



**BLACK  
LIVES  
MATTER  
GRASSROOTS**

**2022  
ACTION  
REPORT**



**BLACK  
LIVES  
MATTER  
GRASSROOTS**

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# **BLM GRASSROOTS**

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# A MESSAGE FROM **GRASSROOTS**

Dearest Friends, Supporters, and Allies,  
We are TEN YEARS IN to Black Lives Matter! Baba Akili, of Black Lives Matter - Los Angeles, is one of our most seasoned organizers, who teaches us the importance of claiming and celebrating our victories. This report focuses on the advances made and work invested by Black Lives Matter Grassroots chapters and organizers in 2022. It is also positions our work in the context of a decade of Black Lives Matter.

Black Lives Matter was birthed July 13, 2013 in Los Angeles, California - the night that Trayvon Martin's murderer was acquitted and his gun returned to him. Tens of thousands the world over, flooded the streets, engaging in intuitive activism that puts bodies behind what "No justice! No peace!" actually looks like. On the third night of the Los Angeles protests, we were called together to gather in a historic Black artist community. A few dozen mamas, educators, students, organizers, artists...just regular Black folks...gathered under the light of the moon, and pledged to build "a movement, not a moment," and Black Lives Matter was born.

Building from the rich legacy of Black freedom movements before, we were summoned by Trayvon's Spirit. We committed ourselves to abolitionism and the complete upending of unjust systems: the same systems that enslaved our forebears, raped our mamas, lynched our babas,

dehumanized, imprisoned, traumatized, hurt, harmed, humiliated, and murdered our people for centuries. As Trayvon's 17-year-old soul joined together, with Oscar Grant, Eleanor Bumpurs, Fred Hampton, Emmett Till, Mary Turner, Nat Turner, and an endless cascade of other stolen lives, we were reminded that it is never enough to struggle for justice in a single name. We must be abolitionists. The whole thing must fall and an entirely new system...one grounded in freedom...must be built.

As we end systems of harm, we must also build systems of care. Sometimes that has taken shape through the fundamental transformation of larger systems and other times it has meant building out spaces of Black autonomy.

In the first ten years of Black Lives Matter, abolition has meant joining with the families of those killed and directly harmed by police and white-supremacist violence to uplift the names of their loved ones and make them #MoreThanAHashtag. We have made #BlackLivesMatterInSchool by removing police from campuses and bringing in culturally-grounded counselors, ethnic studies curricula, supportive services, and community safety teams. Abolition means #WeKeepUsSafe by building closely-knit neighborhoods, diminishing perceived need for police. Abolition drives #BlackXmas, which sows seeds for cooperative economics, by supporting Black-led organizations and Black-owned businesses

that serve as community anchors and divesting from white capitalism that use police as attack dogs and exploit our community.

We also recognize that abolition rarely comes all at once. There is most often a constant chipping away at oppressive regimes through non-reformist reform, until old power structures fall. Defunding the police, by reducing police budgets and reallocating resources to meet community needs is one such example (#PeoplesBudget), as are efforts to decertify the most violent and corrupt police, and mechanisms to expose corrupt policing (Kenneth Ross Jr. Police Decertification Act in California). These policy wins come even as we think expansively and work towards the Breathe Act.

The work of Black Lives Matter has required that we stand in our unapologetic Blackness. Where prior to 2013 Black folks often had to hide the particularities of our oppression under a “people of color” umbrella, our work has made it clear that when we advocate for Black life and freedom, we do so knowing that when Black people get free, everyone gets free.

Making Black Lives Matter has meant utilizing every tool in our toolbox: protesting in the streets, building community, voting and organizing, policy work, engaging in political education, advocacy, spiritual work, and more. The last decade of Black Lives Matter has exposed how deeply rooted and far-reaching white supremacy is, and awakened Black people to our own power.

