

FREE EBOOK

# A YEAR IN REVIEW: RACISM, REPRESSION & FIGHTBACK IN THE USA

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Source: Daniel Arauz



Source: The World



Source: Don Sniegowski

## Alliance for Global Justice





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# INTRODUCTION



On May 25, 2020, crisis came to a head when the extrajudicial murder of George Floyd by a white Minneapolis police officer sparked what's come to be known as the largest sustained mobilization in modern U.S. history. Against the backdrop of a devastating pandemic, economic recession and climate crisis disproportionately impacting Black, Indigenous and Latinx people of color in the United States, an eruption of social unrest and growth of a popular grassroots movement in defense of Black lives has re-ignited public discourse around the structural racism and police violence that characterize the lived realities and struggles of Black communities in the U.S. today.

Predictably, this surge of mass resistance against systemic racism and state violence has been met with even more brutal racist and political repression: most notably the hyper-criminalization of protests; the militarization of police forces; mass protest-related arrests and indefinite detentions; a rise in politically-motivated incarcerations; bolstered state surveillance and counter-intelligence targeting anti-racist activists; a re-ignition of right-wing terrorism and paramilitary violence; and a spike in extrajudicial police murders.

A "new wave" of increased coverage and sharing of news stories regarding deaths of people of color at the hands of police and, most particularly, people of color aligned with the anti-racist movement that followed the Ferguson uprising of 2014 presents us



Source: Sean Hodrick, *Alamy*

with an opportunity to confront the whitewashing of human rights violations in the U.S. in ways not previously possible. This book aims to provide a comprehensive overview and documentation of human rights violations perpetrated against Black civilians and anti-racist activists throughout a year of explosive political repression, the surge of a militant far-right and the growth of a popular movement for racial justice and Black liberation in the 21st century.

As a tribute to George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and the countless lives lost to U.S. state violence and state-sponsored terrorism, this book sheds light on the scope and magnitude of racist and political repression and human rights violations in the U.S. today.



# REPRESSION IN CONTEXT



## Geopolitical context

We recognize that these tactics of state repression (among them arbitrary detentions, harassment, forced disappearances and extrajudicial killings), are the same acts of violence used by the Department of Homeland Security against undocumented people on a regular basis and which have been used in the past against Black movement leaders and Muslim people after September 11.

These practices aren't exclusive to domestic U.S. policy either. As early as 1946, the U.S. established the notorious School of the Americas (SOA) (now known as the Western Hemispheric Institute for Security Cooperation -- WHINSEC), founded in the Panama Canal Zone to protect its geopolitical and economic interests in the hemisphere. The SOA provided training in sophisticated tactics of state terrorism and repression, among them genocide, torture, family separations and mass forced disappearances, to be deployed against the general population and popular movement-building in Central and South America. The victims of Augusto Pinochet in Chile, of the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua and of Jorge Videla in Argentina -- among many others -- can testify to this.

Most recently, human rights crises in Colombia and Honduras -- two countries with the most U.S. support in the Americas -- illustrate the consequences of U.S. influence in the region: forced disappearances, police terror, paramilitary incursions, forced displacements, false positives, mass detentions, and politically-motivated incarcerations are well-established forms of repression in Latin America, taught and refined by the U.S. military.

We recognize that the U.S. Empire -- a term Noam Chomsky has described to define an “integrated policy of U.S. military and economic supremacy” -- remains the greatest systemic perpetrator of human rights violations within its own borders and globally.



Source: Joe Flood

### **Socioeconomic context**

It's no coincidence that the present-day anti-racist movement in the U.S. has erupted against the backdrop of a global public health crisis and economic recession disproportionately impacting low-income people of color in the U.S. Black residents in particular have coped with the highest rates of COVID-19 contagion and unemployment.

According to a report on political violence in the U.S. in 2020 published by the Armed Conflict and Event Data (ACLED) Project, the socioeconomic crisis related to COVID-19 and the latest wave of anti-racist protests are very clearly intertwined. Research suggests that people who have lost their jobs and livelihoods have been more likely to participate in protests. The “Strike for Black Lives,” for example, was an effort to unite the “interconnected fights for racial and economic justice,” in which essential workers protested in remembrance of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Elijah McClain and others while also calling for the Senate to pass emergency relief legislation to address the pandemic’s devastating economic impacts on Black communities.

Research summarized in ACLED’s recently published report further illustrates the struggle of low-income Black communities today: Black frontline workers continue to earn less than their white counterparts; almost half of Black households are concerned with their ability to pay rent; and COVID-19 has become the third largest cause of death among the Black population in the U.S.



We recognize that the state terror and politically-targeted repression Black people face in the hands of U.S. law enforcement is a symptom of a broken system and will not stop without a collective and sustained effort to demilitarize U.S. security forces, abolish private prisons and dismantle the global system of racialized capitalism that provides the fundamental basis for most, if not all, human rights violations today.

As the primary stakeholders of a movement to destabilize inequality, as historian Barbara Ransby describes, transnational corporations with monopolies over wealth and political power continue their efforts to co-opt, pacify and destabilize popular movement-building efforts, in some cases providing direct sponsorship of police repression. An article published in 2020 by *The Guardian* describes how Target, Google, Bank of America and Microsoft are quietly funding police forces in the U.S. through private donations. Another investigation has revealed that oil giants such as Chevron and Shell are funding police foundations in the U.S.

This isn't the first time a multi-billion dollar transnational corporation such as Shell has financially sponsored the policing of Black communities. In the Niger delta, Shell has funneled more than tens of millions of dollars a year to Nigerian security forces (in addition to its own private police force network) in order to guard its private installations and repress protests against its oil operations. As in the U.S. and in solidarity with victims of racist police violence abroad, most particularly communities of the African diaspora, protests against police brutality in Nigeria demanding the abolition of the notorious Sars police force have reignited.



# ERUPTION OF UNREST & MILITARIZATION OF STREETS

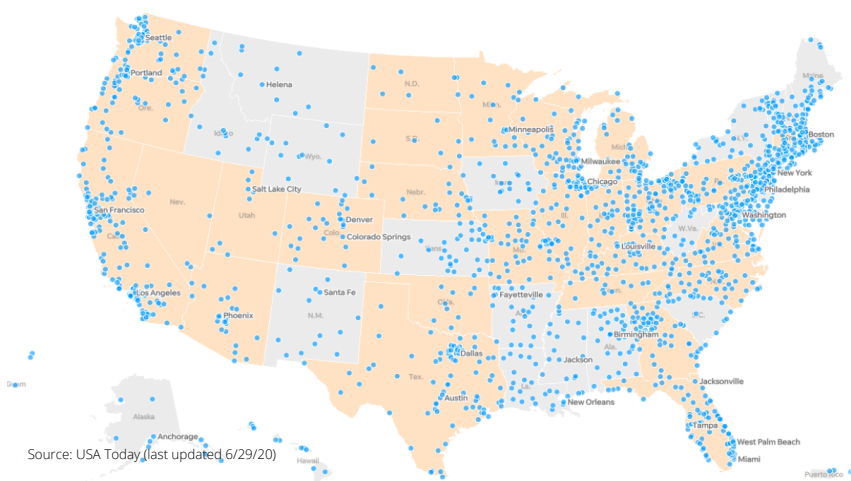
On June 29, 2020, about a month after George Floyd's murder, *USA Today* reported protests in at least 1,700 cities and towns, large and small, across all 50 states. In early June of 2020, a poll from the Pew Research Center estimated that at least 15 million people nationwide had participated in protests, with the number growing by the millions into late June. By then, the National Guard had mobilized in at least 25 states, deploying at least 62,000 federal troops on the ground working in cooperation with local and statewide police to "dominate the streets," as former President Trump described.

On June 26, 2020, former Pres. Trump issued Executive Order 13933, Protecting American Monuments, Memorials, and Statues and Combating Recent Criminal Violence. The issuing of this executive order set a precedent for federal law enforcement institutions (most notably the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) mobilized tactical teams, such as the Border Patrol

## Map of protests across the United States

What cities and towns have protested police violence against Black people? Click or tap the map below to find local coverage of protests and demonstrations near you.

■ Site of protest ■ National Guard activated



Tactical Unit (BORTAC)) to more freely deploy federal troops "to assist with the protection of federal monuments, memories, statues, or property."

According to ACLED's report on political violence in the U.S. published in October 2020, since late May 2020, at least 55 federal and National Guard deployments had been made across the country working alongside mobilized police forces affiliated with Operations Legend -- a systematic law enforcement initiative in which federal law enforcement agencies worked with local and state law enforcement officials, first launched in Kansas City on July 8, 2020 (recently cancelled in January of 2021).

In the past year, this mobilization of militarized local, statewide, and federal law enforcement has laid the foundation for violent repression and surveillance of activists and protesters, mass arrests and indefinite detentions in almost all major cities across the country, ranging from a few dozen to over a thousand arrests based on location.



# CRIMINALIZATION OF PROTEST & A SPIKE IN POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED ARRESTS & DETENTIONS



Source: Stephen Yang

## Overview

We monitored developments in major cities that saw the highest overall arrest statistics when demonstrations first erupted in late May - early June of 2020 and where extrajudicial killings of Black people and anti-racist protesters by the police have continued to spark further unrest, police repression and protest-related mass arrests (i.e. 50 or more people during a short period of time, such as 1-3 days).

Since late May of 2020, protest sites such as **New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Las Vegas, Houston, Louisville, Santa Monica, Portland, Kenosha** and **Minneapolis** have seen spikes in protest-related mass arrests and indefinite detentions. The last comparable spike in arrests and detentions happened during the Ferguson uprising that followed the police murder of Michael Brown in 2014. Since then, a new wave of legislative action criminalizing protesters set the backdrop for the most recent wave of mass arrests and indefinite detentions. By the summer of 2020, states had already put forth at least 154 anti-protest bills, 54 of which had already become law in 14 states, according to an [ongoing report](#) from the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law. In effect, as Philip McHarris of *Slate Magazine* [describes](#), “police can take anything -- such as a curfew violation -- and arrest people, fabricate a resisting arrest or assault on an officer charge, and turn protesting into felony charges.”

Since last summer, in one legislative session alone, an additional [unprecedented wave](#) of 70 anti-protest bills has been introduced by state legislators across 32 states. According to the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, these bills use “an array of restrictions, from new felony penalties for blocking traffic, to looser definitions of ‘rioting,’ to amended ‘stand-your-ground’ laws that would make it easier to shoot protesters without consequence.”

