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**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER
GRASSROOTS**

2023
ACTION
REPORT

Cover Photo Credit: Mateo Gutierrez/USC Annenberg Media

**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER
GRASSROOTS**

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BLM GRASSROOTS

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A MESSAGE FROM GRASSROOTS



*Melina Abdullah, Director of BLM Grassroots speaks at BLM 10 Year Anniversary in AfricaTown (Leimert Park).
Photo Credit: Youth Justice Coalition*

The year 2023 marked ten years of Black Lives Matter. This beloved community and beautiful struggle has been birthed, built, and fueled by brilliant Black folks, and courageous allies, who have chosen to heed our sacred duty to advance abolition. This means toppling unjust systems that prey on our people and imagining and building a world of freedom where we have all of what we need and most of what we want.

This year's Action Report highlights just some of the powerful work moving through Black Lives Matter Grassroots chapters and organizers around the nation. Even as cameras turn away, resources diminish, and public attention is diverted, the work - seen and unseen -

continues to move. We are now 33 chapters that take to the streets, push policy, hold public officials and police accountable, raise awareness, support our people, and imagine and build towards a new world together. Our organizers are regular people. We are mamas and babas, youth and elders, students and educators; we are the working-class and poor, housed and unhoused. We laugh and cry, dance, paint, sing, read, recite poetry, love our children, honor our grandparents, cook and eat good food; we pray fervently... and sometimes cuss a little. We stumble...and we help each other rise again. The work is moved because us regular folks - guided by our Creator and righteous Ancestors - have decided

to move it. We are grateful for every hand, every prayer, every word, every dollar, every effort that has poured into making Black Lives Matter.

This report is broken down into seven essential and overlapping areas: Action, Education, Communications, Development, Public Policy, Direct Support, and Abolition, where examples of national and local efforts are moving. Summaries have been collected from chapters, through questionnaires, organization-wide meetings, field team reports, and collective conversation. Each sub-point warrants a report unto itself, and there is no way to capture the soul of this beautiful movement in this brief report. We are fortunate to have such a longstanding partner in Scholars 4 Black Lives, which is embedded in the work, shares our values and commitment to Black liberation, and that invests such skill, effort, and energy into writing the Action Report.

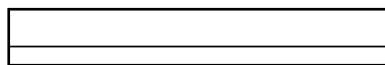
We stand grateful for the work that has been poured in over the generations to get us this far down freedom's road. We commit ourselves to working diligently and honorably in the names of those who walked before us and those whose lives have been stolen. Our work is our pledge to our people, our children, and

future generations that we will fight for and achieve the world divinely intended—a world we all want, need, and deserve.

It is our hope that the Action Report will inspire us to dig deeply, to assess our talents and resources, and use these lessons to strengthen our movement. Black Lives Matter Grassroots is people-powered; we are ever-growing and evolving, and are most effective when all of us engage. Plug into the work by following @blmgrassroots on social media, signing up for our text and email updates, and joining a chapter or building one.

Peace and Justice,

Melina



Melina Abdullah, Ph.D.

Co-Founder and Director

Black Lives Matter Grassroots

AREA 1

ACTION

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF BLACK LIVES MATTER

Black Lives Matter was born on July 13, 2013, spurred to action when the murderer of our beloved son, #TrayvonMartin, was acquitted. Since that day, Black Lives Matter has been counted as the largest racial and social justice movement in global history. The last ten years have been marked by unapologetic Blackness and courageous organizing, built on the legacies of Black freedom struggles of the past and the audacity and creativity of emerging generations. Black Lives Matter Grassroots—the boots on the ground—is what people think



Baba Akili facilitating an Organizing 101 workshop during the BLM 10 Year Anniversary celebration. Photo Credit: Youth Justice Coalition



Sybrina Fulton, mother of Trayvon Martin, speaks during 10th Anniversary celebration in AfricaTown (Leimert Park). Photo Credit: Jason Armond / Los Angeles Times

of when they think of Black Lives Matter. We are the people who birthed, built, and fueled the movement. Our righteous and visionary work seeks to topple all that oppresses us, engage the most radical of imaginings, and build towards a new world where Black people—and by extension all people—are free.

Our ten year anniversary celebrations were nothing short of magnificent – an affirmation of our first ten years and commitment to the fight ahead. On July 15, 2023, all roads led to AfricaTown (Leimert Park) in Los Angeles for the People’s Justice Festival, where more than 3,000 people from around the world engaged in workshops, performances, and a spirit of liberation and freedom. More than 50 justice families came in from across the country, with the mother of Trayvon Martin, Ms. Sybrina Fulton, offering a most compelling mainstage address. Scholars like Greg Carr, Jody Armour, Tabatha Jones Jolivet, and others held down the “Study & Struggle” space. There were ally and youth spaces and Organizing 101

workshops led by our own Baba “the baddest organizer on the planet” Akili. Dr. Cornel West delivered the keynote, and Chuck D of Public Enemy gave the headline performance. Later in September, Black Lives Matter’s 10 year anniversary was celebrated at the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. by aligned policymakers, scholars, justice families, and movement kinfolk.



