



The Call for the 19th National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation: October 22, 2014

On the eve of the 19th annual National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation, a defiant new spirit is in the air. In Ferguson, Missouri, people continue to rise up in outrage against the killing of Mike Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old Black youth who was just days away from starting college. Despite the rapid and ruthless militarization of the town by racist police and the National Guard, people defied curfews, tear gas, rubber bullets, and calls for a return to business-as-usual—and oppression-as-usual—by protesting and rebelling for ten consecutive, sweltering nights in August. Thousands from around the country gathered in Ferguson this past weekend to stand in solidarity with the brave people of Ferguson. These are the moments where the decades of racist abuse, criminalization, and police terror at the hands of this system came crashing against fearless resistance from the very people it seeks to control, inspiring justice-seeking people not just nationwide, but around the world. The National Day of Protest was founded to oppose exactly these kinds of abuses. This year, in big cities and small towns, in the face of police brutality, repression, mass incarceration and the criminalization of youth we say, *Let the spirit of Ferguson ignite hearts nationwide with an uncompromising passion for justice!*

In the United States, this year has seen a litany of state violence, with increasing documentation and coverage making these ongoing atrocities more difficult to deny. Over 800 people have been killed by law enforcement nationwide, at least 200 since Mike Brown, and at least 23 people in *one week*. Although police criminalization of and violence against women and transgender people is nothing new, they have become more newsworthy of late. There seems to be no level too low for law enforcement to stoop in their violence, whether it is against children and young teens, the elderly, the deaf, or those who are emotionally or mentally distressed.

In New York City, the era of mass criminalization of Black and brown communities through "stop and frisk" was supposed to be over thanks to the election of a supposedly progressive mayor. What de Blasio brought instead though, was the return of William Bratton, the architect of Stop and Frisk! Bratton's highly oppressive "broken windows" style of policing, in which the smallest "crimes" are aggressively policed, has already led to an increase in police brutality and public mistrust. In this year, NYPD's use of "Broken Windows" has led to the highly publicized chokehold death of beloved community member Eric Garner, the beating of an 84-year-old immigrant man for allegedly jaywalking, a chokehold on a 7-month pregnant woman for barbecuing in front of her home, a young man kicked in the head while lying on the ground handcuffed, numerous people beaten for falling asleep on the subway, a raid of Harlem housing projects, and numerous other atrocities. Even some of the most well-known cultural aspects of New York are under attack, as subway performers are being arrested at astonishing rates simply for trying to earn a living as they have been doing for decades. Meanwhile, the same City Council that

October 22nd is a day that people around the nation have mobilized every year since 1996 for a National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation. It is crucial that we bring forward a powerful National Day of Protest in cities and towns across the U.S. to challenge the ongoing violence against the people. This October 22nd, stand with thousands across the country to express our collective outrage, creativity, and resistance in response to the crimes of this system. On October 22nd, WEAR BLACK, FIGHT BACK!

voted so strongly for police reforms earlier this year has remained silent in the midst of a new "progressive" administration, lifting their voices only to cry out for 1,000 more cops!

We have seen other attempts at creating some modicum of accountability being thwarted or ineffective, such as the gutting of civilian oversight mechanisms and useless federal investigations of police departments by the U.S. Department of Justice, while those who document police misconduct are under attack. But we applaud the different ways that people have risen up and persevered.

Law enforcement departments across the country have come to use on a routine basis the exertion of military enforcement and control in communities that are deemed a "social disturbance." Although there has been a long history of the militarization of police, the revelation of just how much military weaponry has been supplied to local law enforcement by the Pentagon and how the uprising in Ferguson was dealt with are a sobering reminder of the capabilities of law enforcement to exert standing army-like control over the population of non-combatant civilians. It also would be a moral crime to ignore the fact that the intensification of police arms and enforcement is borne out of the desire, on behalf of the state, to quell the expression of people of color in their demands for justice.

Through the unabated organizing and pressure from the people, we can rejoice over the release of political prisoners Lynne Stewart and Eddie Conway (and hopefully soon Sundiata Acoli), but we must continue our fight for the many political prisoners who continue to be unjustly locked up, along with the hundreds of thousands imprisoned for non-violent offenses due to discriminatory practices in the criminal justice system. The U.S. has the highest number of prisoners in the world, incarcerating almost one-third of the world's female prisoners, and having more than 60% of prisoners being people of color – still a minority of this nation's population. Despite solitary confinement being internationally designated as torture, over 80,000 languish in such conditions, including some as young as 16. Solitary confinement led to a death sentence for some, and more egregious evidence of torture in prisons are now coming to light. This brazen inhumanity is exemplified by border patrol's abuse of immigrant children seeking safety within our borders, and the warehousing and deportation of literally millions of immigrants by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Under such a corrupt system, no imprisonments are legitimate!

The Call for a Month of Resistance to Mass Incarceration, Police Terror, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation declares that this "will not stop unless and until millions of people, of all nationalities, stand up and say NO MORE, in unmistakable terms. The history of this and every other country shows that without struggle, there can be no positive change; but with struggle this kind of change becomes possible."

JOIN US if there is already an October 22nd event in your area. CREATE one if you are in an area where there is currently no group organizing. For listings of activities around the country, check the website www.october22.org