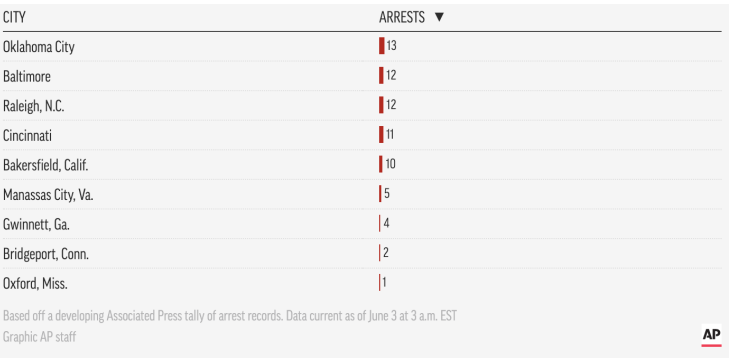
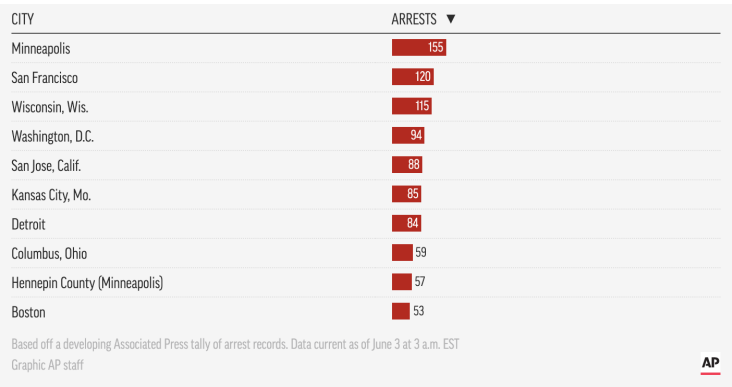
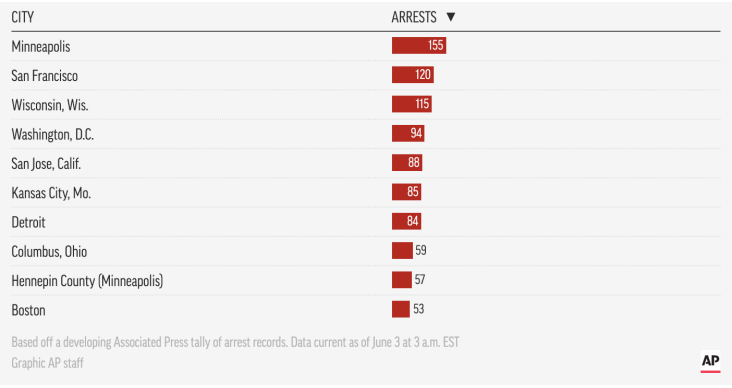
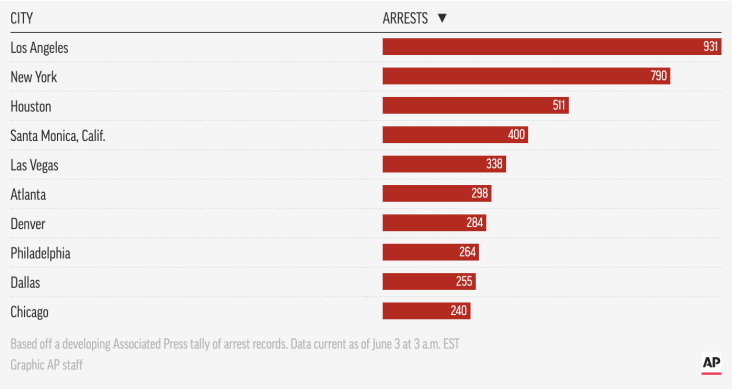
Anti-protest bills in [Florida](#), [Oklahoma](#), [Iowa](#), [Missouri](#) and [Alabama](#) have already passed in at least one legislative chamber and are actively moving. Pushback from activists resulted in the defeat of at least two major anti-protest bills in [Georgia](#) and [Kentucky](#).

Arrest statistics

While many have been detained, not all have been charged and processed, making it difficult to provide exact arrest numbers. In early June of 2020, during the peak of the anti-racist protests, the *Associated Press* reported over 9,300 people arrested in at least 40 cities. Over a year later, tens of thousands of politically-motivated detentions and arrests have been recorded since the eruption of unrest.

While a statistical breakdown of arrest charges is difficult to obtain, the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) has reported on the prominence of largely arbitrary “protest-related” arrests, including “disorderly conduct,” “resisting arrest,” and “failure to disperse.” According to the NLG, police across the country have arrested protesters, journalists, legal observers, medics, and bystanders alike. Charges have ranged from low-level offenses to federal felonies.

According to an analysis of 15 key cities published by the *Washington Post* in October of 2020, the overwhelming majority of protesters arrested in those cities (2,059 out of 2,652) were accused of nonviolent misdemeanors, most charged for violating curfew or emergency orders.





## Arrest demographics

While there is no comprehensive breakdown available of arrest demographics nationwide, analyses of city and county arrest records further reinforce the racial bias evident in U.S. policing and the criminal justice system. Even though 46% of protesters surveyed by Pew Research Center last summer are white, there is a consistently high representation of Black people who have been arrested and indefinitely detained for protest-related activities in various cities during the wave of widespread unrest in 2020.

For example, of the 2,172 people the Chicago Police Department arrested during the eruption of demonstrations in late May of 2020, more than 70% were Black and only 10% were white. In Atlanta, during that same weekend, 58% of the 82 people processed were Black. Others who have been arrested have testified to having been very clearly racially profiled by the police in cities such as Jacksonville, Orlando, Philadelphia and New York.

In New York in particular, where one of the largest mass arrest campaigns in the country based mostly on low-level charges had over a thousand protesters arrested by June 7 of 2020, 42% of those arrested for curfew violations were Black, while only 30% were white. Given the New York Supreme Court's ruling in June of 2020 that protesters could be detained indefinitely and the probability of Black and Hispanic defendants being more likely than non-Hispanic white defendants to be denied bail, it can be reasonably assumed that hundreds of Black protesters have been detained, in retrospect, for more than 24 hours before being able to see a judge.

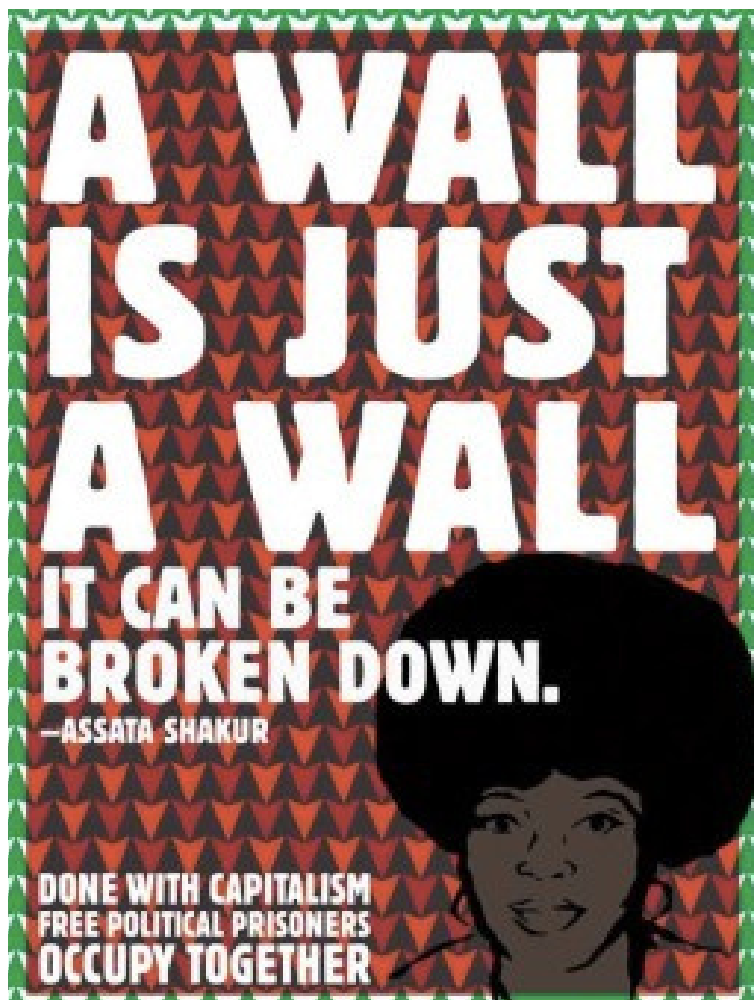
These examples only begin to paint a picture nationwide. First-hand accounts from around the country of Black protestors being singled out by police and treated more harshly than whites by prosecutors, judges, jurors and parole boards continue to illustrate the many levels at which blatant racism permeates both law enforcement and the justice system. Civil rights groups in a number of major cities have filed lawsuits and explored legal steps to protect protesters being indefinitely detained.

# SUPPRESSION OF PROTEST & A NEW WAVE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

## Overview

An analysis of data compiled in AFGJ's Political Prisoners in the U.S.A. informational page, suggests that there has been a 12% increase in the number of political prisoners in the U.S. since the eruption of social unrest following George Floyd's murder in late May of 2020. A resurged movement against police brutality and racism met by tens of thousands of protest-related arrests across the country has resulted in a significant rise in protesters facing severe charges comparable to those received by Black liberation activists, organizers and movement leaders from the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

Judges have always been inclined to side with racist police and prosecutors. Most political prisoners in the U.S. are jailed for their struggles against racism, at least 15 of which are jailed specifically for their membership in groups that have included strategies of armed resistance for Black liberation. During and after the Ferguson uprising of 2014, police and prosecutors engaged in mass arrests and pursued harsh charges against protesters. The longest prison sentence given to any



protester was 8 years for lighting a QuickTrip trash can on fire (which had been quickly put out and had not caused anyone harm).

Since the Ferguson uprising and the wave of #NoDAPL protests in defense of Indigenous rights in 2016, the introduction of at least 226 anti-protest bills across 45 states has laid the groundwork for arbitrary and often fabricated charges against protesters to be used to further enhance cases, leading to higher bail amounts and, consequently, longer potential prison sentences.

The Trump Administration's issuance of Executive Order 13933, which encouraged prosecutions "to the fullest extent" against anyone who vandalizes public monuments,



gave free rein to the justice system's vicious persecution of anti-racist protesters at the federal and state legislative levels. Although the Biden Administration has recently revoked Executive Order 13933, it should be noted that the legal foundations for the hyper-criminalization of protest remain in place at the federal and state legislative levels. In multiple states, protesters involved in attempts to damage local or state property still face trumped-up felony charges, including "terrorism" charges.

According to the Prosecution Project, more than 500 felony cases connected to protests have been filed by state and local prosecutors. Although some district attorneys have declined to prosecute protest-related cases brought to them by municipal police departments, some local prosecutors' offices have partnered with police to bring charges, according to a report from *The Guardian*.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, as of September 24, 2020, over 300 people across at least 29 states had been charged with federal crimes related to protests since the eruption of social unrest that followed George Floyd's murder. Among those facing federal charges, 40% are white, about a third are Black and more than two-thirds are people under the age of 30. Oftentimes, their actions have targeted objects seen to represent the U.S. legacy of racism, genocide and colonialism, such as monuments celebrating colonial figures, enslavers and Confederate leaders, as well as contemporary institutional and symbolic centers of power, such as police stations and vehicles.

### **Hyper-criminalization of protest as a suppression tactic**

Even in less conservative districts, officials have tended to justify their persecution of protesters by distinguishing between "peaceful" and "violent" protests. Most "violent" protest-related actions have been attempts to trespass on or bring damage to federal buildings, private property or law enforcement personnel. In places like New York, for example, where Governor Cuomo has pushed prosecutors to aggressively charge people arrested for "looting" or property damage during protests, it should come at no surprise that two attorneys currently face 45 years to a lifetime in prison for attempting to set an empty police car in an isolated area on fire while protesting.

It's important to note that tucked into "protest-related" charges are accusations of racist terrorism from right-wing militias (i.e. the "Boogaloo" movement), provocateurs and counter-protesters stockpiling weapons, openly advocating for and carrying out physical attacks against protesters, most often carried out with impunity. According to Kate Chatfield, policy director at the Justice Collaborative, there is a "false equivalency between people who kill and people who commit acts of property damage." The overwhelming majority of protesters charged with federal offenses and all political

prisoners we recognize who are facing multiple years to a lifetime of incarceration for recent protest-related activities have caused no physical harm to civilians. Nonetheless, punitive felony charges leveraged against them remain what civil rights experts claim to be a major “suppression tactic” aimed at undermining the larger movement.

This became ever the more clear when former Attorney General William Barr recommended that federal prosecutors charge “rioters” and those who have committed “violent crimes” with sedition -- a criminal charge often used against individuals (who often cannot be tied to any particular act) by a state-appointed grand jury for conduct that incites rebellion against lawful authority. Among those targeted by Barr was the Mayor of Seattle himself, who at one point allowed residents to establish the Capitol Hill Occupied Protest (CHOP) Zone (a geographical zone in the city independent of police or government control) near the city’s downtown in the mid-summer of 2020. (It should be noted that during the period of CHOP activity in Seattle, there were no recorded acts of violence to individuals or even property during protests.)

### **A new wave of anti-racist political prisoners**

We consider protesters currently facing long-term prison sentences (i.e. a year or longer) for their activities during protests who are currently detained or under house arrest to be political prisoners of the anti-racist uprising that erupted in the early summer of 2020. At least eight people currently meet this criteria, whose names are listed below. The motivations informing their acts are clearly political, just as the motivations informing their persecution are.

**Urooj Rahman, 31, and Colinford Mattis, 32,** are anti-racist activists and lawyers who were arrested for allegedly throwing a Molotov cocktail through the broken window of a police car at a May 29, 2020 protest in Brooklyn, NY following the murder of George Floyd. They currently face a minimum sentence of 45 years and a maximum of life in prison. They are currently under house arrest awaiting trial, tentatively scheduled for a March 2022 trial date. As of early April (2021), federal prosecutors have offered Rahman and Mattis a plea deal.