Black Lives Matter-Los Angeles after court support for #ChristopherDeAndreMitchell

ENDING QUALIFIED IMMUNITY AND POLICE ASSOCIATIONS

Black Lives Matter Grassroots has expanded our work to end qualified immunity and challenge police associations, which block progress at every turn. Together with our justice families, we are partnering with Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (MA) to pass the Ending Qualified Immunity Act, which will upend the unjust legal doctrine that protects police from liability when they harm or kill our people. The opposition to our common-sense legislation are the police associations that masquerade as unions when it suits them, but betray working-class people on all fronts, including capping for killer cops. #EndPoliceAssociations 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, and protect the most violent of police. The effort seeks to partner with real unions to oust police associations from houses of labor and expose their seemingly invisible hand to the public. The hallmark of the campaign is a weekly rally in front of one of the most corrupt and violent associations, the LA Police Protective League, coordinated by Black Lives Matter-Los Angeles.

BLACK WOMEN ARE DIVINE

Inspired by the bright spirit of Breonna Taylor, who was murdered by police in Louisville in March 2020, Black Lives Matter Grassroots initiated Black Women Are Divine as a reclamation of Black women's divinity. It is a reminder that while the world attempts to make us into mules, Black women are actually divine. In 2023, Black Women Are Divine took shape as healing and love festivals in Atlanta (GA), Benton Harbor (MI), Boise (ID), Flint (MI), Long Beach (CA), Los Angeles (CA), Richmond (VA), and Tampa (FL). We were honored to have Breonna's family join the Los Angeles celebration. The campaign also included a social media component, which celebrated a living "divine Black woman" each day in March on our Instagram account. The divine Black women honored were nominated by our chapters and the public for their deep commitment to the struggle for Black freedom.

#BLACKXMAS

White-supremacist capitalism relies on police violence. Following the murder of #JohnCrawford by police inside an Ohio Walmart, we initiated #BlackXmas as a means of holding corporations accountable for their roles in the murders and abuse of our people. From "Black Friday" through January 1st (and all year round), Black Lives Matter Grassroots encourages everyone to: 1) Build Black – invest in Black organizations that benefit the community, 2) Buy Black – patronize Black-owned businesses that serve as community resources, and 3) Bank Black – move our money away from white-



(L to R) Lamar Black of Faith & Works, Cara McClure of BLM Birmingham, and Joshua Thompson of Alabama Students Against Prisons, outside of Regions Bank headquarters.

owned corporate banks to Black-owned banks that share our values. In 2023, Grassroots chapters in Atlanta, Long Beach, Los Angeles, and Mississippi profiled hundreds of Black-owned businesses in their communities and featured them on their own social media. A national map of businesses was built and housed at blackxmas.org.

BLM BIRMINGHAM LEADS DIVESTMENT EFFORTS

In coalition with Alabama Students Against Prisons and other community partners, BLM Birmingham organizers spoke with representatives of Regions Bank, a national bank headquartered in Birmingham, regarding its relationship with private prison



BLM Grassroots initiated Black Women Are Divine as a national call to Black women around the world to reclaim their divinity in the names of #BreonnaTaylor, #SandraBland, #WakieshaWilson and all Black women whose lives were stolen by state-sanctioned violence. In 2023, BLM Grassroots recognized the following amazing, brilliant, courageous, and talented Black women:

Alice Walker	Marian Wright Edelman
Andrea Ritchie	Mollie Bell
Brittany Martin	Nikole Hannah-Jones
Cheryl Grills	Paula Minor
Deja Marie Joseph	Queen Yonasda
Eisha Mason	Rickie Byars
Estella Holeman	Ruthie Wilson Gilmore
Evelyn Knight	Sybil Rosado
Helen Butler	Teri Williams
Ilhan Omar	Thandiwe Abdullah
Isra Hirsi	Thema Bryant
Joela-Abiona Rivera (AKA Ms. Abolition)	Tiffany Willoughby-Herard
Karlene Griffiths Sekou	Tricia Hersey
Keiajah Brooks	Yvonne Wheeler
Kimberly Jones	Zaynab Mohamed

BLM GRASSROOTS STATEMENT IN SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Originally published at blmgrassroots.org on October 9, 2023



Black Lives Matter Grassroots stands in solidarity with our Palestinian family who are currently resisting 75 years of settler colonialism and apartheid. As Black people continue the fight to end militarism and mass incarceration in our own communities, let us understand the resistance in Palestine as an attempt to tear down the gates of the world's largest open air prison. As a radical Black organization grounded in abolitionist ideals, we see clear parallels between Black and Palestinian people.

