

# BLACK LIVES MATTER

## POLICE BRUTALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Police Brutality refers to the use of unnecessary or excessive force by police officers in their interactions with civilians. This can amount to torture or ill-treatment, violate the right to be free from discrimination, the right to liberty and security, and in the worst-case scenario also the right to life. Often, police brutality disproportionately affects discriminated communities. This includes trans women who are sex workers in the Dominican Republic, and the LGBTQ+ community in the Russian republic of Chechnya. It also particularly affects those who are protesting their government from Belarus to Hong Kong. Rates of police brutality differ based on a combination of factors including racial or other forms of discrimination, inadequate laws, insecurity or conflict and entrenched impunity. Brazil has one of the highest rates of police brutality, with 1,810 people killed in Rio de Janeiro in 2019.

Racial discrimination and police brutality is a global issue, and the Black community in the UK and USA, to name just two countries, are discriminated against at every level of the criminal justice system from stop and search rates, to trials and incarceration rates – even the use of the death penalty in the USA. Over the last few months, the horrific killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless others in the USA has caused a resurgence of outrage at the failure of racial bias to be properly addressed in the police force. Not one state in the USA complies with international law and standards on the use of lethal force by the police. Since 2013, 28% of those killed by the police in the USA were black people despite being only 13% of the population (Mapping Police Violence). The UK also has deeply entrenched issues with police brutality and racial profiling. Amnesty has written a report on the use of racial discrimination in the Met's Gang Matrix which stigmatizes young black men for the music they listen to and the way they are perceived on social media. 78% of those on the database are Black, despite the Met's own figures showing that only 27% of those responsible for serious youth violence are black. 99% of those on the database are male, with the youngest being just 12 years old.

\*Unless otherwise stated all the figures are from the Amnesty website and specifically the listed below:

Police Brutality: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/police-brutality/>

Gang Matrix: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/london-trident-gangs-matrix-metropolitan-police>

Police use of lethal force in the USA: [https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/aiusa\\_deadlyforcereportjune2015-1.pdf](https://www.amnestyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/aiusa_deadlyforcereportjune2015-1.pdf)

Police killings in Brazil:

<https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AMR1954672016ENGLISH.pdf>

Mapping Police Violence: <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/>

The UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/UseOfForceAndFirearms.aspx>

Human Rights Watch, 14 Recommendations for Fundamental Police Reform:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/08/12/us-14-recommendations-fundamental-police-reform>

## UK- BASED ORGANISATION'S TO FOLLOW

**The4front project** – youth organization, empowering young people to fight injustice

**Netpol (The Network for Police Monitoring)** - currently working on a comprehensive report into policing at Black lives matter protests in the UK.

**Glitch** – Working to protect the mental health of Black users online.

**Resistance lab (Manchester-based)** – an anti-racist group who seek to understand, expose, and educate others about how state violence affects marginalised communities.

**StopWatchUK**- organization working on fair and accountable policing, also working on facial recognition in policing

**Black Lives Matter UK** – the UK contingent of the Black Lives Matter movement.

## THE DEATH PENALTY AND ANTI-BLACK PREJUDICE

**How the US Death Penalty is an issue of racial justice:**

*“The colour of a defendant and victim's skin plays a crucial and unacceptable role in deciding who receives the death penalty in America.”*

American Civil Liberties Union

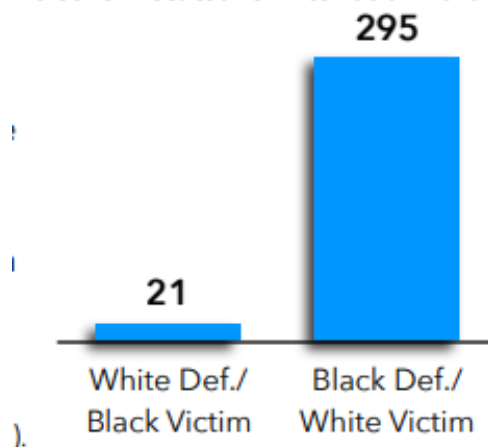
Amnesty International has fought against the ultimate denial of human rights, the death penalty, ever since its formation in 1961. In the UK the death penalty no longer exists but fifty-five countries in the world, including the US still retain the use of capital punishment. Many organisations including Amnesty International USA, the Death Penalty Information Centre and

the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (US) have compiled research which demonstrates how anti-black prejudice influences who is sentenced to death in the US.

