

May 29th, 2020

Salaams + Peace Be Upon You All,

In immensely exhausting and angering times such as these, we must express solidarity with our Black brothers and sisters, both within and outside of the Muslim community.

On Monday, May 25th, 2020 [George Floyd](#), an unarmed Black man, was murdered by a police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Yet again, a Black life has been taken at the hands of police violence and white supremacy. Non-Black folks cannot attempt to insulate themselves from this injustice, and **it is not enough to simply *not be racist***. We must actively confront the anti-Blackness embedded in our society-- silence is a pledge for racism.

In 2019, 1099 people died due to police violence, 24% of whom were Black, who represent only 13% of the US population. Black people are [3 times more likely](#) to be killed by a police officer than white people. Conversations around this subject happen constantly, and our tangible action is long overdue.

Many individuals are unsure about what action might look like, so we have consolidated some resources provided by Black individuals and organizations who are actively doing this work, and advising non-Black folks in ways they can help. Here are some key points to be cognizant of while showing solidarity:

- **Prioritize Black voices and experiences.** We need to listen before acting to avoid engaging in harmful behavior that may further silence and alienate Black voices.
- **Stop publicizing the video of George Floyd's murder.** Recklessly circulating traumatizing videos of any Black killings that occur, especially without trigger warnings, is insensitive and dehumanizing. There are ways to spread awareness without sensationalizing trauma.
- **Stop publicizing the images, videos, and names of protestors.** A disproportionate number of Black activists from the Ferguson protests in 2014 were found murdered-- this is not a coincidence. See this [article](#) for reference.
- **Share mental health resources.** According to a [study](#) on racial trauma, "African American youth are more likely than their peers from other racial and ethnic groups to experience interpersonal traumas and traumatic racist and discriminatory encounters."
- **Educate yourself and your circles!** Far too many unsubstantiated claims and counter-arguments are made that attempt to shift blame to the victims of police violence, silence the Black Lives Matter movement, and ultimately invalidate Black experiences.

There is a lot for each of us to learn, and unlearn, in being effective allies, though we need to start immediately. Solidarity should not be reactive or dependent on the murder of yet another Black life-- it is an ongoing process.

With love,

The Muslim Institute for Leadership & Empowerment

More Action Items

- Educate yourself with the [Black History Month Library](#) created by activist-organizer and author, [Charles Preston](#), which contains assorted materials on notable Black figures.
- Read this Teen Vogue [article](#) by Charlottesville activist-organizer, Zyahna Bryant, which includes more information on how to “take anti-racist action.”
 - Zyanha’s Recommended Readings:
 - [Angela Davis](#), [Asata Shakur](#), [Michelle Alexander](#), [Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor](#), [Ida B. Wells](#)
- Text “FLOYD” to 55156 and “Justice” to 668-366
- The [Anti-racism Resources for White People](#) contains an action guide compiled by advocacy strategists Sarah Sophie Flicker and Alyssa Klein
- You can find many petition and donation links at this [site](#) provided by the Organization of African Students (OAS) which includes:
 - The [Minnesota Freedom Fund](#)
 - Official George Floyd [Memorial Fund](#)
 - Petition for [Tony McDade](#)
 - Petition for [Ahmaud Arbery](#)
 - Petition for [Breonna Taylor](#); make calls using the approved script at this site as well!
- Below are links to services, literature, and personal narratives that provide consolation and therapy for those who may feel emotionally overwhelmed as a result of these recurring traumatic incidents:
 - [Black Virtual Therapist Network](#): “Collective of advocates, yoga teachers, artists, therapists, lawyers, religious leaders, teachers, psychologists and activists committed to the emotional/mental health and healing of Black communities.”
 - [Racial Trauma Toolkit from Boston College](#): “The ISPRC Alumni Board has released a toolkit for managing symptoms at [#racialtraumaisreal](#) which is available to download.”
 - [Black Mental Health Resources from Everyone Counts Campaign](#): “We wanted to highlight some of today’s African-American advocates and projects advancing the conversation about mental health, breaking down the stigma faced by their communities, and helping African-Americans to access recovery-oriented, trauma-informed, and culturally competent mental health care.”
 - [Apologies Are Not Reparations](#): A must-read, powerful essay by third-year UVA student, Jayla Hart
 - [Sharing Hope: Speaking with African Americans about Mental Health](#): “This program provides mental health information in a sensitive manner through personal stories and also highlights how and where to find help.”

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted.”

- Quran, Surah An-Nisa (4:135)