
Ferguson Returns to Normal on Thanksgiving with Calm and Solidarity

28/11/2014



Ferguson, a suburb of St. Louis, has been trying – little by little – to recover some measure of normalcy after the violent protests Monday and Tuesday nights that resulted in more than 120 arrests and substantial material damage.

A number of residents on Thursday interrupted their Thanksgiving celebrations to come to Canfield Drive, where an improvised monument of flowers and stuffed animals has been set up to memorialize 18-year-old Michael Brown in front of an automobile burned during the disturbances.

“My son asked about him. ... He said, ‘I want to see Michael Brown.’ I wanted to bring him here so he can see what happens these days in the United States. People can’t sleep, especially in this area,” Kartess Browder, 24, told Efe, while holding her frisky little son’s hand.

Not far away, yellow police tape cordoned off the ruins of a beauty shop that was attacked and destroyed Monday night, while snow fallen over the past 24 hours melted and dripped from the roofs.

“This is a crime scene,” a police officer told Efe, emphasizing that the yellow tape cordon could not be crossed since a police investigation was under way there.

The small businesspeople in Ferguson whose shops were destroyed in the violence received free turkeys for Thanksgiving from the NAACP.

Natalie Dubose, a single mother with two children whose bakery was trashed and destroyed by several rioters during the disturbances launched a campaign on the social networks to solicit donations and said she has collected \$230,000.

"I never thought there was so much love," she said, tears coming to her eyes at people's generosity in her time of need.

Volunteers from the Red Cross in St. Louis also have mobilized to help the families who lost their homes as a result of the violence.

Several dozen people, however, gathered before the police station – guarded by about 40 National Guard troops clad in anti-riot gear – on Wednesday night and one of them, Atia – a 24-year-old African American student – carried a sign saying "Justice for Mike Brown."

"I'll eat turkey," she told Efe, "and return here. The fight will continue every day."

Protests against the grand jury decision not to indict policeman Darren Wilson in Brown's killing had continued on Wednesday night in Los Angeles with isolated cases of violence and the arrests of several dozen people.

The protests, which had spread to 170 cities across the United States after the verdict, had died down elsewhere but gained momentum Wednesday in Los Angeles where the police dispersed hundreds of demonstrators and made dozens of arrests.

The relative calm on Wednesday night throughout the country except Los Angeles could be attributed to it being Thanksgiving Eve.

Wilson, a 28-year-old police officer, shot the unarmed Brown on August 9 claiming tht the youth was belligerent and attacked him and saying he felt his life was in danger.

In a televised interview this week, Wilson said that he shot Brown in self-defense and that he had a clear conscience, whereas several eyewitness accounts describe the incident as cold-blooded murder.

Though Wilson has been let off, a double investigation is underway to determine if Brown's civil rights were violated and if the local police were involved in discriminatory practices against the large local African-American community.
