Silence Is Not An Option

Over the past several weeks, Las Americas has been uplifting local and national Black Lives Matter protests, efforts and anti-racist materials within our team and on social media. We want to be unequivocal in our support but also want to make it clear we are listening and understand there is a lot of work to be done. As our timelines and the headlines change we want to remind our supporters that the issue of systemic racism is not new and it’s far from over. We hope the nation continues to be alert to these issues as attention begins to fade: The work is just beginning.

Las Americas is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending systems that oppress immigrants and refugees, and we fight every day for policies that value humanity, dignity, and justice. With the recent murder of George Floyd centering the immeasurable numbers of Black lives lost to racist policing and the terror brought upon the Black community, it is clear we are not living with systems that uphold our values. There is no question during this point in history where we stand - Black Lives Matter because, as we’ve heard from the streets in every state in this country, without justice there can be no peace.

We are committed to defending Black life and those standing up against police brutality and racial injustice. For this we support the following:

1. End Qualified Immunity

Qualified immunity protects police officers from lawsuits and holds them to a different set of standards than the rest of us.

2. Demilitarize the Police

During this pandemic, our health care workers are struggling to be equipped with proper PPE on the frontlines, yet police are fully equipped with weapons of war to use against American citizens exercising their constitutional rights. Law enforcement must be demilitarized; programs providing surplus military equipment to police should be terminated, use of weapons such as tear
gas should be prohibited, tactics must be deescalated, and substantial investment must be made in alternative forms of responding to community needs—such as mental health interventions.

3. Register To Vote

Our Power to vote is the only thing that is going to dismantle a system of oppression that has been built over many generations. Laws and institutions must reflect the progress of the people and that power lies with us. Local elections are immensely important for our cities. The relationships between prosecutors and the police can determine whether or not a cop with blood on their hands will be servetime. We must vote our values and vote for just communities.

4. Immigration is Black Issue

We must recognize and address systemic anti-Black racism within the U.S. asylum and refugee systems as well. Seeking asylum is an internationally-recognized human right, yet far too many Black asylum seekers are denied due process, locked in detention, and eventually deported. We must actively protect Black migrants after years of heightened discrimination in the asylum and refugee systems regardless of who the is elected president.

We encourage our supporters to donate to groups like BYP100, Haitian Bridge Alliance, Black Alliance For Just Immigration, M4BL, NAACP, Black Visions Collective, Coalition of Communities of Color, Assata’s Daughters and other organizations working to end police brutality and racial injustice.

Unless and until white America collectively acknowledges they built this system of oppression and is accountable to changing the present reality facing Black communities, we remain a country where liberty and justice for all is an unrealized ideal that remains out of reach. Staying silent is no longer an option. Accepting racism is no longer an option. In the words of Angela Davis, it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be actively and vocally anti-racist. We are the change, we are seeing it and we are paving the path towards a more perfect union.

La Lucha Sigue,

Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center