This work has come with heavy costs. Black Lives Matter and the people in it have survived physical attacks, had their lives threatened, been arrested, charged, prosecuted, and jailed, had their characters assailed, been fired from jobs, lost business, friends and family, been surveilled, stalked, and targeted by the state. One of the most painful and challenging pieces has been betrayals and ruptures within the movement. This includes what might best be framed as a corporate takeover of the movement’s resources, platforms, and good name by the (BLM) Global Network Foundation. We are unsure if the consultants who hijacked what rightfully belongs to those who birthed, build, and fuel the movement are solely motivated by money or if there are other systems at play. As students of history, we know that one cannot expect to engage in the undoing of an evil and unjust system without having the full weight of that system thrust back on you. We also know that we only had our faith, will, and each other at our start and we built one of the largest movements the world has ever seen. We will continue to fight, struggle, and win because that is our sacred duty.

Ten years in and Black Lives Matter has fundamentally changed the world for the better. There are tangible victories and there are intangibles. The report that follows outlines a few as we continue to sojourn forward until we win total and complete freedom for Black people.

In love and beautiful struggle,

Dr. Melina Abdullah  
*Director of BLM Grassroots*

## AREA 1

# ACTION



*Black Lives Matter Michigan and BLM Flint organizers protesting following deadly shooting of Patrick Lyoya, a Congolese refugee, by Grand Rapids Police.*

### **BLACK WOMEN ARE DIVINE**

Following the murder of #BreonnaTaylor by police in Louisville, and as a global call to Black women around the world to reclaim our divinity, BLM Grassroots initiated Black Women Are Divine in 2020. This campaign was developed as a reminder and opportunity for Black women to celebrate life, collective joy, solidarity and power, even as we fight against state-sanctioned violence. Black Women Are Divine took shape as healing festivals in Los Angeles, Tampa, Boise (ID), Flint (MI), Benton Harbor (MI), Long Beach (CA), and Torrance (CA) we organized in the month of March. Breonna's family joined the Los Angeles celebration. The campaign also took place on social media, profiling 31 Black women who commit themselves to the struggle for Black freedom in many and varied ways.

### **#ENDPOLICEASSOCIATIONS**

First initiated locally by the BLM Los Angeles chapter, #EndPoliceAssociations (EPA) is a national campaign that works to expose the role police associations play as "organized crime," which bully and bribe elected officials, pilfer the public purse and municipal budgets in most major cities, and vouch for even the most violent police officers. Our work exposes how police associations masquerade as labor unions while lobbying for unjust legal protections like qualified immunity. Chapters in Benton Harbor (MI), Boise (ID), Long Beach (CA), Los Angeles (CA) Pasadena (CA), and Torrance (CA) have all initiated efforts to address local police association influence and extraction of public resources. Our core goal is to remove police associations from the House of Labor.

# COMMUNICATIONS



## THIS IS NOT A DRILL

First launched on Facebook in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the state of emergency as experienced by Black America, *This Is Not a Drill!* (TINAD) was created by the BLM Los Angeles chapter as a means of conveying vital information. TINAD is now a two-hour program on KBLA Talk 1580AM with a Saturday time-slot (and an encore on Sundays). Weekly topics have ranged from understanding surveillance technology's impact on the movement to issues of systemic racism in local, state, and federal policy. Guests have included local and national organizers, youth, university scholars, clergy, and others committed to the liberation of Black people.



## PRIORITIZING BLACK MEDIA

The African proverb reminds us that, “Until the lion tells the story, the hunter will always be the hero.” Black journalists have always served as our lions – from Ida B. Wells, to Thandisizwe Chimurenga...Charlotta Bass to Nikol Hannah Jones. Black Lives Matter Grassroots has invested in building relationships with Black journalists and the Black press, to ensure that they are given the information needed to tell the Black Lives Matter story accurately and in a way that advances justice. This means regular Black press calls, exclusives, and connection to “justice families” to accurately portray current justice issues and our work on the ground.