**Lore-Elisabeth Blumenthal, 33,** is a Philadelphia woman accused of torching two police cars during protests outside City Hall on May 30, 2020. The FBI was able to track down Blumenthal through Instagram, Etsy, and LinkedIn. At this moment, she remains at the Federal Detention Center in downtown Philadelphia, held without bail, and faces a seven-year mandatory minimum sentence and 80-year maximum sentence if convicted. As of early May (2021), neither the prosecutors’ office nor courts have expressed any clear plans to hold a trial in the foreseeable future.



**Brandon M. Wolfe, 23, Dylan Robinson, 22, Davon Turner, 24, and Bryce Williams, 23,** were indicted for the arson of the Minneapolis Police Department's Third Precinct during a protest on May 28, 2020. Wolfe and Robinson have previously been charged in federal court for aiding and abetting arson. As of May (2021), all four have pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit arson. On April 28 (2021), Robinson was sentenced to four years in federal prison with two years of supervised release, ordered to pay \$12 million in restitution. On May 4 (2021), Wolfe was sentenced to 3.5 (41 months) years in prison, also with two years of supervised release and \$12 million in restitution. On May 13 (2021), Turner was sentenced to three years in federal prison, also with two years of supervised release and \$12 million in restitution. As of June (2021), Williams was sentenced to about two years in prison (27 months), also with two years of supervised release and \$12 million in restitution.

\*A meme circulated on social media claiming that Wolfe was a white supremacist and provocateur, but the meme was anonymous and included nothing to back up the allegations. Up until now, we have seen nothing indicating Wolfe's motivations other than the allegations that he was participating in the uprising in Minneapolis and, specifically, in the burning of the Third Precinct. Unless we receive other substantiated reports, we will consider his actions to be directed against police brutality and racism and the indictment of those involved in the act to be politically-motivated. We encourage those with more information to contact us.

**Alexandria Dea, 26,** was charged along with Viet Tran, 21, on July 7, 2020 with a rarely applied count of unauthorized dissemination of intelligence data. On July 1, 2020, police in Des Moines, Iowa arrested 17 protesters who were suspected of burning a police car. During the protest, Dea retrieved a Des Moines Police Department bulletin from the back pocket of a police officer with information and photos of those protesters. Tran shared the document with a local reporter, which was later aired on television and shared on social media. Dea has been charged with theft of the document, which carries a maximum sentence of ten years. As of May (2021), Dea's charges have not been dropped, but Tran's have been dismissed on the basis that the document they helped to disseminate did not constitute any kind of intelligence data. It is not clear if Dea remains detained, but she has drawn a different judge and continues to await trial.

# BOLSTERED STATE SURVEILLANCE & COUNTER- INTELLIGENCE



## **The Department of Homeland Security's war on a movement: COINTELPRO 2.0 and the militarization of federal law enforcement agencies**

Between May - July of 2020, undercover police lacking legible insignia were frequently identified patrolling protest sites and forcing protesters into unmarked vehicles in multiple cities across the U.S. The situation escalated in July of 2020, when the Trump Administration, in line with the Operations Legend federal law enforcement initiative, mobilized the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Border Patrol Tactical Unit (BORTAC), the "marine corps of the U.S. federal law enforcement community" trained to treat civilians as "enemy combatants," to surveil anti-racist protests in Portland, Seattle and Kenosha.

It's come to be known that DHS officials have also dispatched drones, helicopters and airplanes to surveil anti-racist protests in at least 15 cities, including Minneapolis, Detroit, New York, Buffalo, Philadelphia and Dayton. The DHS logged at least 270 hours of surveillance of anti-racist protesters between May and June of 2020. Documented evidence of local, statewide and federal police forcing protesters into unmarked vehicles, most often releasing them with no record of arrest, points to a deep history what civil rights and privacy expert and researcher Anika Navaroli describes as "policies that have systematically created an environment of fear for Black people in America, while rendering their right to privacy nonexistent."



Federal law enforcement agencies now under the consolidation of the DHS maintain a long track record of using national revenue and resources to surveil anti-racist movements that precedes even the COINTELPRO counter-intelligence program of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement. According to its own public records, the DHS was established under the pretext of “protecting American people from terrorist threats.” Following 9/11, the DHS further bolstered its “counter-terrorism” surveillance of the domestic U.S. population, since growing its annual budget by the billions. Years after the eruption of Ferguson protests, documents obtained by *The Intercept* from the DHS in 2018 reveal something described internally as the “Race Paper.” While the DHS has not been willing to discuss the nature of the document, lawyers involved in the case say that internal DHS communications about the document dating back to the days of the Obama Administration may refer to a contemporary framework for evaluating the “radicalization of Black activists.”

As early as 2015, it became widely known that the DHS had begun to closely monitor and collect information about Ferguson activists and protesters associated with the so-called Black Lives Matter movement, including location data and social media activities in cities such as Ferguson, Baltimore, Washington D.C. and New York. The “Race Paper” made available in 2018 suggests that the FBI had also put resources towards running informants, as well as physical surveillance of anti-racist activists in the years following the Ferguson uprising of 2014.

In 2017, a leaked report from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) revealed that federal law enforcement agencies have had their sights on “Black identity extremists,” who allegedly pose a growing threat to law enforcement with “premeditated, retaliatory and lethal violence.” According to *The Root*, “the move is the latest iteration of a long tradition of the FBI targeting and tracking Black activists.”

It should come at no surprise that hundreds of domestic terrorism investigations have been opened since May 28, 2020, three days after George Floyd’s murder, according to U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Texas and co-head of the Justice Department’s recently formed task force on “antigovernmental extremists,” Erin Nealy Cox.

The criminalization and surveillance of anti-racist protesters by federal law enforcement agencies continues to reveal itself as a tool for intimidation and suppression. According to Maurice Mitchell, an organizer for Blackbird, “surveillance is a tool of fear. When the police are videotaping you at a protest or pulling you over because you’re a well known activist -- all of these techniques are designed to create a chilling effect on people’s organizing.”

(U) **PURPOSE:** (U//~~FOUO~~) This [redacted] seeks information necessary for potential future case openings, [redacted] [redacted] in order to determine the scope of Black Identity Extremist Groups involvement in violence to further political and/or social agenda within the FBI [redacted] area of responsibility.

Source: FBI via ACLU and MediaJustice

(U//~~LES~~)

(U) **AUTHORIZED PURPOSE:**

(U//~~FOUO~~) This Assessment seeks to identify, obtain, and utilize information about potential national security threats and/or federal criminal activities involving Black Identity Extremist Groups in the FBI [redacted] area of responsibility ("AOR") in furtherance of a

As journalist Philip McHarris of *Slate Magazine* has described, "people have a degree of protection as long as they are surrounded by others in a crowd or a street. But when they are arrested and out of sight, they are vulnerable. Once they are taken into custody, police have plenty of opportunities for violence during transportation and jailing." Anti-racist activists surveilled by the state on a regular basis most particularly since the Ferguson uprising of 2014 (such as Joshua Williams and Ramsey Orta, who had filmed the police murder of Eric Garner) have reported constant harassment and violence from police officers and prison guards. Such testimonies only begin to paint a picture of the dangers activists and protesters face once disappeared from the public eye.

Williams' and Orta's testimonies point to an ongoing bipartisan effort to criminalize and repress anti-racist protesters by framing them as domestic terrorists. The Biden Administration's recent introduction of the National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism and its adoption by U.S. military agencies has made this abundantly clear. An official document recently obtained by *The Intercept* titled "Introduction to Terrorism/Terrorist Operations," which was part of a training manual recently disseminated in May 2021 by the Naval Education Training and Command's Navy Tactical Training Center in conjunction with the Center for Security Forces, makes explicitly clear the intentionality behind Biden's domestic terrorism bill. The training document, designed for the U.S. Navy's internal force, explicitly asks, "Anarchists, socialists, and neo-nazis represent which terrorist ideological category?"

The document goes on to describe what *The Intercept* journalist Ken Klippenstein calls a "cryptic program codenamed 'Iron Fist,' in which the FBI would use undercover employees and recruit confidential informants among 'Black Identity Extremist' groups." The document suggests that attempts to infiltrate leftist organizations deemed "Black Identity Extremist groups" have already been undertaken.

Despite the FBI and the DHS having publicly identified white supremacists as the deadliest terrorist threat to the U.S., “Black Identity Extremism” remains the focus of federal law enforcement agencies’ “anti-terrorism” training, infrastructure and operations. One can argue that a long history of surveillance, intimidation and suppression of anti-racist movement-building by federal U.S. law enforcement agencies under the guise of an “anti-terrorism” agenda is becoming codified in national law under the Biden Administration.

## **Documenting the disappearing of protesters by undercover law enforcement agents in militarized protest sites**

Below we document cases in which individuals have been forcefully detained, often forced into unmarked police vehicles upon no initial justification for arrest and released in a different location than where they had been taken from, as carried out by undercover local, statewide and federal law enforcement agents.

**Washington, D.C.:** an undercover policeman dressed as a protester who claimed to be a CNN reporter was captured on camera exiting an unmarked police vehicle occupied by two other undercover officers on May 29, 2020. According to *The Grayzone* editor Max Blumenthal, the undercover officer in the video was working as a provocateur in conjunction with the two other undercover officers in the unmarked vehicles.

**San Diego:** a woman was arrested without explanation on June 4, 2020 by a group of plain-clothed undercover San Diego police who had forced her into an unmarked vehicle. As this was happening, a group of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team members arrived at the scene “prepared to de-escalate the situation,” according to the San Diego Police Department (SDPD). As the vehicle drove off, one of the officers could be heard saying, “if you follow us you will get shot. Do you understand me?” After the fact, the SDPD proclaimed that a plain-clothed detective had arrested the woman for throwing a cardboard sign at a passing SDPD motorcycle officer.

**Columbus:** videos revealing a group of plain-clothed law enforcement officers forcing a protester into an unmarked vehicle and driving away were posted to social media on June 24, 2020. Despite repeated requests, these men did not identify themselves. When they had initially arrived, they surrounded a Black protester who was armed with an AR-15 and confiscated his rifle. They then proceeded to arrest another protester, who was forced into one of the two unmarked vehicles they had arrived in. The status of the arrested protester is unknown, and information requests to the police and mayor’s office haven’t been returned.



**Portland:** on July 15, 2020, BORTAC agents arrived at a Portland protest in unmarked vehicles. Federal agents wearing generic “police” patches forced protesters into unmarked vehicles, releasing them with no official record of arrest. In response to a video revealing one of these incidents that went viral online, the CBP spoke on behalf of its agents that they had information about the person in the video that had led them to suspect the protester was engaged in assaults against federal agents or destruction of federal property. According to witnesses, when the abductions took place, it was difficult to tell whether they were being undertaken by undercover police or far-right militants, who have a strong presence in Portland and often wear military-like outfits.

**New York:** on July 28, 2020, plain-clothed police officers from the New York Police Department (NYPD) forced a protester into an unmarked vehicle with no prior explanation of arrest. The protester was detained overnight and released the next day with a desk appearance ticket. After the fact, the NYPD justified their actions on the protester having spray painted the lenses of multiple police cameras.

**Pittsburgh:** on August 15, 2020, plain-clothed officers from the Pittsburgh Police Department (PPD) forced a protester into an unmarked van. While law enforcement officials have justified their arrest as a means of drawing as little attention as possible, civil rights experts such as Witold Walczak, legal director of the ACLU of Pennsylvania, believe Pittsburgh police were in clear violation of their own guidelines. “According to those who were there, the law enforcement officers involved made no effort to work with protest leaders to clear the area and gave no clear dispersal order,” Walczak explained. “Instead, they tricked a protest leader to approach them and then whisked him away.”

**Kenosha:** videos have emerged showing local police working alongside federal law enforcement agents to detain protesters and force them into unmarked vehicles on August 26, 2020, during a protest that followed the police shooting of Jacob Blake. According to activists, at least 12 protesters were arrested this way. One video posted online shows a man wearing a U.S. Marshal uniform along with police pointing guns at a van stopped near a gas station, breaking the van’s window and taking passengers away in vehicles without markings or license plates. The people in the van were part of a Seattle-based organization called Riot Kitchen 206, which provides food to protesters. Another three student activists were forced into unmarked pickup trucks by men who could be heard saying, “don’t even try it, we’re cops.”