We, too, understand what it means to be surveilled, dehumanized, property seized, families separated, our people criminalized and slaughtered with impunity, locked up in droves, and when we resist they call us terrorists. We, too, dream of a world where our people may live freely on decolonized land. May the borders, checkpoints, prisons, police, and watchlists that terrorize our communities crumble and may the world we build from their ashes honor those who have fallen in struggle.

For lasting peace to come, the entire apartheid system must be dismantled. The war on the Palestinian people must cease. We call on the United States government to immediately stop funding war and redirect the \$4 billion in annual spending from the Israeli military to repair the damage caused by U.S. backed wars, military air strikes, coups, and destabilizing interventions against oppressed people around the world.

company CoreCivic (formerly known as Corrections Corporation of America). Their work led to Region's decision to sever its ties with the prison profiteer, agreeing to no longer provide banking services or financing for further development of for-profit prisons following the end of its contract in 2023.

GLOBAL BLACK SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE

Following the unprecedented genocide carried out by the Israeli government since October 7, 2023, BLM Grassroots and its chapters redoubled our support for Palestinian liberation. Solidarity work between Palestinian and Black Lives Matter organizers has been integral since Black Lives Matter's inception. Since 2014, organizers from the U.S. and Palestine have exchanged delegations, shared tools and tactics, and issued public statements of support. Two days after the most recent genocidal surge, Black Lives Matter Grassroots released a public statement supporting the Palestinian people. Following this, the BLM Buffalo chapter spearheaded a Black x Palestine toolkit, offering historical background and resources. Chapters have led and participated in marches and rallies nationwide, advocating for ceasefire motions to local, state, and federal bodies, including Congress. The BLM Youth Vanguard has also been at the forefront of the student movement for #FreePalestine.

BLM ATL AND #STOPCOPCITY

Organizing with the Movement 4 Black Lives and Community Movement Builders, BLM Grassroots and the Atlanta chapter

have been deeply involved in the work to stop a massive police training facility known as Cop City. The \$90 million Atlanta Public Safety Training Center, is currently under construction in the Weelaunee Forest area of DeKalb County, which is sacred Muskogee land in Atlanta. When people from around the world rose up to #StopCopCity, police reaffirmed their barbarism by stealing the life of environmental activist Manuel Esteban Perez Teran, lovingly known as "Tortuguita" on January 18, 2023. Tortuguita was part of an encampment in the forest and put his body and life on the line to block Cop City construction. Alongside aligned groups led by Black and Indigenous people, BLM Grassroots and the Atlanta chapter have participated in countless protests, public forums, voter engagement efforts, gathering signatures for petitions, and direct advocacy. We are now a part of a larger collective of groups meant to block the more than 90 "cop cities" being planned around the nation.

AREA 2

EDUCATION

STUDY AND STRUGGLE DURING #BLACKAUGUST

Black Lives Matter Grassroots has engaged in Black August, committing ourselves to the principles: Fast, Study, Train, and Fight for the end to a carceral system that hails from chattel slavery and in honor of the freedom fighters who sacrifice their freedom for ours. 2023 was a particularly momentous year as we welcomed home several of our movement elders who had been imprisoned for decades, including Dr. Mutulu Shakur (released in late 2022) and Ruchell Magee (released in 2023), the longest-serving political prisoner in United States history.

#BLACKHISTORYMATTERS

In February, our annual #BlackHistoryMatters campaign, facilitated by Dr. Charles H. F. Davis III, resumed in partnership with Scholars for Black Lives. This annual campaign aims to develop a broad political understanding of important Black political figures, events, and solidarity movements within the global Black freedom tradition. It also serves as a proclamation and pushback against the radical right's efforts to silence truth and remove Black people, including Black Studies and critical race theory, from education.

YOUTH VANGUARD SCHOLARSHIPS

The Black Lives Matter Youth Vanguard Scholarship is in its third year. Awardees were nominated by local Black Lives Matter Grassroots chapters for the Black Lives Matter Youth Vanguard Scholarship to acknowledge their leadership, activism, and ongoing pursuit of knowledge. This year's scholarship recipients include:

Aadriana Epps

Dakota Technical College

Amir Greenridge

Long Beach Community College

Asha Greenridge

Tuskegee University

Chloe Jordan*

Loyola Marymount University

Deja Marie Joseph*

Howard University

Emani Labon

Spelman College

Ezekiel Hunt

Prairie View A&M University

Jamelah Lewis*

Northwest University

Jerome Richardson

Temple University

Kahlila Williams

University of California Los Angeles

Nevaeh Wiley

St. Paul College

President Morgan-Barnes

Howard University

Sayyhid Newsome

Hillsborough Community College

Thandiwe Abdullah

Howard University

**Member of a Justice Family*



BLACK HISTORY MATTERS

Each day in February, BLM Grassroots publishes individually designed graphics educational captions on its social media accounts. Written by movement-aligned scholars, these captions provide succinct insight into the political legacies of often lesser-known contributors to the struggle for Black liberation.