## AREA 3

# DEVELOPMENT

### **LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST BLM GLOBAL NETWORK FOUNDATION**

On September 1, 2022 Black Lives Matter Grassroots announced the filing of a lawsuit against the BLM Global Network Foundation (GNF). The lawsuit came after six months of imploring the highly-paid consultants who wrestled control of the resources to return the money, platforms, and good name of Black Lives Matter to the people who birthed, built, and fuel the movement. More than 2000 people signed on to an open letter, requesting that the usurpers do the right thing. Their continued refusal brought more than 100 families of those killed by police and white-supremacy, Black Lives Matter organizers, movement elders,



*Organizers hang Black Lives Matter sign in new Center for Black Power during People's Budget forum in Los Angeles.*

freedom fighters, and allies to stand together and demand the return of what belongs to the people. While we continue to fight for the return of what rightfully belongs to us, we are also building new infrastructure, resources, and platforms under the Black Lives Matter Grassroots banner. Most importantly, we continue to do the work necessary for Black liberation, which includes our legal fight for the soul of Black Lives Matter.

### **CENTER FOR BLACK POWER**

In 2020, BLM Grassroots and its chapters received overwhelming financial support of our organizing work, including Black Lives Matter – Los Angeles receiving nearly \$2 million in donations. Every penny (and then some) was used to purchase a building in the heart of AfricaTown (also known as Leimert Park) now known as the Center for Black Power. Through

this purchase, BLMLA reclaimed the property from gentrifiers, including a rumored arms dealer whom previously used the location as a gun store. The Center has become a hub for Black organizing, space for youth, and site for mutual aid. Notably, BLMLA purchased the building in the face of a historic restrictive covenant, which sought to ban Black ownership. Legal support for the building purchase was supported by celebrated attorney George Fatheree III, who also brokered the historic return of Bruce's Beach to the Bruce family in Southern California, and has committed himself to retrieving historic lands for Black and Indigenous folks.

### **BLM FIST SCULPTURE UNVEILED**

Artist Jordan Powell-Karis, first erected "The Fist" sculpture in Minneapolis' #GeorgeFloyd square, and later #DaunteWright in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota. Over the summer of 2022, the prolific artist teamed up with BLM Grassroots activists in Akron, Ohio to install a statue at the church built and pastored by the family of #JaylandWalker, who was shot at more than 90 times and killed by police on June 27, 2022. Powell-Karis installed his most recent Fist statue at the birthplace of the Black Lives Matter movement, in Los Angeles' Leimert Park.

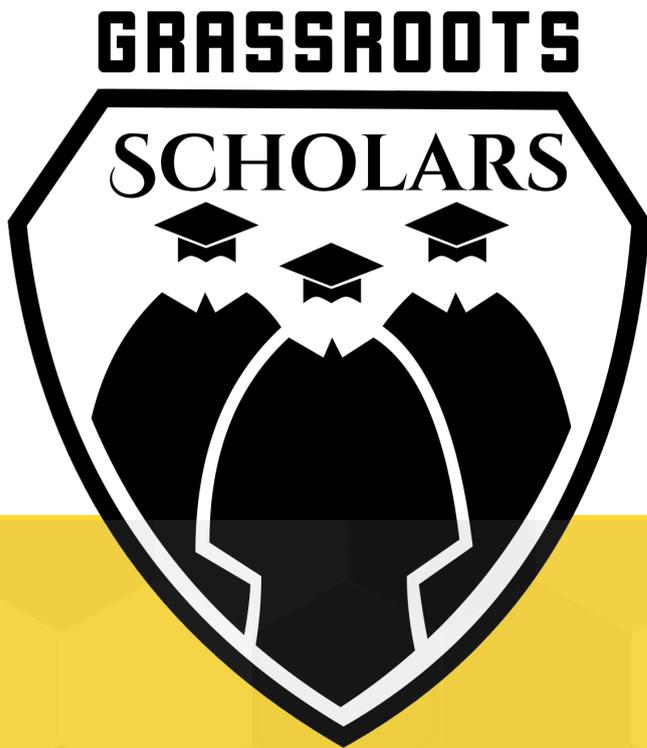
### **NEW BLM GRASSROOTS CHAPTERS**

In 2022, the on-the-ground work of Black Lives Matter continued to grow. Existing chapters engaged in mutual aid, policy,