# SURGE IN STATE & FAR-RIGHT VIOLENCE



Source: Noah Berger

## **Spike in police brutality against Black people, anti-racist protesters and journalists**

According to *The Guardian*, as late as October of 2020, there had not been a single week without an incidence of police brutality against civilians or journalists during protests since the eruption of unrest that followed George Floyd's murder. As mobilizations against racism and police brutality have persisted in the wake of widely documented police violence against people of color, anti-racist demonstrations have been met with police attacks on citizens and journalists accompanied by multiple incidents of law enforcement agents tolerating or collaborating with a mobilized far-right. Below we provide an overview of the most recent wave of police repression of anti-racist protests and the proliferation in hate crimes and paramilitary violence that has coincided, documenting incidents of extrajudicial executions perpetrated by armed state and non-state actors (i.e. on or off-duty law enforcement agents and right-wing militants).

Legal observers have consistently reported accounts of police attacking people with batons and bicycles, running protesters down with horses and police vehicles, and freely deploying tear gas, pepper spray, rubber and bean bag bullets, and flash-bang grenades during the wave of protests that followed George Floyd's murder. Five months into the social unrest that had erupted in late May of 2020, research revealed some important findings. There were at least 1,000 documented instances of police brutality against civilians and journalists during anti-racist protests between late May and late October of 2020, according to a database reviewed by *The Guardian*.

**The database shows more than 1,000 violations, including:**

- 500 incidents of police using “less-lethal” rounds, pepper spray and tear gas,
- 60 incidents of officers using unlawful assembly to arrest protesters,
- 11 instances of kettling, and
- Five attacks on medics.

Despite the mainstream media’s focus on “looting” and vandalism, violence against civilians (as opposed to the “violence” commonly characterized by property destruction or the targeting of law enforcement agents) has been one-sided, most often instigated by law enforcement or agent provocateurs. In fact, there is little evidence to even suggest that demonstrators have engaged in the widespread “violence” state officials have claimed to pose a threat to public security. According to ACLED’s recently published report on political violence in the U.S., at least 93% of anti-racist demonstrations between May 24, 2020 - August 22, 2020 did not involve any form of “violence” as characterized by property destruction or the targeting of law enforcement agents; yet, they were met with violent police repression.

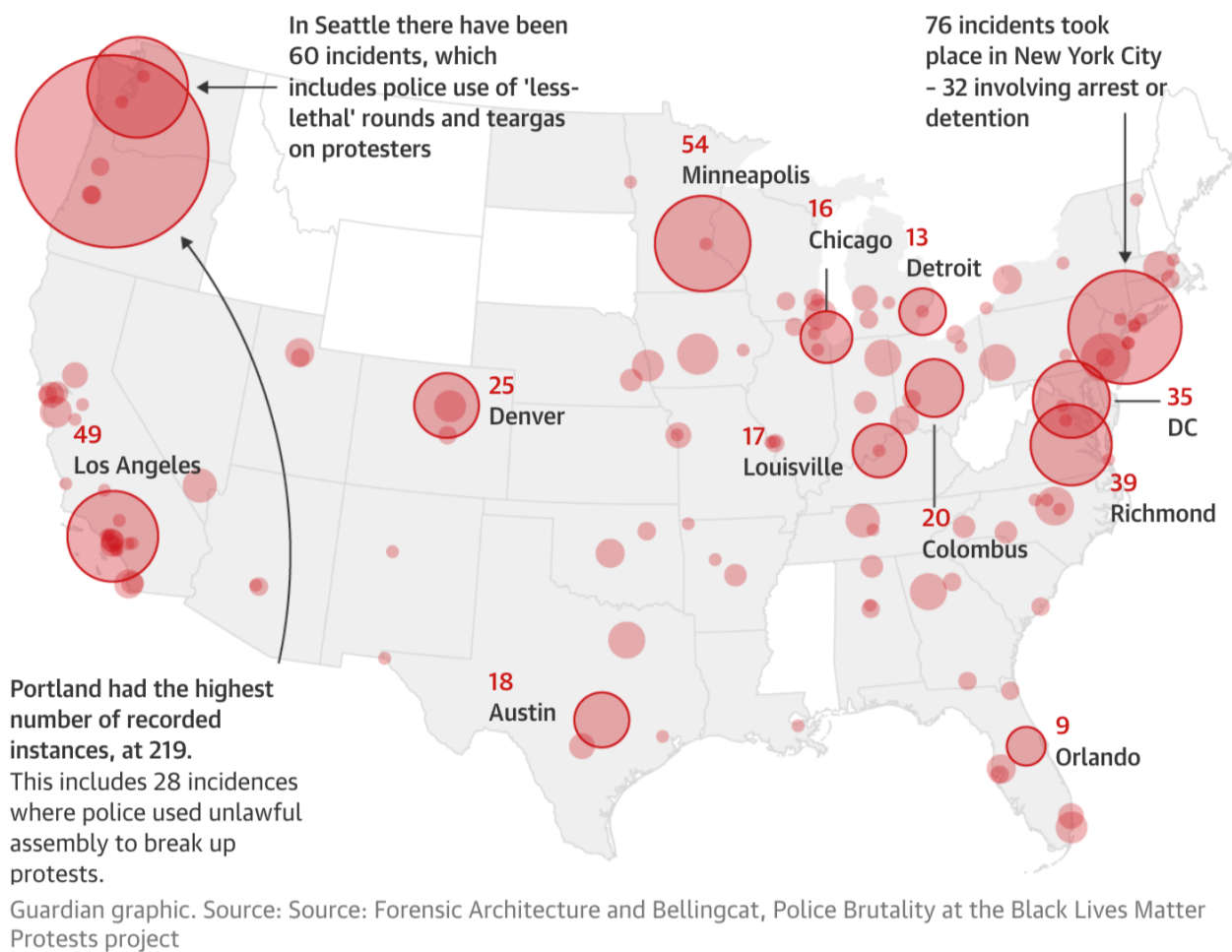
Police brutality against protesters has been extensively documented in New York City, Seattle, Minneapolis, Los Angeles and Portland (where more than 200 incidents of police brutality have taken place). Even in cities like Seattle, where the establishment of the then-called CHOP Zone coincided with a break in “violent” (as characterized by state officials) protest-related activities in the area, it was only during the period of CHOP activity that the Seattle Police Department intervened in order to reclaim control over the area. This was followed by former Pres. Trump’s warning that protesters would be met with “serious force” if they attempted to replicate CHOP elsewhere in the country.

Contrary to the running right-wing narrative that the state’s crackdown on protests has served as an emergency intervention to quell unwarranted protest-related “violence” on the streets, experts suggest it has been in response to the use of excessive force by law enforcement agents that some protesters have turned to more confrontational methods. In places like New York City, Washington, D.C. and Minneapolis, where there has been a proliferation of new restrictions on protests, some protesters have chosen to embrace more combative tactics as the risks and dangers of nonviolent protest have risen.

Indeed, interactions with police in the U.S. can be deadly. Most recently, between March 29 (the day the George Floyd trial began) and April 17, 2021 alone, data obtained from gun violence databases by journalists working for the *New York Times* indicates that 64 people have died at the hands of law enforcement nationwide, an average of three killings a day, with Black and Latinx people representing more than half of the deaths.



## More than 950 incidents of police brutality against protesters and civilians have been documented in the past five months



### Documenting extrajudicial police murders of Black people and protesters

Below we document 44 cases of Black people and anti-racist protesters killed by on-duty law enforcement agents using excessive force since the eruption of social unrest in May of 2020 and subsequent militarization of police forces, with an emphasis on those killed as a result of their participation in demonstrations against police brutality, white supremacy and state violence.

**Tony McDade, 38**, was shot and killed by Tallahassee police on May 27, 2020 during a confrontation with five people who had attacked him the night before. Before police officers shot and killed McDade, they could be heard saying “stop moving, n----r,” and shot him after he had stopped moving. An eyewitness told local news station WFSU, “I never heard, ‘Get down, freeze, I’m an officer.’ I never heard nothing. I just heard gunshots.” McDade is also the twelfth transgender or nonbinary person to be fatally shot or killed in 2020. The Leon County Grand Jury has declared the Tallahassee police’s use of lethal force “justified.”

**Marquis Tousant, 23**, was shot and killed by Lt. Greg Behning during an alleged shootout with Davenport police officers who approached him in an unmarked vehicle near a Walmart in Davenport, Iowa on June 1, 2020, in the same area Italia Kelly was shot and killed by a white man while leaving a protest earlier that night. Scott County Attorney Michael Walton ruled that the shooting was “justified.”

**David McAtee, 53**, was a Black barbecue restaurant owner shot and killed on June 1, 2020 in Louisville while National Guard troops and local police were dispersing a crowd of people gathered nearby for breaking a 9 p.m. curfew. As McAtee reached for his own gun in self-defense as law enforcement agents neared his restaurant, two Guard members fired 18 shots, killing McAtee. On May 26 (2021), it was announced that no state charges would be filed against the Kentucky National Guard or Louisville police in relation to McAtee’s death.

**Jorge Gomez, 25**, was an anti-racist protester shot and killed by four Las Vegas police officers near the Lloyd George U.S. Courthouse on June 1, 2020. The officers alleged that Gomez, who was carrying firearms and wearing body armor, had been reaching for his gun. Gomez’ death was ruled a homicide by the Clark County Coroner’s Office.

**Sean Monterrosa, 22**, was an anti-racist activist shot and killed on June 2, 2020 in Vallejo, CA by white police officer Jarrett Tonn, who is responsible for three prior on-duty shootings since 2015. Tonn claims that he mistook a hammer in Monterrosa’s pocket for a gun. Tonn has been placed on administrative leave with no charges filed against him or investigation into the death launched.

**Jamel Floyd, 35**, died on June 3, 2020 in a cell at the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC), a federal jail in Brooklyn, N.Y., after being pepper-sprayed by jail guards. Floyd had been ill for several days leading up to his death and, according to the Floyd family’s attorney Kate Rosenfeld, had his requests for medical attention ignored. As of the time this was published (July 2021), Floyd’s family has vowed to bring a wrongful death lawsuit against the MDC.

**Kamal Flowers, 24**, was shot and killed by New Rochelle police officer Alec McKenna on June 5, 2020. The police claimed to have been searching for a suspicious vehicle when they pulled Flowers’ friend, Muhammad, over in a very dark area. Flowers had just been released from prison and was chased by the cops that had pulled Muhammad over. As they ran after him, they could be heard saying, “Go catch that n----r.” A Westchester County grand jury has voted not to indict McKenna.

**Priscilla Slater, 37**, died of heart issues due to medical neglect while in police custody in Harper Woods on June 10, 2020. According to Attorney Geoffrey Fieger, Slater had been ignored for nine hours before she suffered what medical examiners suspect to have been a terminal seizure caused by extreme suffering from lack of needed medical care. It is known that two officers had “manipulated or falsified” evidence related to the positioning of her body. Those two officers have been fired, but according to Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy, no charges will be filed against them.

**Michael “Blue” Thomas, 62**, was shot and killed by Los Angeles County sheriff’s deputies on June 11, 2020. According to the sheriff’s office, deputies were responding to reports of domestic violence inside Thomas’ home, and that Thomas had reached down to try to take one of the deputies’ guns when confronted by them, prompting them to shoot him. According to Thomas’ family, Thomas and his fiancé were only having a verbal argument, Thomas had no weapon, and he was not hurting his fiancé. There is no body cam footage to validate the deputies’ claims (Los Angeles County sheriff’s deputies are not required to wear body cameras). Thomas’ family’s attorney, Bradley Gage, claims that police violated Thomas’ Fourth Amendment right, which protects citizens from illegal searches and seizures, and that four deputies had already been holding Thomas down when one of them fatally shot him. As of June (2020), the Los Angeles County Office of the Inspector General has launched an investigation into the shooting.

**Rayshard Brooks, 27**, was shot and killed by white Atlanta police officer Garrett Rolfe on June 12, 2020. Two police officers had arrived at a Wendy’s parking lot in response to a complaint they had gotten about Brooks having fallen asleep in his car. They attempted to arrest Brooks, who resisted and was shot by one of them in what has been deemed an “unjustified use of deadly force.” Rolfe has been placed on administrative leave and faces 11 charges, including felony murder.

**Julian Lewis, 60**, was shot and killed by ex-Georgia State Trooper Jacob Thompson on August 7, 2020. According to officials, Thompson had tried to stop a Nissan for a traffic offense on Stoney Pond Road in Screven County. He began to chase Lewis and fired at him multiple times after his car had crashed in a ditch. Thompson has been denied bond on charges of felony murder and aggravated assault.