AREA 3

COMMUNICATIONS

THIS IS NOT A DRILL!

First launched on Facebook in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the state of emergency experienced by Black people in the United States, This Is Not a Drill! (TINAD) was created by Black Lives Matter-Los Angeles as a means of conveying vital information. TINAD is now a two-hour program on KBLA Talk 1580 AM, with a Facebook Live simulcast, airing every Saturday from 8-10AM. Weekly topics have ranged from understanding surveillance technology's impact on the movement, to 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. The weekly #MoreThanAHashtag segment features conversations and calls to action with families of those killed by police and/or white supremacists.

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 been 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 they have the information needed to tell the Black Lives Matter story accurately and in a way that advances justice. This includes regular Black press calls, exclusives, and connections to "justice families" to accurately portray current justice issues and our work on the ground.



DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT AND UPDATES

Our movement family continues to expand as prospective chapters complete our extensive onboarding process to establish themselves in new locations across the nation. Our onboarding process provides chapters with essential tools for building strength and ensuring alignment across our network - including political education, movement orientation, and training. In 2023, Black Lives Matter Grassroots grew to 33 chapters nationally, with an additional six chapters slated for onboarding in 2024.

BLM Atlanta

In addition to their work to #StopCopCity, BLM Atlanta focused on issues of police brutality as a part of their work with Justice Families via court support, rallies, and marches which further fueled their work on People's Budget efforts to defund the police. BLM Atlanta also helped with feeding our unhoused siblings and worked with college students to get cops off of their campuses.

BLM Benton Harbor

BLM Benton Harbor is working to address issues in the criminal legal system, including compensation for wrongful convictions, ending police violence, and providing court support. The chapter continues its efforts to get clean water.

BLM Birmingham

State-sanctioned violence, voting rights, reproductive justice, gerrymandering, and labor exploitation were issues at the forefront of the work moving in Birmingham. Additionally, as a part of their Black Women Are Divine event, they worked as a member of a coalition to bail Black mothers out of jail, bringing home seven Black mothers who were being held because they could not afford bail. The chapter is building a support group to provide resources and counseling services for impacted families. BLM Birmingham also traveled to Decatur, Alabama following the killing of Black father #StevePerkins to help organize and build capacity among Black activists there, bringing the dismissal and prosecution of the cop who killed Steve.

BLM Boise

In 2023, Idaho marked its deadliest year for police shootings, leading to organizing for BLM Boise to focus on protests and advocacy for legislation that pushes back against police violence and demands resources for communities. BLM Boise also advanced bills related to tenants rights, maternal leave, and policing oversight.

BLM Buffalo

BLM Buffalo continues to organize with and support the families who were devastated by the white supremacist massacre at Tops Market. Additionally, the chapter also works with the family of #TylerLewis, a Black Buffalo State College student who was killed by a white man while on the campus of the University at Buffalo.

BLM California

BLM CA attended the California Legislative Black Caucus Policy Institute Leadership Symposium where they met with organizers and policymakers to discuss legislation and the chapter's priorities. In addition, BLM CA fought for single payer healthcare and built foundational relationships with labor unions to further their fight for healthcare justice.

BLM Detroit

In addition to their work to end police brutality and violence de-escalation efforts, BLM Detroit continued its transformative work in mutual aid, focusing on food sovereignty and clean water access. BLM Detroit also maintained its focus on revolutionary arts and culture, offering art classes to Black Detroit communities.

BLM Florida

Our first family-led chapter worked on essential issues relating to education, including blocking book bans, advocating for African American Studies and ethnic studies, and countering "Don't Say Gay" policies. The chapter fought for the continued right to protest and stood at the center of the national fight to end qualified immunity in the name of #AndrewJosephIII.

BLM Flint

Nine years since the crisis was exposed and Flint still doesn't have clean water. The ongoing water crisis continues to be a top priority and point of advocacy. "Fli-City Blackout" is the chapter's podcast, which is used as a form of political education to discuss local issues, as well as advocacy at the state and local level to fight against systemic racism.

BLM Ft. Wayne (Change Makers)

BLM Fort Wayne is currently working to address police accountability, disproportionate suspensions of Black children from school, and mobilizing resources for their community. They also administer mutual aid programs, monitor courts, and provide court support.

BLM Lancaster State Prison and BLM Kern Valley State Prison

BLM Prison chapters at Lancaster State and Kern Valley State prisons are working on improving the material conditions in prisons pending the ultimate goal of prison abolition. Additionally, members of the chapters are working on leadership development, mentorship, education, and member recruitment.