*BLM Grassroots with "The Fist" in Akron, Ohio in support of the fight on behalf of #JaylandWalker and family.*

advocacy, protest, and other abolitionist work in their locales and states. Local organizers chose to align and affiliate (or re-affiliate) with BLM Grassroots, participating in a six-month long political education, training, and onboarding process. The larger Grassroots contingent also mobilized to places where there were BLM Grassroots was not previously operating to onboard several new chapters, which include BLM Birmingham (AL), BLM Buffalo (NY), BLM Gulfport (MS), BLM Jackson (MI), BLM Minnesota, BLM Mississippi, and BLM Richmond. BLM Grassroots is now comprised of 33 active chapters.



The inaugural class of BLM Grassroots Scholars includes student-activists within our ecosystem who were nominated by Grassroots chapters. Scholarships were awarded to undergraduate students who demonstrated a deep commitment to advance Black liberation in their community and contributed to their continued education at a college or university in which they were enrolled. Scholarships were awarded in the amounts of \$1000 for general awards and \$2500 for students who were members of families directly impacted by of state-sanctioned violence. A total of 14 scholarships were awarded.

**Ales Bosley**

*Wayne State University*  
(BLM Michigan)

**Amir Greenridge**

*Long Beach City College*  
(BLM Los Angeles)

**Ayah Fakhy**

*Columbia University*  
(BLM Los Angeles)

**Channyah Brickerson-Smith**

*Wayne State University*  
(BLM Michigan)

**Chloe Jordan**

*Loyola Marymount University*  
(BLM Los Angeles)

**De'ja Joseph**

*Howard University*  
(BLM Florida)

**Ezekiel Hunt**

*Prairie View A&M University*  
(BLM Los Angeles)

**Janae Moore**

*Eastern Michigan University*  
(BLM Michigan)

**Kahlila Williams**

*UCLA*  
(BLM Los Angeles)

**Kawika Smith**

*Morehouse College*  
(BLM Los Angeles)

**Marshe Doss**

*Santa Monica College*  
(BLM Los Angeles)

**MiracleRay Davis**

*Eastern Michigan University*  
(BLM Michigan)

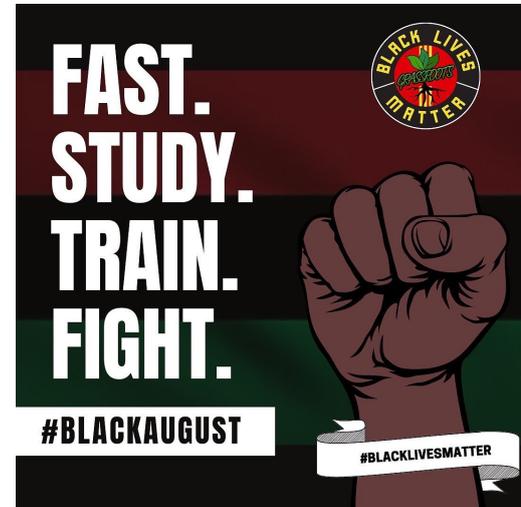
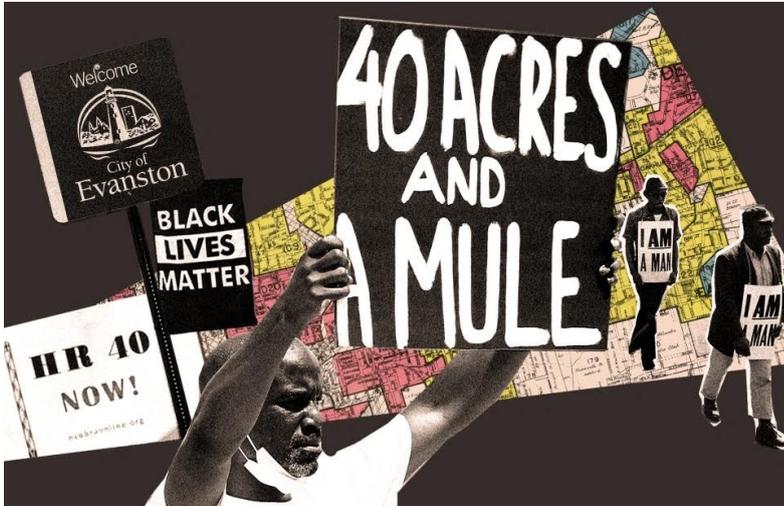
**Sarah Djato**