**Salaythis Melvin, 22**, was shot and killed by Orange County sheriff’s deputy James Montiel outside of the Florida Mall on August 7, 2020. Montiel claimed that he saw Melvin running away from him with a gun tucked in his waistband. As of June (2021), Melvin’s family has filed a federal lawsuit against the Orange County Sheriff’s Office. Allegations in the Melvin family’s lawsuit claim, “James Montiel shot Salaythis Melvin. He



did not know who Salaythis Melvin was other than the fact that he was a Black man that had not committed any crimes and was running in fear for his life.” The allegations continue to describe that instead of offering aid to Melvin, Montiel and four others threatened to shoot him again while “he was on the ground fighting for his life.”

**Anthony McClain, 32**, was shot and killed by Pasadena police officer Edwin Dumaguindin during a traffic stop on August 15, 2020. McClain suffered one wound in the lower right quarter of his back and a graze wound to his left shoulder as he fled from the scene and died hours later at Huntington Hospital. The case remains under review by the Los Angeles District Attorney’s Office. As recently as May (2021), McClain’s family, George Floyd’s family, and local activists have demanded that action be taken by the Los Angeles City Council against Dumaguindin.

**Trayford Pellerin, 31**, was shot and killed by Lafayette police officers who had begun to follow him around on August 21, 2020. According to the Lafayette Police Department, officers were responding to a complaint about a man armed with a knife near a gas station parking lot. When police arrived at a north Lafayette gas station, they saw a Black man who began to walk away from them, and more than half a dozen officers started following him. After following the man for about half a mile, three officers cornered him outside of another gas station, shooting a total of 11 shots in 2.4 seconds. Recently released body cam footage shows no visible indication of Pellerin being armed with a knife, nor does it show him posing any threat to officers. A Lafayette grand jury has declined to indict the officers responsible for Pellerin’s death on second-degree murder charges. Pellerin’s family and their attorney, Ron Haley, have expressed their anger and frustration towards the grand jury’s decision. “I was disappointed to know that we are not the exception out here in Lafayette, Louisiana...we are the rule,” Haley said.

**Damian Daniels, 30**, was shot and killed outside of his home on August 25, 2020 by Bexar County deputy John Rodriguez. Daniels, a combat veteran, had been struggling with severe PTSD over the recent deaths of loved ones and was paranoid when three deputies called by the American Red Cross came to check on him, according to his family. Rodriguez is also responsible for another fatal shooting of a mentally distressed man from 2010 and has been arrested for domestic violence. Lee Merritt, Daniels’ family’s attorney, has demanded that the Bexar County District Attorney further investigate the death.

**Dijon Kizzee, 29**, was shot and killed on August 31, 2020 by Los Angeles sheriff’s deputies who tried to stop him for riding a bicycle in the wrong direction. The deputies told investigators they had shot Kizzee after seeing him pick up a handgun that they

alleged he had wrapped in a piece of clothing he was carrying, but no weapon can be seen in video evidence. Kizzee was struck 15 times in the chest, arm and back, as confirmed by an independent autopsy investigation. According to the autopsy, he did not die immediately, and had instead writhed on the ground in pain as officers continued to fire shots at him. As of the time this was published (July 2021), the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department has said nothing to account for its actions in response to the autopsy report. Kizzee's family and activists are demanding that District Attorney Jackie Lacey hold the officers responsible for the death accountable.

**Deon Kay, 18**, was shot and killed by D.C. police officer Alexander Alvarez on September 2, 2020. According to D.C. Chief of Police Peter Newsham, Kay was in a parked car when someone reported that he and someone else were brandishing weapons. When police arrived at the scene, Kay began to run away from them, and Alvarez, who began to follow him, shot him six seconds after getting out of his squad car. The shooting was investigated by the U.S. Attorney's Office for D.C. and the D.C. Police Department's use-of-force review board. As of November 2020, federal prosecutors announced that no civil rights charges will be filed against Alvarez. The local activist community and civil rights experts remain disappointed with the handling of the incident that led to Kay's death. "The narrative saying that...he had a gun or that there were arms produced at the scene - - that does not justify someone's life being taken away," local activist Aura Angelica told WTOP News. Executive director of the ACLU's District of Columbia branch Monica Hopkins condemned the D.C. Police Department's continued use of "aggressive police tactics." "The tragic shooting and death of 18-year-old Deon Kay is the logical conclusion of a policy that not only meets violence with violence, but actually escalates and incites it -- especially in our Black communities," Hopkins explains.

**Michael Forest Reinoehl, 48**, was a self-described antifascist activist shot and killed on September 3, 2020 by Pierce County sheriff's deputies, a Lakewood police officer and a Washington State Department of Corrections employee all serving on a Tacoma-based fugitive task force with a warrant to arrest him. Reinoehl had just been charged with second-degree murder of a far-right Patriot Prayer supporter Aaron "Jay" Danielson after acting in self-defense during a face-off between a pro-Trump caravan of vehicles and counter-protesters in Portland. As of March (2021), the Thurston County Sheriff's Office has completed an investigation of the federally deputized task force that had killed Reinoehl and confirmed that officers had shot 40 rounds at him without having identified themselves before shooting. It remains unknown whether charges will be filed against them.

**Kurt Reinhold, 42**, was shot and killed by Orange County sheriff's deputies on September 23, 2020. The two deputies who stopped Reinhold, who were full-time homeless liaison officers in San Clemente, are responsible for assisting homeless people in finding access to resources and social services. Instead of following their guidelines, they stopped Reinhold for jaywalking, proceeding to tackle him onto the ground and fatally shoot him. According to Reinhold's family's attorney, John Taylor, the altercation that led to Reinhold's death was a "blatant, racially motivated stop." "They create the confrontation. They escalate the confrontation. They are the first person to put their hands on him and they end up taking his life, shooting him to death," Taylor explains. Reinhold's family has filed a lawsuit against Orange County, alleging that the deputies responsible for Reinhold's death violated his Fourth and 14th Amendment rights. The deputies have returned to duty, reassigned to a different task force.

**Jonathan Price, 31**, was shot and killed by Wolfe City police officer Shaun Lucas on October 3, 2020. According to the Texas Department of Public Safety, Lucas was responding to a call about a possible fight when he confronted Price, who began to walk away from him. Lucas first used a stun gun, then fatally shot Price, who was then taken to a hospital where he died. As of October 2020, Lucas has been charged with murder and is jailed with a bail set at \$1 million.

**Fred Williams III, 25**, was shot and killed by Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies on October 16, 2020 in the first ever police shooting involving a Los Angeles County sheriff's deputy to be caught on body cam footage. According to officials from the Los Angeles Police Department, deputies were patrolling the area Williams was in when they found him standing near a group of people and began to run away with what appeared to be a gun in his hand. Deputies chased Williams into a driveway and through a backyard, fatally shooting him as he attempted to jump over a fence. The deputy, whose name has not been released, opened fire at least seven times, which he claims was in response to Williams having pointed a gun at him. Body cam footage shows William attempting to escape the officer but does not show any indication of Williams pointing a gun at the officer. As of February (2021), an inquest conducted by the L.A. County Medical Examiner-Coroner remains inconclusive regarding whether or not the deputy's shooting was lawful. State law, which only requires a determination of the place, manner and cause of the deputy-involved shooting, as well as the refusal of any Sheriff's official to testify, has greatly limited the findings of the inquest. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department has launched an investigation into the shooting. Once the investigation is complete, District Attorney George Gascón will use it to determine whether or not to bring criminal charges against the deputy responsible for killing Williams.



**Marcellis Stinnette, 19,** was shot and killed by Waukegan police officer Dante Salinas on October 20, 2020. According to officials from the Waukegan Police Department, Stinnette was initially confronted by officers who were trying to arrest him on an outstanding warrant. Stinnette was in the passenger's seat of a parked car with his girlfriend and mother of his seven month-old child, Tarafa Williams, when they were first approached by the police. Williams has spoken up to challenge the police department's narrative that she or Stinnette posed any threat to the officers. "I rolled down the window and turned on all the lights in the car so the officer could see. I had no weapons and I wasn't doing anything illegal," Williams told local news agency Lake & McHenry County Scanner, adding that she, the driver of the car, began to drive away after the officer stepped back from her car. Police began to chase Williams and Stinnette, shooting at them, causing Williams to lose control of the car, resulting in a crash. Both Stinnette and Williams were seriously injured as a result from the crash and were neglected medical attention. Stinnette's mother, Zharvellis Holmes, has filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court against the City of Waukegan that charges Salinas for his use of excessive force "despite being in no immediate danger."

**Mark Matthew Bender Jr., 35,** was an off-duty security guard shot and killed by San Bernardino police responding to a complaint about him displaying drunken behavior and being armed with a gun on October 22, 2020. Body cam footage shows that when police arrived at the scene, Bender could be seen putting up his empty hands, as a police officer had ordered him to do. When Bender began to walk away, an officer proceeded to tackle him, after which body cam video footage cuts out. The San Bernardino Police Department claims that the officer who shot Bender was acting in self-defense, citing a recently obtained cell phone video of the incident from a bystander that shows Bender pulling a gun out of his pocket after being tackled to the ground. Bender's family's attorney Brian Dunn argues that Bender did not pose "any reasonable or credible threat of violence to the officer." "Possession of a firearm does not give justification for use of force," Dunn explains, also pointing out that the officer had not witnessed Bender commit any crime or dangerous behavior before tackling him to the ground. An official investigation was opened in October 2020, and as of March (2021), Bender's family attorneys have filed a claim against the city as a legally required precursor to a lawsuit.

**Walter Wallace Jr., 27,** was shot and killed by Philadelphia police on October 26, 2020. Police were responding to what relatives describe as "another one of his [Wallace's] episodes." Wallace struggled with mental illness, including bipolar disorder, and had gone to therapy just a week before the incident. Police were familiar with his history of mental health issues and had been called by family members in order to request an

ambulance for him. Instead of providing medical intervention during their third visit there that day, officers shot at him 14 times. As of May (2021), Wallace's family is suing the officers involved for wrongful death and plans to file a separate federal lawsuit. They are also demanding reform in police training and the use of lethal weapons during crisis intervention.

**Karon Hylton-Brown, 20**, was killed on October 26, 2020, three days after crashing a moped that was being chased by D.C. metropolitan police for allegedly riding without a helmet on the sidewalk, causing him to collide with a passenger vehicle. According to Hylton's family's attorney, D.C. police went against their own policy, which does not allow police to initiate a chase for traffic violations. As of October (2020), four D.C. police officers involved in the incident have been placed on administrative leave. An investigation into Hylton's death has been launched.

**Kevin Peterson Jr., 21**, was shot and killed on October 29, 2020 by Clark County sheriff's deputies in Hazel Dell, a town outside of Portland. According to Clark County Sheriff Chuck Atkins, detectives from the Clark/Vancouver Drug Task Force were conducting a narcotics investigation in the area, where shootings had been heard on police radio. Three deputies reportedly fired their weapons at a man suspected of selling drugs in the parking lot of a Quality Inn, firing a total of 34 bullets. Atkins' statement didn't offer any details of the shooting, including whether or not anyone had been shot before they arrived. The officers involved have been placed on administrative leave. As of March (2021), Peterson's family announced a plan to sue over his death.

**Andre Hill, 47**, was shot and killed by Columbus police officer Adam Coy seconds after he was found walking out of a garage on December 22, 2020. According to body cam footage, Hill was unarmed and walking towards Coy holding an illuminated cell phone. As of February (2021), an Ohio coroner's office ruled Hill's death a homicide, and Coy has been indicted on charges of murder in commission of a felony, felonious assault and two counts of dereliction of duty.

**Casey Goodson Jr., 23**, was shot and killed on December 4, 2020, by Franklin County Sheriff's Office deputy Jason Meade. According to sources, Meade also served as a SWAT member and was assigned to a U.S. Marshals Service fugitive task force. According to Peter Tobin, U.S. Marshal for the Southern District of Ohio, the task force had just finished an unsuccessful search for a suspect Friday afternoon when they noticed Goodson drive by on his way home from a dentist's appointment. According to an official autopsy report released in March (2021), Goodson was shot six times in the torso from behind. As of June (2021), the Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney's office

announced that it had filed the necessary documents to appoint two special prosecutors to assist in its investigation and prosecution of Goodson's death.