BLM Los Angeles (BLMLA)

In addition to playing a pivotal role in virtually all BLM Grassroots campaigns, alongside Helen Jones, mother of #JohnHorton and wife of #BrucePhillips, BLM LA continues to fight to get police out of traffic stops while reimagining public safety with self-enforcing road infrastructure and policies that address barriers to equipment and administrative violations. One such project is taking place in Watts, at the very park where #BrucePhillips was killed in a hit-and-run. This project will address road safety concerns in the area that keep children and community safe without police presence.

BLM Mississippi

BLM Mississippi is actively engaged in mentorship, organizing protests, and electoral justice work. They also fought against HB 1020, which seeks to expand the jurisdictional authority of the Capitol Police. The bill also allows for the creation of a court system where judges and prosecutors are *appointed* rather than elected.

BLM Pasadena

BLM Pasadena is fighting to end pretextual stops by police as a way to mitigate disproportionate criminalization and harm to Black people. This is a part of the chapter's larger work of protesting police engagement with the community and advocating for defunding of the local police department.

BLM Richmond (RVA)

BLM Richmond (RVA) is working to address issues in their community, including houselessness, mental health, incarceration, white washing of Black history/narrative, and child care. They are working on implementation of the Marcus Alert, which creates behavioral health crisis response as an alternative to police and are working on advancing a Virginia reparations study.

BLM Twin Cities

BLM Twin Cities continues to fight for policies around reparations, police accountability, ending the slavery language in the constitution, incarcerated people's minimum wage, and language restricting staff and SROs from employing physical restrictions on students. Twin Cities also maintains one of the most active Youth Vanguard chapters, understanding that students must stand at the front of in-school justice demands.

BLM Torrance

After years of tremendous physical, mental, and personal sacrifice by organizers, BLM Torrance consistent efforts for police accountability on behalf of #ChristopherDeAndreMitchell and his family resulted in the cops responsible for his murder being fired, decertified, and put on trial. BLM Torrance provides court support for Christopher's family, attending all hearings and court dates, and continues to demand a police oversight body in the city through weekly mobilizations to attend Torrance City Council meetings.

AREA 5

PUBLIC POLICY

BLM GRASSROOTS AT THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

In September, BLM Grassroots continued its 10-year anniversary celebration during Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. Chapters from across the country were in attendance including representatives from BLM Atlanta, BLM Los Angeles, BLM Twin Cities and BLM Florida. Youth Vanguard co-founder, Thandiwe Abdullah, presented on a main stage panel on stopping gun violence, convened by Congressman Maxwell Frost (FL). The delegation engaged in tabling, attended panels, and brought together policymakers and justice families committed to moving important legislation forward. Andrew Joseph, Jr. and Deanna Joseph (parents of #AndrewJosephIII), LaCandis Reid (sister of #JamesLeatherwood), Wanda Johnson (mother of #OscarGrant), and Gwen Carr (mother of #EricGarner) all made the policy demands real. Grassroots also met and discussed our policy priorities (e.g., Ending Qualified Immunity Act and our campaign to #FreeBrittanyMartin) with several legislators, including Congressmembers Ayanna Pressley and Cori Bush. Additional scholars, Black clergy, journalists and organizers with whom we shared space included Dr. Juliane Maluveaux, Dr. Thema Bryant, Dr. Ron Daniels, Dr. Roslyn Satchel, Dr. Melina Abdullah, Dr. Greg Carr, Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw, Dr. Wendy Smooth, Dr.

Keesha Middlemass, Roland Martin, Pastor Jamal Bryant, Bobbi Wine, Chauntyll Allen, Tia Oso, Rashad Robinson, Kendrick Sampson, Guerline Jozef, Porch'se Miller, Greg (Baba) Akili, Joseph Williams, and Sheila Bates.

BLM CALIFORNIA AND CALCARE

BLM CA continues to build on their work to create a single-payer health care system in the State of California alongside labor partners like the California Nurses Association. Currently, Black Californians face limited access to quality healthcare due to enduring financial barriers. This underscores the urgent need for healthcare justice, a critical priority that ensures true public safety and holds the potential to significantly enhance the lives of Black Californians. While it did not pass in the 2023 legislative year, CalCare will be a continued priority for the next legislative cycle.

LOCAL CHAPTERS ENGAGE CITY COUNCILS, SCHOOL BOARDS

As a part of BLM Grassroots' local organizing strategy, various chapters have prioritized engaging with local politics at the city council. Specifically, chapters have mobilized their membership to attend city council meetings, offer public comment on critical issues like public safety and racialized policing, reparations to Black communities, and affordable housing and homelessness. Chapters have been diligent

in their outreach, routinely calling, emailing, and engaging public officials on social media to ensure issues affecting Black residents are prioritized in local policy discussions and implementation practices.