*University of Pennsylvania*  
(BLM Los Angeles)

**Thandiwe Abdullah**

*Howard University*  
(BLM Los Angeles)

# EDUCATION



## POLITICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

In 2022, BLM Grassroots initiated a virtual political education program consisting of monthly 90-minute sessions on topics directly relate to local and national organizing issues. Conversations have focused on Black Power, abolition, reparations, womanism, and more. Leading the sessions have been movement aligned intellectuals and engaged organizers from around the world.

## #BLACKHISTORYMATTERS

In February, the annual #BlackHistoryMatters campaign continued, facilitated by Dr. Anthony Ratcliff, Professor of Pan-African Studies at California State University, Los Angeles. Originally conceived in partnership with Scholars for Black Lives, the annual campaign aims to develop broad political understanding of Black historical figures, events, and movements within the Black freedom tradition. Daily entries throughout the month of February are offered on social media by movement-aligned scholars, which provided a deeper dive into the lives and legacies of historical Black freedom fighters otherwise pushed to the margins.

## BLACK AUGUST

Black August is a longstanding international tradition that uplifts political prisoners and Black freedom fighters whose lives and freedom from incarceration were stolen and sacrificed in service of the work. Originating in the 1970s in California prisons, Black August is a month-long commitment to fast, study, train, and fight against anti-Black state violence and those impacted. BLM Grassroots has joined in uplifting and facilitating members' participation in Black August as a communal effort toward political growth and accountability.

## AREA 5

# PUBLIC POLICY



*BLM Grassroots members with Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (left) and Senator Ed Markey (right) at Ending Qualified Immunity Act press conference. [Photo Credit] Ashlee Banks*

### **#ENDQUALIFIEDIMMUNITY**

BLM Grassroots' #EndQualifiedImmunity petition is a direct challenge the unjust legal doctrine that protects government officials, including police officers, who are accused of violating a person's Constitutional rights. Qualified immunity is frequently invoked to absolve the state from direct accountability for the harm they cause to civilians, and particularly Black people, whose lives are irreparably harmed or stolen through acts of police violence. The petition launched by BLM Grassroots, in the name of #AndrewJosephIII and supported by actress Eva Marcille as celebrity spokesperson, facilitated political education efforts across local chapters. BLM Grassroots signed-on as an organizational endorser of the federal Ending Qualified Immunity Act, which was authored by Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (MA). The family of Andrew Joseph

III, supported by Black Lives Matter Grassroots and Clergy for Black Lives joined with Congresswomen Pressley and Cori Bush (MO) for a press conference announcing the Bill in March 2022.

### **POLICE DECERTIFICATION ACT**

In 2018, #KennethRossJr was murdered by Gardena cop Michael Robbins, who had previously shot three other people when he was an officer at another department. Like so many, the killer cop was able to jump to another locale where he meted out more violence. Authored by State Senator Steve Bradford, the Kenneth Ross Jr. Police Decertification Act of 2022 was conceived, named, advanced, and won by Black Lives Matter California and partner organizations. Already, more than 50 of the most violent and corrupt *former* California law enforcement officers have had their guns and badges permanently rescinded.

