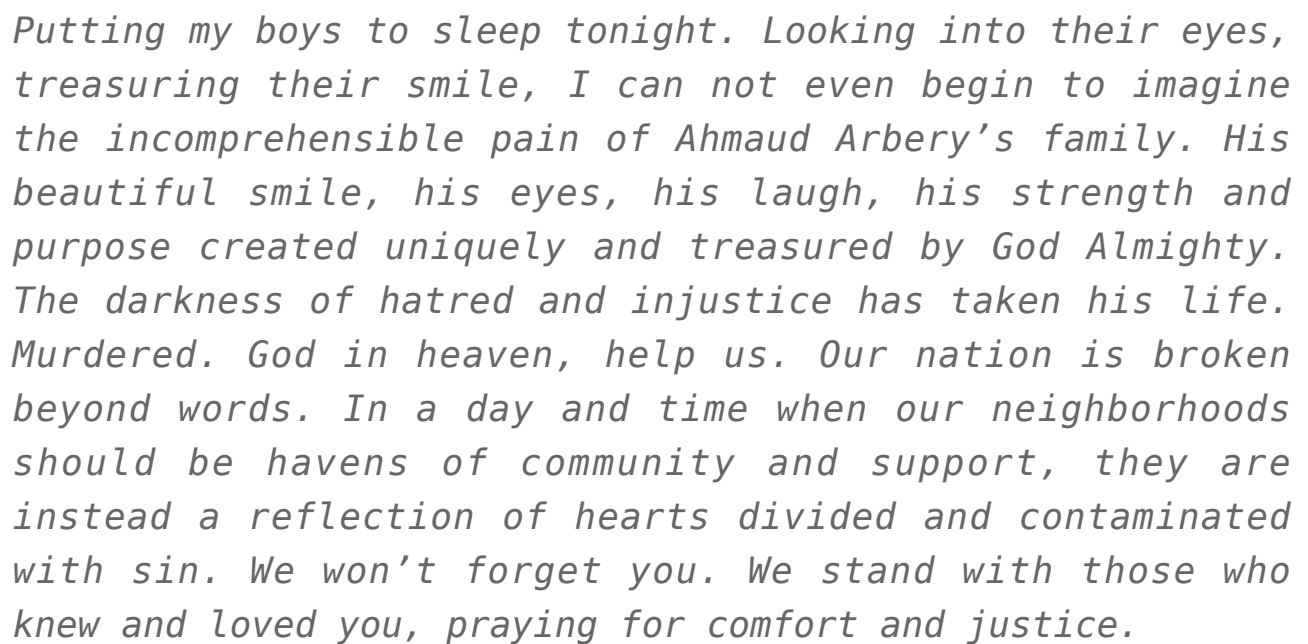
[View this post on Instagram](#)

Ahmaud Arbery. One of God's children. Taken from this world too early and leaving his family to mourn his loss. The loss from a senseless death. My heart is broken and it's so incredibly sad this still happens in our country. Please pray for the family. Come lord Jesus. #ahmaudarbery #justiceforahmaud

A post shared by Jeremy Camp (@jeremycampofficial) on May 6, 2020 at 7:49pm PDT



[View this post on Instagram](#)

The image shows a screenshot of an Instagram post. At the top, there is a link to view the post on Instagram. Below the link is a large, solid black rectangular area, which is a redacted image. Underneath the redaction is a paragraph of text in a monospaced font, enclosed in a light gray border. The text is a heartfelt message about the death of Ahmaud Arbery, expressing grief and a call for justice. At the bottom of the post, there is a line of text indicating it was shared by DawnCheré Wilkerson on May 6, 2020.

Putting my boys to sleep tonight. Looking into their eyes, treasuring their smile, I can not even begin to imagine the incomprehensible pain of Ahmaud Arbery's family. His beautiful smile, his eyes, his laugh, his strength and purpose created uniquely and treasured by God Almighty. The darkness of hatred and injustice has taken his life. Murdered. God in heaven, help us. Our nation is broken beyond words. In a day and time when our neighborhoods should be havens of community and support, they are instead a reflection of hearts divided and contaminated with sin. We won't forget you. We stand with those who knew and loved you, praying for comfort and justice.

A post shared by DawnCheré Wilkerson (@dawnchere) on May 6, 2020 at 6:38pm PDT



[View this post on Instagram](#)

Justice can never be about “just us”. While the church has an obligation to pray for the family of #ahmaudarbery to be comforted in their great heartbreak, we must also stand against this senseless violence and seek justice. May we never become desensitized to the value of life!

A post shared by Wilfredo De Jesús (@pastorchoco) on May 6, 2020 at 7:06pm PDT