

From Monifa Bandele, Policy Table Leader Movement for Black Lives

The Movement for Black Lives is an ecosystem of 150 Black-led organizations creating a shared vision and policy agenda to win rights, recognition, and resources for Black people. Central to our work is our demand for investments in the education, health and safety of Black people, instead of investments in the criminalizing, caging, and harming of Black people. We want investments in Black communities, determined by Black communities, and divestment from exploitative forces including prisons, fossil fuels, police, surveillance and exploitative corporations.

On this 49th anniversary of the Attica Uprising, we honor our incarcerated freedom fighters. Demanding justice is key to Black liberation. We rise up in defense of all Black lives because protests and organizing are the only way we've ever secured any rights in this country. That is why our right to protest has always been under attack, especially behind the walls. We can learn so much from the bold activism of Attica and we stand on the foundation they laid in fighting for human rights, dignity, and ending the racist structures of incarceration. They demanded radical change. Instead, over the decades, "reforms" have worsened sentencing and accelerated mass incarceration. To honor them, we must pick up the mantle for real transformation.

Historically and currently our political movements are criminalized --from the 10,000+ protestors arrested during the current uprising to Black political prisoners and exiles like Assata Shakur, Mumia Abu Jamal, and Mutulu Shakur to Josh Williams and other protestors arrested during the Ferguson and Baltimore uprisings. The current uprising has been met with police rioting, tear gas, physical abuse and violence, and bogus arrests. By June, we saw over 10,000 arrests with over 90 people facing federal charges.

The Movement for Black Lives demands all charges be dropped against protestors and political prisoners; a full investigation into all allegations of police and federal agent violence; the calling off of Operation Legend and militarization of police; all law enforcement agencies including ICE and CBP must stop arresting protestors; and passage of the [BREATHE Act](#) to divest from prisons and end militarized policing.

From the Black Panthers to Ferguson organizers to the thousands being charged today by local and federal law enforcement, we are calling to free them all!

In response to a legacy of police and proxy violence that most recently took the lives of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and Tony McDade, people have taken to the streets in protest. This uprising against excessive, brutal, militarized policing has called for decision makers in city, state, and federal government to defund the police after decades of inaction and failed reforms, consent decrees, investigations, and oversight.

In just a few months, the organizations and leaders of the Movement for Black Lives worked as part of this protest movement to accomplish what many thought was impossible. Now, cities across the country are calling to defund the police.

For much of U.S. history, law enforcement meant implementing laws that were explicitly designed to subjugate Black people and enforce white supremacy. That's why Black people, along with hundreds of thousands of others, are calling for city, state, and federal governments to abolish policing as we currently understand it. We must divest from excessive, brutal, discriminatory policing and invest in a vision of community safety that works for everyone, not

just an elite few. In New York State we demand the passage of Elder Parole, Fair and Timely Parole, HALT Solitary, and repeal of Walking While Trans.

Our current movement is connected to the Attica Uprising because the demands are the same. We want freedom. Full stop.