# DIRECT SUPPORT



*Andrew and Deanna Joseph and supporters react to \$15M judgement against Hillsboro County in wrongful death lawsuit [Photo Credit: Luis Santana | Tampa Bay Times]*

## **JOSEPH FAMILY WINS \$15 MILLION JUDGEMENT**

After an eight-and-a-half year fight, the family of Andrew Joseph III were awarded a \$15 million judgement in a federal wrongful death lawsuit in September 2022. Andrew was a 14-year-old middle schooler who was unjustly profiled, detained, violated, and abandoned on the side of a busy interstate after being ejected by Hillsboro County sheriffs from the Florida State Fair. Subsequently, Andrew was struck and killed by a motorist. The 10-panel jury assigned overwhelming negligence to the Hillsboro County Sheriff for its role in creating the conditions for Andrew's death, for which the family should be compensated. This victory comes as a magnifying win for BLM Grassroots' #EndQualifiedImmunity petition, which was first initiated in 2021.

## **TORRANCE POLICE OFFICERS INDICTED**

Despite previously being cleared of wrongdoing by former Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey, Matthew Concannon and Anthony Chavez, two police officers linked to a racist text message scandal in the Torrance Police Department, were indicted in the killing of Christopher DeAndre Mitchell in April. For the last five years, the members of Black Lives Matter Torrance chapter have attended, monitored, and protested weekly Torrance City Council Meetings to demand justice and provide support to Mitchell's family. These efforts, though hard fought—resulting in multiple arrests and severe police brutality suffered by activists—have brought a degree of accountability and exposed the corruption of Torrance Police Department.

## **HEALING JUSTICE**

Inspired by the pivotal work of Dr. Mutulu Shakur, Healing Justice has become a prominent concept and practice within our movement that is transforming our culture. Healing Justice is a space for BLM chapters to build a shared analysis, develop skills around healing interventions, organize network-wide campaigns and offer cross-chapter support. For more insight about Healing Justice, please watch *Healing Justice, Embodiment, Praxis, and Building Black Futures*, a conversation between healing practitioners grounded in sacred practice, Black traditions and radical freedom.

## **SUPPORT FOR THE FAMILY OF JAHEIM MCMILLAN**

When 15-year-old #JaheimMcMillan was killed by police outside a Family Dollar in Gulfport, Mississippi in October 2022, BLM Grassroots quickly mobilized. Andrew Joseph, Jr., father of #AndrewJosephIII, took the role of Rapid Response Coordinator, providing support to the family and community, and organizing alongside local organizers. While we have not yet won an indictment of the officer who killed Jaheim, we have called for accountability from both the police and Family Dollar stores. We have also brought greater organizational support, successfully

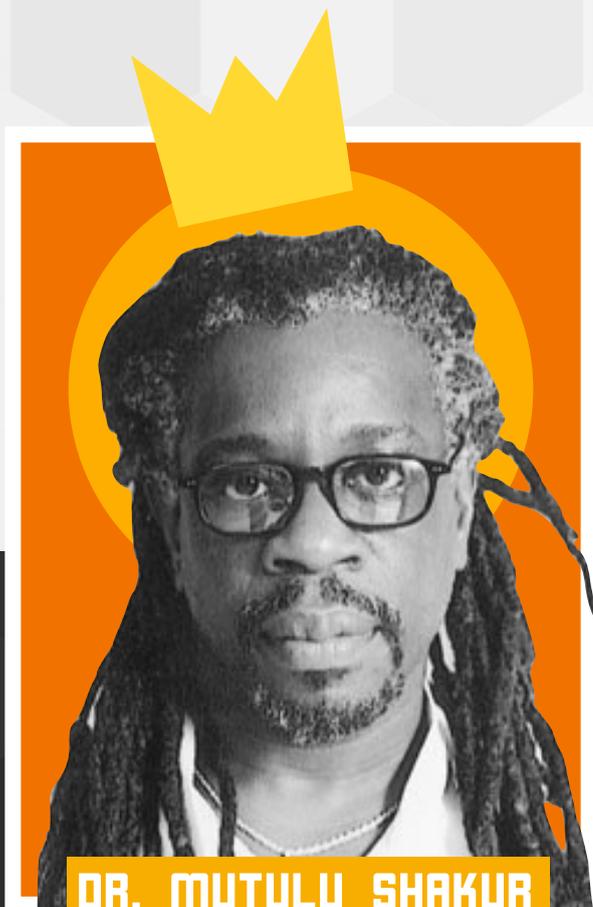
onboarding Black Lives Matter Gulfport (MS) and BLM Mississippi chapters.