MUNICIPAL SUPPORT FOR STREET MURAL WAIVERS IN FLINT

In 2020, organizers from the BLM Flint chapter spearheaded the creation of a street mural on Martin Luther King Boulevard, initially supported by the Mayor's office. However, days before the 2023 Juneteenth Festival, where supplies and volunteers were ready to repaint the mural, the City reversed course and stopped restoration efforts, citing state-level traffic safety concerns. Fortunately, a Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) spokesperson declared the road locally owned and operated and therefore did not require a MDOT permit and such decisions were entirely up to the city.



Black Lives Matter street mural on Martin Luther King Boulevard in Flint, Michigan

BLM BIRMINGHAM CHALLENGES GERRYMANDERING

Allen v. Milligan, formerly known as Merrill v. Milligan, was a challenge to the construction of redistricting maps in Alabama that dilute Black voter blocs. In June 2023, resulting from coalition efforts co-led by BLM Birmingham, the Supreme Court voted 5-4 that the maps violated the 1964 Voting Rights Act, providing the basis of lawsuits in Jefferson County, Alabama to address gerrymandered maps ahead of the 2024 elections.

ORGANIZING FOR A PEOPLE'S BUDGET

First initiated in 2020, the People's Budget work has engaged communities around the nation about where they would like to see their city's resources allocated. Overwhelmingly, people want to divert funds away from police, prosecutions, and parking enforcement, and towards mental health and housing. In 2023, BLM Grassroots convened several virtual national planning meetings to support People's Budget efforts. In Los Angeles, Drs. Tabatha Jones Jolivet and David Turner launched a citywide survey, along with focus groups and community conversations, to develop a report. This report was presented at a community forum attended by more than 300 people, including newly elected Mayor Karen Bass, in advance of the budget.

AREA 6

DIRECT SUPPORT



Pamela Fields, mother of #DonteLamontJordan, at the park bench dedication and memorial for her son. Photo credit: Brandon Richardson.

DEDICATION FOR DONTE LAMONT JORDAN

Family, friends, and members of the BLM Long Beach chapter gathered at Seaside Park in July to celebrate the life of #DonteLamontJordan, who was killed by Long Beach police in 2013. Jordan, who lived across the street in Long Beach’s Washington neighborhood, regularly provided food and haircuts to unhoused residents in the park, which now features a beautifully designed bench dedicated to his memory. The bench was painted by local artist Sharniece Chantal in partnership with the Arts Council, BLM Long Beach, Long Beach Parks, Recreation and Marine, and nonprofit Partners of Parks. Audrena Redmond, Director of Political Education and Chapter Coordination for BLM Grassroots and co-founder of BLM Long Beach, noted the bench was part of a broader local effort to “lift up Black lives” in the wake of George Floyd’s murder in Minneapolis.

BLM MISSISSIPPI UNMASKS ‘GOON SQUAD’

Six white cops, collectively known as the ‘Goon Squad,’ were charged and pleaded guilty to 16 felony counts in both state and federal court in August 2023. The charges stemmed from the torture of Eddie Parker and Michael Jenkins of Braxton, Mississippi, which BLM Mississippi helped to unmask along with decades of anti-Black police violence. Five of the officers were deputies with the Rankin County Sheriff’s Office, and one was a local officer from the Richland Police Department. The group had been involved in several other incidents over the last five years in Rankin County, resulting in either serious injury or deaths

of Black men. Concurrent sentences, handed down in March and April 2024, ranged from 10 to 27 years for the officers' crimes.

MUTUAL AID PROGRAMS

Mutual aid work is a pillar of BLM Grassroots. Chapters in Benton Harbor, Flint, Long Beach, Detroit, Los Angeles, Mississippi, and Richmond (VA) all engage in regular mutual aid projects ranging from back-to-school giveaways to monthly food distributions. BLM Detroit has been a model of this. Every month, the chapter distributes more than 60 organic produce boxes, sourced from Black farmers, to Black communities throughout the city.

GRASSROOTS CHAPTERS CONTINUE ORGANIZING WITH JUSTICE FAMILIES

BLM Grassroots, alongside BLM Grassroots Florida launched our Rapid Response team and hosts regular Justice Families meetings to provide space, comfort, and support to our families who have had a loved one stolen by state-sanctioned violence.

BLM Atlanta has continued its support for the families of #QundavierHicks, #KendrickJohnson, #VincentTruitt, #JaylinMcKenzie, #JabrilRobinson, and #JimmyAtchison.

BLM Kalamazoo/Battle Creek has remained in close community with the family of #LindellGrisham, who died in the presence of police in 2022, as well as given support to Ayanna Google, who was reportedly tortured in Calhoun County jail after being detained during a mental health crisis earlier this year. BLM Flint has also continued its support of John Fleming, DeAngelo Bowman, Aaron Dunigan and their respective families in the wake of police misconduct including wrongful arrests, excessive use of force, and violent house raids.