**Bennie Edwards, 60**, was shot and killed by two Oklahoma City police officer Clifford Holman on December 11, 2020 after police responded to complaints that Edwards had been bothering customers outside of a strip mall. According to police officials, Edwards had been carrying a knife when they originally attempted and failed to subdue him before using lethal rounds. Court records from 2014 indicate that Edwards suffered from severe mental illness, and the officers involved in his shooting had no certification in crisis intervention. As of February (2021), Oklahoma County District Attorney David Prater has filed a first-degree manslaughter charge against Holman and an alternative second-degree manslaughter charge.

**Dolal Idd, 23**, was shot and killed by Minneapolis police on December 30, 2020, in the first fatal police shooting in Minneapolis since the murder of George Floyd. Idd was confronted by police in the same neighborhood where George Floyd was killed on a "probable cause weapons investigation" when he attempted to flee and police cornered his vehicle, unfolding in an alleged shoot out that resulted in Idd's death. According to Idd's friend, Abdirahman Warsame, Idd displayed very obvious paranoia about the police. Idd's other friend, Jay, also noticed his fear of the police. He recalled Idd once saying, "they took my two older brothers. What if they take me, too?" He noticed that almost every day the two of them had once lived together, Idd would claim that he felt he was being watched. Body camera footage shows only 27 seconds of the encounter leading to Idd's death. As of March (2021), the Minnesota chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations is working with Idd's family to pursue a further investigation into Idd's death. Lee Hutton, Idd's family's attorney, has demanded that the City of Minneapolis release all police camera footage from that night.

**Vincent Belmonte, 18**, was shot and killed by East Cleveland police officer Larry McDonald on January 5, 2021 while driving his girlfriend to work in a car borrowed to him by a friend. According to the East Cleveland Police Department's initial report, officers had been trying to stop a car they believed to be stolen. McDonald, who throughout his career has received a number of complaints about use of excessive force and lack of probable cause, has been granted paid administrative leave. As of June (2021), the local activist community continues to demand accountability for the murder of Belmonte, encouraging their supporters who are registered to vote to sign the Citizens for a Safer Cleveland, or Safer CLE, petition for a ballot measure that expands the powers of the Civilian Review Board to investigate police misconduct and establish a permanent Community Police Commission.



**Jamal Sutherland, 31**, died on January 5 at the Sheriff Al Cannon Detention Center while being forcibly removed from his jail cell by detention deputies to attend a bond hearing. Sutherland's death came 14 hours after being booked into the jail on a misdemeanor charge. Body cam footage shows Sutherland being tased numerous times before becoming unresponsive. Initially placed on administrative leave, the two deputies responsible for Sutherland's death, Detention Sgt. Lindsay Fickett and Detention Deputy Brian Houle, have been fired by the Charleston County Sheriff as of May (2021). As of July (2021), Ninth Circuit Solicitor Scarlett Wilson announced that no charges would be filed against the deputies.

**Kwamena Ocran, 24**, was shot and killed by one of four plain clothed officers from the Gaithersburg Police Department's Street Crimes Unit on January 8, 2021. According to officials from the Gaithersburg Police Department, police from the Street Crimes Unit were surveilling Ocran upon receiving a report that he was armed with a handgun that they allegedly saw him pull out after reaching a sidewalk area near an apartment complex. Ocran's family and the local activist community disagree with the police department's narrative, especially since there is no body cam footage available to provide evidence for its claims. Ocran's mother has called for an independent and transparent investigation into the shooting and for a criminal trial to be opened against the officers. As of May (2021), an investigation opened by the Montgomery County Police Department's Major Crimes Division remains unresolved.

**Xzavier Hill, 18**, was shot and killed by Virginia State Police during a traffic stop on January 9, 2021. Police claim they shot Hill after he had pulled out a gun; however, his mother and several other family members who viewed the dash cam footage testify that Hill wasn't holding a gun when officers shot him. According to Hill's family, he did not even own a gun, and he was left handed -- meaning if he were to shoot a gun, he'd most likely do it with his left hand, and according to Hill's family's observation of the dash cam footage, his left hand was empty during the incident. As of February (2021), a multi-jurisdictional grand jury led by Attorney Michael Caudill, a former state trooper, recently determined that the troopers were "justified" in using deadly force. Hill's family and community is demanding full transparency in this case and that the officers responsible for Hill's death be brought to justice.

**Patrick Warren, 52**, was shot and killed by a Killeen, Texas police officer Reynaldo Contreras on January 10, 2021, after police responded to a call from Warren's family asking for an intervention from a mental health professional after noticing changes in Warren's behavior. According to a doorbell video recording, Warren could be seen coming out of his house while waving his arms at Contreras, asking him to leave.

According to the Warren family's civil rights attorney, Lee Merritt, Warren was told to get on the ground as he continued to approach Contreras. Someone in Warren's family could be heard asking Warren to sit down and for Contreras to not shoot at him right before he fired three fatal gunshots. Contreras was placed on administrative leave and returned to work in April (2021). As of the time this was published (July 2021), Warren's family continues to demand Contreras' immediate firing and arrest.

**Jenoah Donald, 30,** was fatally shot by a Clark County sheriff's deputy on February 4 during a traffic stop over a defective rear light in Hazel Dell, Washington. The shooting had allegedly occurred after three deputies responded to a "suspicious activity" call earlier that night. An evidence receipt filed Thursday following the search of Donald's car showed he had no firearms inside his vehicle, and a sharp object described by one of the involved deputies to have prompted the escalation in their use of force was a cordless Kobalt drill on the front passenger's seat. As of the time this was published (July 2021), Donald's family intends to sue Clark County over his wrongful death.

**Marvin Scott III, 26,** died while in custody in Collin County Jail on March 14, 2021 after Allen police officers arrested him for possession of less than two ounces of drugs, a misdemeanor charge. According to Scott's family, Scott had schizophrenia and had been suffering a mental health crisis when detention officers intervened in what they have observed as Scott "acting in an erratic manner." According to Collin County Sheriff Jim Skinner, Scott died when detention officers tried to restrain him using actions Scott's family has deemed as "inappropriate," given Scott's history of mental illness. Seven detention officers have been placed on administrative leave. As of the time this was published (July 2021), a Collin County grand jury has declined to indict eight Collin County officers responsible for Scott's wrongful death.

**Donovan Lynch, 25,** was shot and killed on March 26, 2021 by Virginia Beach police during an investigation into multiple shootings that had taken place earlier that night. Virginia Beach Police Chief Paul Neudigate claims that police came across Lynch and believed he was brandishing a weapon, prompting them to carry out a "police intervention shooting," but there is no evidence to suggest Lynch was pointing a gun at officers. The officer responsible for killing Lynch had a body camera, but did not have it activated throughout the time of the incident. According to Lynch's family, Lynch and the officer who killed him knew each other. Lynch's family and the local activist community are demanding an independent and transparent investigation into Lynch's death. Lynch's father has also filed a \$50 million wrongful death lawsuit against the officer.

**Daunte Wright, 20**, was fatally shot by Brooklyn Center police officer Kim Potter on April 11, 2021 after being pulled over for a traffic violation. Body cam footage shows Wright trying to get back into his car as officers attempted to handcuff him on the side of the road. Potter could be heard saying, “taser, taser, taser” before shooting him with a gun. Wright then got into his car and began driving away until he crashed his vehicle. Shortly after crashing, he was pronounced dead. Potter has been placed on paid administrative leave. According to Wright’s family’s attorney, Ben Crump, Wright’s family got no due process for the investigation and prosecution of Wright’s death. “They didn’t get to have the officers come before the court of law and have the witnesses and the evidence presented to a jury to make a determination whether they would have any criminal liability,” Crump explains.

**Matthew “Zadok” Williams, 35**, was shot and killed by DeKalb County police on April 12, 2021 outside of his condo in Decatur, Georgia. Police had responded to a call from one neighbor who had falsely claimed that Williams was attempting to burglarize his own home. According to police, during the confrontation, Williams “lunged at officers with a knife” -- a story Williams’ family and neighbors don’t believe. Williams’ sister, Hahnah Williams, believes that police officers had “caught him by surprise” while he was having a mental health crisis. According to one of Williams’ neighbors who witnessed the incident, Williams fled from officers after being confronted by them and jumped through a glass window before being fatally shot. Williams’ mother contends that Williams was kneeling behind furniture in his home when he was fatally shot. An independent autopsy report indicates that Williams would have survived if officers had rendered aid (instead, his body was left inside his home for an hour before it was removed). As of the time this was published (July 2021), Williams’ family and activists are calling for the immediate release of all media related to Williams’ murder, the termination of all officers involved and the release of their full employment records.

**Andrew Brown Jr. 42**, was fatally shot by Pasquotank County sheriff’s deputies in Elizabeth City, N.C. on April 21, 2021. According to officials, deputies had been trying to execute a drug-related search and arrest warrant when they began to follow Brown as he was driving his car. According to autopsy reports, Brown was hit by five of the 14 bullets fired at him and died from a shot to the head. Elizabeth County District Attorney Andrew Womble claims that Brown’s death was “justified” on the basis that he had ignored commands and evaded arrest, using his car as a “deadly weapon.” Brown’s family believes he was executed. “I saw him executed,” said Brown’s son, Khalil Ferebee, after reviewing police footage. “It was obvious he was trying to get away,” he affirmed. One deputy has resigned, and two (who were placed on administrative leave) have returned to work, with no charges filed against any of them.



**Winston Boogie Smith, 32**, was a known anti-racist activist shot and killed on June 3, 2021, by undercover police from the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and a Ramsey County Sheriff's Office working in conjunction for the U.S. Marshals Service North Star Fugitive Task Force to arrest him on a weapons violation as he walked out of a restaurant to his car. Authorities claim Smith showed a handgun, but according to Norhan Askar, who was on a date with Smith during the time of the incident, no gun could be seen on Smith or in his vehicle. The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) claims that evidence at the scene suggests Smith had fired a gun from inside his vehicle before the deputies shot him; yet, there is no body cam footage to validate these claims. The deputies responsible for Smith's death have been placed on paid administrative leave, and the Minnesota BCA will be opening an official investigation.

**Eric Eugene Cole, 42**, was killed in an altercation with Springfield police on June 14, 2021. According to recently released dash cam footage, Cole was run over by officer Amanda Rosales shortly after calling 911 for help after being shot by another Springfield police officer in what Springfield Police Chief Lee Graf has described as "an accident." Dash cam footage of the incident very clearly displays Cole bleeding on the ground in the middle of the street as Rosales' police vehicle approaches him. As of the time this was published (July 2021), an internal investigation is underway and Rosales has been placed on paid administrative leave. In addition to the internal investigation, the Ohio State Highway Patrol is conducting a crash investigation into the death.

**Leneal Frazier, 40**, was fatally struck by a Minneapolis police squad car on July 6, 2021. Frazier was attempting to drive through an intersection when a Minneapolis police officer driving the squad car, Brian Cummings, collided with his vehicle while chasing a robbery suspect. Frazier is the uncle of Darnella Frazier, the teenager who recorded the viral video of George Floyd's death. A memorial service was held earlier this month (July 2021), which was attended by the Floyd family. Frazier's family is calling for Cummings to be fired (he is currently on paid administrative leave). As of the time this was published (July 2021), the Minneapolis State Patrol is investigating the incident, and Frazier's family is requesting that the Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison take over the case. Frazier's family's attorneys, Jeff Storms and Ben Crump (who also represents the Floyd family), will be representing them in a lawsuit against the Minneapolis Police Department.