## **RESPONDING TO WHITE DOMESTIC TERRORISM**

White domestic terrorism is a constant threat that undergirds the very foundation of the United States and police violence is central to it. The terrorism that comes at the hands of mostly white men, with weapons of war, speaks to why we must be abolitionist in our approach. On May 14, 2022, Peyton Gendron entered a Topps Grocery Store in one of the Blackest neighborhoods of Buffalo, New York. He held an assault rifle embossed with the word “nigg\*r” and killed ten people. Their names were: Celestine Chaney (65), Roberta Drury (32), Andre Mackneil (53), Katherine Massey (72), Margus Morrison (52), Heyward Patterson (67), Aaron Salter (55), Geraldine Talley (62), Ruth Whitfield (86), and Pearl Young (77). BLM Grassroots first mobilized more than 40 healers and spiritualists to pour libation and pray with the Buffalo community. We then returned to engage in work that exposes the horrid atrocities of white terrorism, with renowned scholar Dr. Julianne Malveaux. Grassroots would return to Buffalo on six additional occasions at the request of the community to facilitate workshops around Black power. This deep work has given rise to the BLM Buffalo chapter.

AREA 7

# ABOLITION



**DR. MUTULU SHAKUR**

1950-2023

*"The activists of today will become the political prisoners of tomorrow if we don't fight for the ones who gave up their freedom for ours."*

– Hank Jones

*San Francisco 8, Black Panther Party,  
and BLM Grassroots Board of Directors*

## REMEMBERING (AND FREEING) OUR POLITICAL PRISONERS

BLM Grassroots is ever grateful for the brilliant and courageous revolutionaries whom sacrificed their freedom in service to improving the lives and conditions of everyday Black people. Political prisoners are those persecuted and incarcerated because of their ideological beliefs and insurgent work on behalf of Black and other marginalized communities. Since our inception, Black Lives Matter has partnered with organizations like the Black August Coalition, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, and Black Panther Alumni to fight for the freedom and dignity of political prisoners. In 2022, we signed on to the campaign to #FreeJayBurton, a leading prisoner rights organizer. We launched into the fight to #FreeBrittanyMartin, who was arrested, prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced to more than four years in prison for simply making political statements at a Black Lives Matter protest in 2020; the pregnant mother of five was forced to have her sixth child in confinement, brutalized by guards, and denied the right to nurse or mother her newborn. Over the last year we also supported the work to bring Sundiata Acoli home.

Perhaps our greatest victory of our political prisoner work was helping to win the compassionate release of Dr. Mutulu Shakur in December 2022. Dr. Shakur, renowned acupuncturist and healer, was a New Afrikan activist and member of the Black Liberation Army before being arrested sentenced to 60 years in prison on RICO charges in 1988. Father to the legendary Tupac Shakur, following marriage to Afeni Shakur in 1975, Dr. Shakur was among the first to infuse the concept of healing justice into revolutionary work. After his release, "Baba Mutulu" frequented Black Lives Matter Grassroots meetings and gatherings, including our monthly political education meetings. He encouraged us the continue building of a movement that is restorative, loving, beautiful, visionary, and truly revolutionary. Dr. Shakur's enduring legacy remains deeply embedded in our work and we remain indebted to his contributions to our movement in his final months of life and living.





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