In California, BLM Pasadena organizers have remained advocates for the families of #AnthonyMcClain, #CharlesTownes, #VanessaMarquez, and #KendrecMcDade, all of whom were killed by police in recent years. BLM Los Angeles intensified its work to remove police from traffic stops following the LAPD tasing murder of #KeenanAnderson and remove police from mental health calls following the theft of #TakarSmith's life. The Los Angeles chapter counted the conviction of the Los Angeles County sheriff's deputy who murdered #RyanTwyman among its achievements, though short of justice since it does not bring back the young father, brother, and son. BLM Torrance continues to center its work around #ChristopherDeAndreMitchell, whose murder brought the prosecution of two Torrance cops and exposed the corruption and racism of the entire department.

BLM Grassroots Florida co-founders Deanna and Andrew Joseph have helped lead a support network of families impacted by police violence across the nation. In Florida, they have organized alongside the families of #JosiahPinner, #JonasJoseph, and #TrayvonMartin. Following their 2022 \$15 million verdict against the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office in the death of their son, a payment which has been blocked by police associations and the politicians that they control, the Josephs have continued to work tirelessly to move other "justice families" from "pain to purpose."

In 2023, BLM Grassroots also provided support to the families of the following:

- #RonaldGreene (Monroe, LA)
- #JahiemMcMillan (Gulfport, MS)
- #JaylandWalker (Akron, OH)
- #TylerLewis (Buffalo, NY)
- #GlennFosterJr (AL)
- #JaylenRandle (Houston, TX)
- #LedenBoykins (GA)
- #RasheemCarter (MS)
- #StevePerkins (Decatur, AL)
- #JaylinMcKenzie (Memphis, TN)
- #KendrickJohnson (GA)



(L to R) Black Lives Matter Lancaster Prison Chapter co-founder Prince Akili with BLM LA organizer Baba Akili

AREA 7

ABOLITION

FREING OUR POLITICAL PRISONERS

In 2023, BLM Grassroots continued its abolition work in service to bringing several political prisoners home. Political prisoners are those persecuted and incarcerated because of their ideological beliefs and insurgent work on behalf of Black and other marginalized communities

Most notably, this included coalition efforts for the release of revolutionary abolitionist Ruchell “Cinque” Magee in August 2023. In 1970, Magee was involved in the Marin County courthouse uprising organized by Soledad Brother Jonathan Jackson. In response, the full weight of the state was levied against Magee in retaliation, leading to 67 years inside. Just two months following his release, comrade Cinque transitioned to the ancestral plane.

LIFE-CHANGING POLICIES ON THE WAY TO ABOLITION

Black Lives Matter-Los Angeles rallied every week for three-and-a-half years to remove the former District Attorney because of her refusal to prosecute killer cops, who stole more than 800 lives in Los Angeles County on her watch. #JackieLaceyMustGo was also about building towards a more progressive criminal legal system as we work towards fundamental transformation. We succeeded in ousting Lacey and the new District Attorney implemented policies that led to the release of hundreds of Black people who had been targeted by a system that undeniably descends from chattel slavery. Black Lives Matter-Lancaster Prison Chapter co-founder, Ryan Brown (who adopted the name Prince Akili in honor of our

own Baba Akili), was one who is now stepping back in to the world and doing the work of Black liberation after being released through these new policies - which prioritized releasing those imprisoned as children who are being held on "enhancements." Ryan was only 15 years-old on March 6, 2006 when he was taken from his 10th grade class at Luezinger High School, tried as an adult on a non-murder charge stacked with "gang enhancement," and imprisoned. On March 26, 2023, the new District Attorney's policies brought Prince Akili home, where he was welcomed by his family and Black Lives Matter community. He is working, serves as an active member of BLM Los Angeles, and is leading the #BlackAugust political education programming to honor our political prisoners and #FreeEmAll.



Brittany Martin was unjustly arrested after participating in a 2020 racial justice protest in Sumter, South Carolina.

people and made comments that the officer, and later the state, would contend were threats. Brittany was convicted and sentenced to four years in prison. Within the first year of serving her sentence, Brittany was forced to give birth to her youngest child, Blessing, inside, denied the right to mother or breastfeed her infant, had her hair (a religious symbol) forcibly cut, denied attorney visits, been beaten, placed in solitary confinement, and transferred to an out-of-state prison without the knowledge or consent of her family. BLM Grassroots has been working alongside Brittany's attorney and brought in the ACLU to free her, advocate for her, and provide support for her family.

#FREEBRITTANYMARTIN

Brittany Martin is a Black freedom fighter and mother of six. Like so many, she heeded the call to demand justice for Black people in the wake of a surge in police and racist violence in 2020. When confronted by police, then pregnant mother of five, affirmed her love for Black

IN MEMORIAM

Black Lives Matter Grassroots remembers recently ascended ancestors who struggled tirelessly for Black liberation.