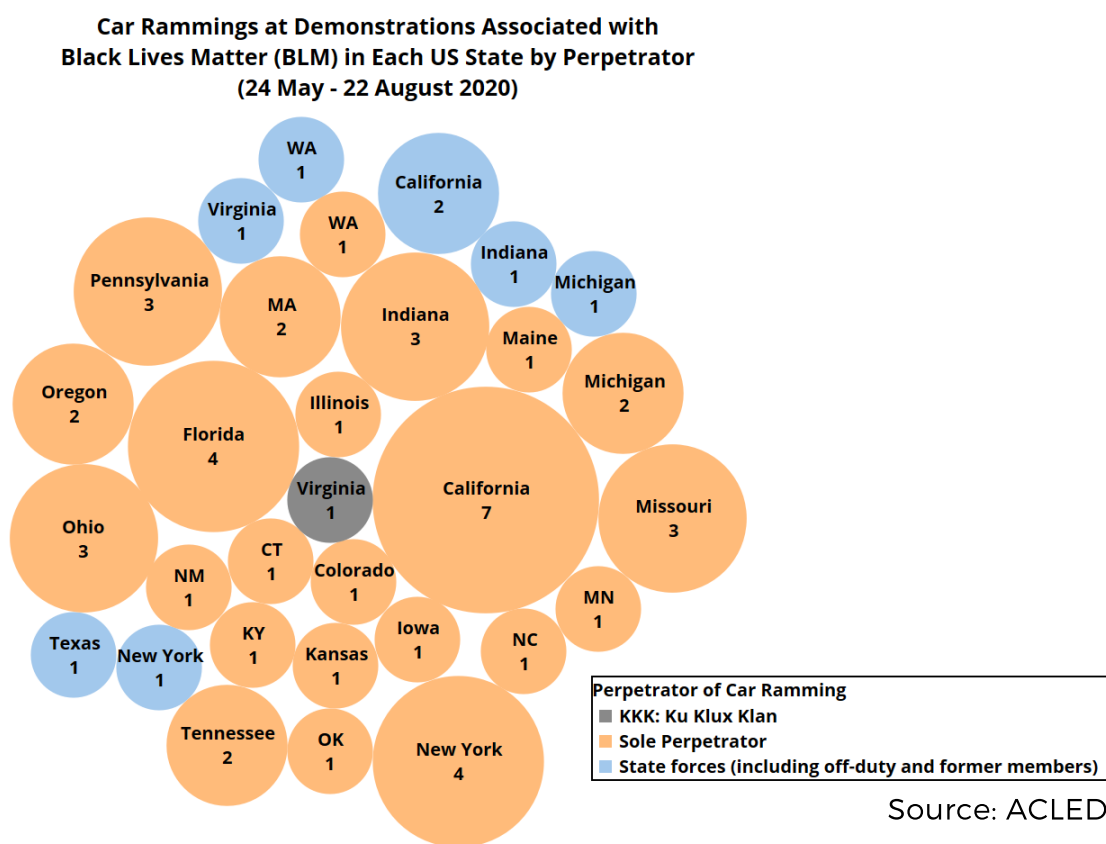
## Surge in far-right violence and anti-Black hate crimes

According to the Associated Press, hate crimes in the U.S. have reached the highest level in over a decade. Against the backdrop of a reignited white supremacist movement, the mobilization of far-right paramilitary groups and a spike in right-wing terrorist attacks that comprise the majority of documented domestic terrorism incidents in the U.S. in 2020, civilian homicides and hate crimes targeting Black people and anti-racist protesters in the U.S. proliferated following the eruption of social unrest triggered by George Floyd's murder.

Recently documented evidence confirms a well-known trend of tolerance of or collaboration with self-identified white supremacists from U.S. law enforcement agents. Of course, it's often the case that self-identified white supremacists are also law enforcement agents, a reality most recently brought to light by recently leaked data about ties between U.S. law enforcement agencies and self-proclaimed right-wing vigilante groups.

According to research analyzed by *The Guardian* in late October of 2020, there have been at least 19 documented incidents of police "being permissive" to far-right individuals and "showing double-standards" when confronted with white supremacists since the eruption of anti-racist protests that followed George Floyd's murder in May of 2020. Perhaps most illustrative of these documented incidents has been video footage from Kenosha that exposes undercover law enforcement forcing nonviolent protesters into unmarked vehicles just days before police stood by and offered water bottles to right-wing militants marching into a protest for Jacob Blake, leaving two protesters dead. The Trump Administration even publicly approved of the attack, claiming that the shooter responsible for the deaths, Kyle Rittenhouse, was "justified" in his actions.

An investigation into at least 104 instances of cars ramming into anti-racist protesters between late May - early September of 2020 further illustrates the complacency and oftentimes collusion with which law enforcement in the U.S. enables far-right violence. Car rammings have taken place in cities throughout the country, including New York, Denver, Minneapolis, Seattle, and a number of cities in California. According to research conducted at the University of Chicago, vehicle assaults on protesters became increasingly common and were often motivated by “animosity against the movement.” Videos of vehicle rammings have become a popular meme in white supremacy circles. Many of these most recent car rammings involved KKK members and people who outwardly identify as politically right-wing. According to the investigation, police perpetrated at least eight of these attacks.



At the state legislative level, as Henry Grabar wrote for *Slate Magazine* in 2017, lawmakers across the country “have attempted to codify the idea that protesters surrender their rights when they stand in the road,” further reinforcing the culture of impunity for racist violence also enjoyed by U.S. police officers. By attempting to pass laws that would criminalize the occupation of public spaces such as roads and highways, as Grabar describes, legislators “capitalize on” discussions that “politicize” the use of public space. “Right-wing extremists also believe that public spaces like roads and highways need to be taken back, mirroring the ‘law and order’ rhetoric favored by [former] President Trump,” Grabar explains.



The Trump Administration never made any attempt to disguise its endorsement and incitement of white supremacist violence. When asked to disavow white supremacists during a presidential debate in November of 2020, former Pres. Trump addressed one of his supporting neofascist organizations, the Proud Boys, with the words, “stand back, but stand by.” Months after his leaving office, former Pres. Trump’s power as an instigator of far-right violence has become increasingly obvious. It’s come to be known that throughout 2020, right-wing militants organized armed counter-protests and other shows of force at a number of state capitols throughout the country leading up to the notorious January 6 U.S. “Capitol storming,” in states such as Oregon, Washington, Michigan, and California.

The Biden Administration, while not outwardly adopting the white supremacist narrative of the Trump Administration that gave right-wing extremists and paramilitary forces a platform to mobilize on, has certainly made the attempt to codify the idea that anti-racist activists and protesters, now under the label of “Black Identity Extremists,” are enemies of the state and the nation as a whole -- or, in its own words, “anti-authority violent extremists.” The recently introduced National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism essentially mirrors and, as such, lends legitimacy to the contemporary far-right narrative that popular resistance to racism and state violence constitutes a form of terrorism against the general public.

## **Documenting hate crimes and deaths perpetrated by white supremacist violence**

Below we document 19 fatalities resulting from the perpetration of white supremacist violence by off-duty law enforcement agents and armed right-wing militants since the eruption of social unrest following George Floyd’s murder in late May of 2020. Causes of death range from fatal shootings of anti-racist protesters carried out by white property owners to blatant hate crimes and premeditated terrorist attacks carried out by violent right-wing extremists, more often than not with impunity.

**Calvin L. Horton, 43**, was shot and killed by a white pawnshop owner John Rieple in Minneapolis on May 27, 2020 in what is believed to be the first protest-related extrajudicial murder. Rieple, owner of Cadillac Pawn, claimed Horton was a “looter.” Rieple was released without charges, even though neither police nor county prosecutors have publicly described Horton as a looter.

**James Scurlock, 22**, was shot and killed by white bar owner Jake Gardner during a protest in Omaha on May 30, 2020, following an altercation Gardner’s father instigated

by pushing protesters gathered near his property. Scurlock, unarmed, was among a group of protesters who had retaliated against Gardner's father's provocation by tackling Gardner, who then responded with disproportionate force by firing shots at them. Gardner was declared to have acted in self-defense and faces no charges.

**Barry Perkins, 29**, was fatally struck by a FedEx truck while attending a protest in St. Louis on May 30, 2020. Perkins was among a group of protesters who were blocking the I-70 highway. A handful of protesters had approached the driver to let him know Perkins was stuck under the truck and did not physically threaten the driver before he continued to drive off and run Perkins over. As of the time this was published (July 2021), there is no indication that the FedEx driver who killed Perkins will face any criminal charges.

**Dorian Murrell, 18**, was shot and killed by a white man named Tyler Newby in an alleged altercation between Newby and a group of protesters on May 31, 2020 in Indianapolis. Murrell was unarmed and, according to Murrell's family member who was with Murrell at the time, no physical altercation between Murrell and Newby had occurred. Newby has been charged with murder but has been released from jail on a \$25,000 bond due to "exceptional circumstances."

**Italia Kelly, 22**, was shot and killed by a white man named Parker Marlin Belz while getting into her friend's car to leave a protest she had attended in Davenport, Iowa on May 31, 2020. Belz has been charged with first-degree murder. As of September 2020, Belz has been denied bond.

**John Tiggs, 32**, was shot and killed in Chicago on May 31, 2020. Tiggs was among several people who had entered a store in South Chicago and began taking items until an unidentified suspect who had gotten out through the store's back office started shooting at the group. Two suspects were taken into custody and released without charges.

**Robert Forbes, 56**, was run over by a white man named Timothy Keith Moore who was driving his car at an estimated 30-50 mph as Forbes was crossing the street during a protest in Bakersfield, California on June 6, 2020. According to Forbes' family's lawyer, Moore has Nazi tattoos, which "show the depraved indifference to human life consistent with how he was driving that day." Moore has not been arrested or charged. Activists demand that Moore be further investigated and charged for manslaughter.

**Summer Taylor, 24,** died from injuries suffered when a speeding car ran her over during a protest in Seattle on July 4, 2020. The car had begun plowing into protesters on a Seattle freeway that had been shut down for days after swerving around cars supporting the protest. The driver has been charged with vehicular homicide, vehicular assault and reckless driving. As of January (2021), the driver has been released from jail on a \$1.2 million bond, has been placed on house detention and awaits sentencing.

**Garrett Foster, 28,** was shot and killed by off-duty U.S. Army sergeant Daniel Perry while attending a protest in Austin on July 25, 2020. Perry had been driving his car into a crowd of protesters marching downtown and began to shoot into the crowd, killing Foster. Perry claims to have acted in “self-defense”; however, video footage and photographic evidence suggests that Perry fired the first shots into the center of the crowd. Just a month before the incident, Perry had posted tweets about retaliating against demonstrators, suggesting to “shoot center of mass.” As of July (2021), Perry has been indicted on charges of murder and aggravated assault.

**Anthony Huber, 26, and Joseph Rosenbaum, 36,** were shot and killed by 17-year-old Kyle Rittenhouse during a protest in Kenosha on August 28, 2020 that had erupted in response to the police shooting of Jacob Blake. A third man was seriously injured. Rittenhouse, a member of the local right-wing Kenosha Guard militia, was responding to a call to action named, “Armed Citizens to Protect our Lives and Property.” When the group had first come out to the protest, police officers could be heard saying, “we appreciate you guys, we really do,” and offered the armed civilians water as they walked down the street after the 8 p.m. curfew. After the shooting, police did not arrest Rittenhouse at the scene and allowed him to walk past them as he left. Rittenhouse was originally charged with first-degree murder, facing a life sentence if convicted. He has recently been released from jail after posting a \$2 million bail. As of March (2021), Rittenhouse faces multiple felony counts, including reckless homicide and reckless endangerment, and awaits sentencing.

**Djibril Diol, Adja Diol, Khadija Diol, Hassan Baye and Hawa Baye Diol,** were a Muslim Senegalese family killed by three people in dark hoods and white masks who had set fire to their home on August 18, 2020 in Denver. Khadija Diol, the daughter of Djibril and Adja Diol, was two years old, and Hawa Baye, the daughter of Djibril Diol’s sister Hassan, was an infant. Although Division Chief of Investigations Joe Montoya claims that the Denver Police Department does not want to get “tunnel-visioned into a motive,” the Colorado Muslim Leadership Council claims that the incident has left the Colorado Muslim community at a huge loss and demands that the perpetrators be brought to justice. As of February (2021), two teenagers, Kevin Bui and Gavin Seymour, have been



charged with 60 felony counts related to the fire, including first-degree murder, and await sentencing.

**Aidan Ellison, 19,** was shot and killed by a white man named Robert Keegan on November 23, 2020, outside of a hotel in Ashland, Oregon. According to sources, Ellison had been playing music in the hotel's parking lot that night when Keegan, another guest at the hotel, asked him to turn it down. According to court records, the two had gotten into an argument when Keegan went back into his room and returned with a gun, fatally shooting Ellison in the chest. Findings from Ellison's autopsy suggests that Keegan lied about having acted in self-defense during Ellison's murder. Keegan now faces several charges, including second-degree murder. As of March (2021), Keegan awaits sentencing.

**Dominique Williams, 32 and James Lionel Johnson, 38,** were shot and killed on April 7, 2021 in Takoma Park by David Hall Dixon, an off-duty Pentagon Force Protection Agency officer. According to officials from the Takoma Park Police Department, police were responding to reports of shots fired in the parking lot area Williams and Johnson were in when Dixon confronted them there, explaining that the two were being approached about an alleged car break-in. According to Dixon, Williams and Johnson tried to "flee" in a vehicle and he proceeded to "discharge his service weapon" when the two "almost tried to run him over." According to Takoma Park Chief of Police Antonio DeVaul, Dixon's testimony was inconsistent with the facts revealed by the police department's investigation. A surveillance video revealed that Dixon fired multiple shots at the vehicle after it had passed him and "no longer presented an immediate threat that would have justified the use of deadly force." Dixon has been charged with two counts of second-degree murder and one count of attempted second-degree murder. As of April (2021), Dixon has been indicted by a Montgomery County grand jury on a total of nine counts stemming from two separate incidents in Takoma Park, including murder and first-degree assault.

## **Found dead hanging**

Since the eruption of unrest following George Floyd's murder in late May of 2020, at least four Black men and one Black woman has been found dead by hanging throughout the country, whose names are listed below. The victims' communities remain suspicious about these cases, most of which have been quickly ruled as suicides, given their significance in a historical context, the recent counter-mobilizations of white supremacist groups and the physical proximity of some of the deaths. In California, for example, two Black men were found only 10 days and 50 miles apart in an area of California where there exists a well-documented presence of white supremacist groups.

**Malcolm Harsch, 38,** was found dead hanging from a tree near a homeless encampment the morning of May 31, 2020 in Victorville, California. Harsch's family was convinced that his death had not been a suicide. When Harsch's relatives were first informed by the coroner's office that his autopsy had been completed, they were not informed of the cause of death. Harsch's sister began conducting her own investigation into her brother's death, as her family feared his death had been a lynching. "It doesn't sound right," she said. A few weeks later, Harsch's family announced publicly that they had reviewed an alleged surveillance video that, according to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Office, happened to be located on a vacant building nearby where Harsch's body was discovered. The San Bernardino police cited this video as evidence for ruling Harsch's death as a suicide. Unsurprisingly, no such footage has been released to the public, and many activists remain suspicious about Harsch's death.

**Dominique Alexander, 27,** was found hanging in Manhattan's Fort Tryon Park on June 9, 2020, just ten days after Harsch had been found. According to city officials, the city's medical examiner confirmed that Alexander's cause of death was a suicide. Alexander's family has expressed their skepticism about this conclusion. "Our family was left with so many questions as to what happened to my brother and his death was automatically ruled a suicide," Dominique's brother, Keats Alexander, said in a video posted to a fundraiser the family had created to support the costs of an independent investigation into his death. Local organizers agree with Alexander's family. "In order to move forward with this case, there needs to be an independent autopsy completed as well as a legal counsel to find justice," organizers wrote on the fundraiser page.

**Robert Fuller, 24,** was found dead hanging from a tree only 50 miles west of Harsch in Poncitlán Square, across from the Palmdale City Hall on June 10. Although the investigation was still in progress and Fuller's autopsy had not been completed, authorities swiftly pronounced his death to be a suicide. This was a surprise to Fuller's family, to whom it "did not make sense." In an interview with the *New York Times*, Fuller's sister said that "everything they've been telling us has not been right...We've been hearing one thing. Then we hear another." On July 9, 2020 the Los Angeles Coroner's Office officially concluded its investigation and reaffirmed that Fuller's death had been a suicide. There was no surveillance footage of Fuller's death; investigators had only obtained a security camera video from a nearby street, where the tree Fuller was found hanging from could not be seen.

**Willie Brown Jr., 38,** was found dead hanging from a basketball rim in a Sacramento park on October 19, 2020. The Sacramento County Sheriff's Department has called the incident an attempted suicide, claiming they don't suspect any foul play to have

occurred, but his family members are skeptical. “It does not sit right with the family understanding the historical record of Black men being found dead with their deaths ruled as suicide all while being victims of white supremacist hate crimes,” Jaysean Brown, Willie's son, said on the family's Gofundme page. “We have seen a pattern of Black men being hung over the last few months all the while witnessing the violence white supremacist terror groups have been planning and executing in the same timeframe.”

**Mikayla Miller, 16**, was found dead hanging from a tree by a belt by a jogger in a wooded area in Hopkinton, Massachusetts on April 18, 2021. Mikayla's mother, Calvinia Strothers, believes that her daughter was killed just hours after she was assaulted by a group of teenagers. Miller's death has been ruled a suicide by medical examiners, according to a death certificate obtained by NBC Boston. Miller's mother and local organizers are demanding a full and transparent investigation into her death.

### **Attempted lynchings**

**Lake Monroe, IN**: Vauhxx Booker, a Black man, was assaulted by five white men on July 4, 2020 who pinned him to a tree, attempted to break his arm, and threatened to “get a noose” while telling Booker's friends to leave the area. The assailants claimed Booker had been trespassing on their property and, despite his apology, continued to attack him. According to Booker, one of the men was wearing a hat with a Confederate flag on it, and the men were making statements about “white power.” The video of the incident also documents the group of men shouting numerous racial slurs at Booker. Despite Booker having called 911 after the incident, no immediate arrests of the assailants were made. About a week later, however, two of the men were charged with felonies related to criminal confinement, intimidation and battery. Since June of 2020, when all four criminal court judges of Monroe Circuit Court and Monroe County Prosecutor Erika Oliphant recused themselves from this case, a trial remains pending.

# REFLECTIONS FOR MOVEMENT-BUILDING: ON 2020, THE PAST & THE FUTURE



Source: New York Public Library

By James Jordan, National Co-Coordinator, Alliance for Global Justice

\*Disclaimer: this analysis is excerpted from the November-December 2020 edition of the [Nueva Hegemonia journal](#) of the Communist Party of Peru -- Patria Roja. The views expressed below are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Alliance for Global Justice.

## **On the new Biden Administration**

With the Biden administration the situation and the struggles in the United States will change a lot. In some respects, it will be better than under Trump. At least we are going to have some way to deal with the pandemic, although it will not be the most adequate. It is obvious to anyone who wants to study it, that socialism has had a far superior response to the responses of the imperialist powers and savage capitalism. And with this knowledge, there is new momentum for the movement for a public health care system. Of course, Biden is no socialist. But we can hope with him for at least some form of consistent response to the virus, even if it's not the most appropriate or what we need. But it is something.

And with Biden, at least the White House will not continue to openly encourage racists and hate groups. But Biden is not going to change the underlying basis of race, gender and class oppression that defines business as usual in American life. That is why we must understand that our fight is not against personalities, but against the system.

And there is much that will not change, or the changes we will see, if they occur outside the demands and militancy of the popular movements, will be cosmetic and not substantial. You have to understand that Biden has been an architect of the instruments



of domestic and international repression. Biden wrote legislation that precipitated a 700% increase in the number of incarcerated, mostly Black, Latinx and Native American, mostly working men and women living in poverty. He has contributed to the militarization of the police repeatedly. Biden supported the start of construction of the border wall, begun in the years of the Bill Clinton administration. Internationally, Biden has a long history of support for imperialist wars and militarism, and our next president is a loyal servant of transnational corporations and neoliberalism.

On issues of war and peace, Biden has boasted that, "I wrote the legislation for Plan Colombia." However, he too has been far more supportive of the Colombia Peace Accord than Trump. With respect to South America, Trump has attacked the Peace Accord in anger; and he has blocked and threatened Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua relentlessly. However, the form will change, but not the game. Biden will continue to pursue an imperialist policy in Colombia, as he has in Honduras, Peru and Brazil and other key and important countries in the U.S. empire building in the region. Biden is pro-war, a servant of the Pentagon. It would be disingenuous to say he will be better or worse than Trump in any way with respect to militarism. He will simply be different.

I spoke with my co-worker, Chuck Kaufman. He has been a mentor in my development as an activist and I wanted to get some of his analysis of the American present, and what we can expect for the future. He said to me,

*"We do not have a press, a media. The national media treats each development of the public mobilizations as its own business, separate and isolated from all the others, from everything that happened before, from everything that is going to happen. Our alternatives and alternative presses are still too small. Most of the public don't see them. We can't spin our own narrative, to demonstrate the links between the struggles. However, this movement fixed the attention of the people, even the inadequacy of the media. In the whole country we saw how George Floyd was killed, for nine agonizing minutes, we saw it with our own eyes. I think the people couldn't take it anymore. People took to the streets, but also people donated resources, for bail funds for the detainees, for the Black Lives Matter organizations, for their local movements. There will be a struggle to keep the militancy of the movement in the streets, to avoid cooptation. But this movement is not going away."*



## Perspectives for 2021

With all these elements, we find ourselves here in the final days of 2020, a year of struggle, bourgeois democracy, and the pandemic. Now, we must ask ourselves, what is to be done in the year 2021? The situation is that we have witnessed the most massive popular uprising I have seen in my 61 years of life. Truly, it is something historic and with many possibilities that the effect of this uprising is going to be transformative for the country. However, the situation is still that the popular movements do not have a mass party to represent us. Of course, we have small parties, Marxist and socialist parties; and also, non-parties, organizations of anarchists, for instance, who want to represent the interests of the people; and these all have a very important influence in the popular movements. But it is a fantasy to say that we have actually reached sufficient numbers to mobilize adequately for political power. And, yes, we have made a lot of progress in radicalizing and democratizing the union movement; and the AFL-CIO and different unions have made progress in independence and autonomy from the Democratic Party, but not enough. Alas, there are still right-wing unions that endorsed Trump and have supported Republican candidates; and there are too many unionists who hold right-wing positions.

In truth, the situation is like this. The uprising continues in one way or another. At the moment, the demonstrations in the streets have diminished. But I think this is not a permanent situation, but part of the ebb and flow of such movements. But, without the support of a workers' Party, or some mass organization like popular assemblies, and without the strong support of the unions and workers' organizations, the elements for a truly revolutionary movement that can take power, we lack the infrastructure to wield decisive political power, and the popular movements are forced to rely on themselves.

There is another deep problem that presents itself. With resources concentrated in the Democrats and their corporate backers, and in the unions, which are still very much tied to the Democrats, there will be a lot of pressure to co-opt the organizations of the popular movements and, in particular, of the Black Lives Matter movement. They are going to offer resources with strings attached. But there is a sophistication and righteous anger, especially on the part of young people that is very resistant to this co-optation. The appeal of those co-opters who want to soften our movement doesn't mean much in a country where the defenders of fascism have grown stronger, where state and para-state repression is increasing, and our ecological and economic health is failing fast. However, controversies have already occurred from some leaders who seem more interested in creating personal positions and promoting themselves, rather than promoting the movement and its deeper demands. We must hope that the sense of relief that many have with Trump's defeat will not last and that very soon everyone will return to our primary task: to defeat not individuals or parties, but the system of racism, genocide, class oppression and environmental destruction that is still in power.

It must be understood that even as I write this, we are hearing of demonstrations by Trump supporters in Washington D.C. that have included violent assaults on opposing protesters; an arson attack on a church with Black Lives Matter solidarity signs; and statements that would defend Trump's presidency by force so he can return for a second term. In fact, even the leader of the Republican Party in Texas has suggested that states where the majority voted for Trump secede from the country. As you can see, the situation is very volatile. There are groups openly talking about a new civil war. Is it possible? I don't know.

But above all, we know that the anti-racist struggle is the most important struggle in the country; and there is no class of workers more important to the liberation of all than Black workers and the struggles for their rights. African Americans play a leading role in all revolutionary and transformative struggles. African people, along with indigenous people, have been the most targeted for repression and exploitation since the early days of capitalism's global expansion. Today, in the U.S., the movement for Black rights and self-determination has shown, above all, that it is not a temporary struggle, but one that has staying power. The successes of Black liberation struggles throughout our history have always paved the way for other struggles. The struggles against slavery and for the right to vote led directly to the women's suffrage movement; the fight for civil rights was the basis for a long list of struggles, including anti-war, anti-poverty, women's rights, Chicana liberation, disability rights, LGBTQI rights and more. That is why our top priority for the liberation of every American must be the anti-racist struggle for the liberation of people of African descent.



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