DR. MUTULU SHAKUR

NEW AFRIKAN REVOLUTIONARY, ACUPUNCTURIST, AND HEALER

1950–2023



RUCHELL "CINQUE" MAGEE

REVOLUTIONARY, POLITICAL PRISONER, AND PRISON ABOLITIONIST

1939–2023



BABA SEKOU ODINGA

NEW AFRIKAN REVOLUTIONARY, BLACK PANTHER, AND BLA MEMBER

1954–2024

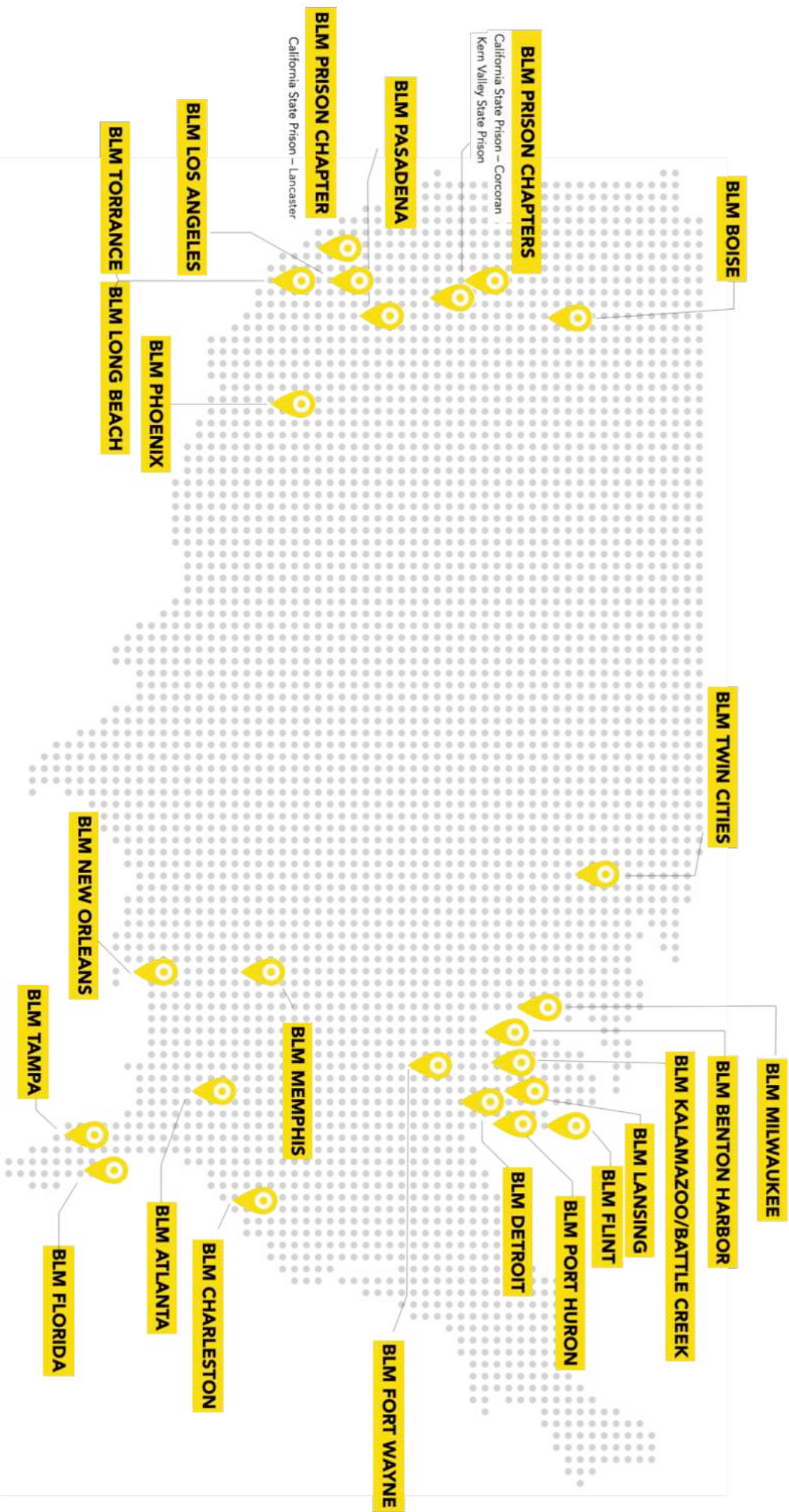


BABA KWAZI NKUMAH

ORGANIZER, POLITICAL ANALYST, AND LABOR ACTIVIST

1944–2024

BLM GRASSROOTS CHAPTERS



... JUST 25
BLACK PEOPLE
YEL



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [BLMGRASSROOTS.ORG](https://blmgrassroots.org)

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