Studies and figures show that the race of both the defendant and the victim has an effect on whether a death sentence is handed out to the defendant in the US. For example:

- In Washington, jurors were three times more likely to recommend a death sentence for a black defendant than a white one in similar cases (Prof. K. Beckett, Univ. of Washington, 2014).
- In Louisiana, the chances of receiving a death sentence was 97% higher for those whose victim was white than whose victim was black (Pierce & Radelet, Louisiana Law Review, 2011). (Findings of the above two studies summarised: <https://files.deathpenaltyinfo.org/documents/pdf/FactSheet.f1597179875.pdf>).
- Since 1976, 43% of those who have been executed in the US have been people of colour, as are 55% currently awaiting execution. This means that the death sentences fall disproportionately on defendants of colour (American Civil Liberties Union).

#### Persons Executed for Interracial Murders



(chart courtesy of <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/executions-overview/executions-by-race-and-race-of-victim>)

- In cases of interracial murders (when the race of the defendant and victim was different) black defendants were disproportionately executed for killing white victims. This chart shows that the number of death sentences handed out to black defendants in interracial murders is over ten times those handed out to white defendants who have murdered black victims in the US since 1976.

Study after study has demonstrated a deeply racist element to the US system of capital punishment. This is yet another reason to abolish the death penalty in the US.

# WHAT YOU CAN DO

## Encourage your members to join the Anti-Death Penalty Project

This is a group of Amnesty UK activists raising awareness of why the death penalty is ineffective, unfair, and the ultimate denial of human rights. They campaign to end the death penalty in the fifty-six countries which retain the death penalty (Amnesty International Report, 2019). Publicise the Project to your members and get them to join their mailing list, through the link below.

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/death-penalty-project-campaign>

## Educate Yourselves

- 'Executions by Race and Race of Victim', <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/executions-overview/executions-by-race-and-race-of-victim>
- 'Racial Bias', National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (US), <http://www.ncadp.org/pages/racial-bias>
- 'Race and the Death Penalty', American Civil Liberties Union <https://www.aclu.org/other/race-and-death-penalty>
- 'A Vast Racial Gap in Death Penalty Cases, New Study Finds', NY Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/03/us/racial-gap-death-penalty.html>
- 'Taking A Stance Against the Death Penalty', Twenty Minute Interactive Course, <https://academy.amnesty.org/learn/course/external/view/elearning/102/taking-a-stance-against-the-death-penalty>
- 'Why we're working to End the Death Penalty', <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/end-death-penalty>

## Mark Anti-World Death Penalty Day on the 10 October 2020

Anti-World Death Penalty Day is in its 18<sup>th</sup> year. It is organised by the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (Amnesty International is a member organisation). It is a day to raise awareness of the death penalty and to campaign for its abolition. Within your university group you could mark the day by:

- **Holding a debate:** This is a great way of learning how to 'win' the argument on the death penalty and how to challenge perceptions and myths surrounding it. Include the issue of anti-blackness and the death penalty and share the resources in this pack with members to inspire informed discussions.
- **Run a Workshop:** Educate your members on how anti-blackness is a part of the US death penalty and the wider justice system. Research how activists have campaigned against the death penalty previously and brainstorm how these could inspire your group to fight to abolish the death penalty too. Invite anti-racist societies and representative groups to your workshop or discussion to include activism against the death penalty across as many people as possible.

- **Craft Session:** Get your members to create eye-catching posters or social media graphics against the death penalty. Include where appropriate, stats and facts about how deeply racialised the US death penalty and add a powerful slogan.

## BLACK TRANS LIVES MATTER

“Queer people have been here fighting but there’s a lot of fear about embracing the LGBTQ culture, especially in the Black community.”

Juniper Alexander, U.S. military veteran, Activist.

“While trans women of colour were at the forefront of fighting against racial injustice and sexual discrimination, many of those hard-fought privileges were only extended to white cis-gendered men and women. BLM wouldn’t exist without queer and transgender women of colour at the forefront. The real enemy is white supremacy, not queerness.”

Jamila Brown, Writer.

In the UK, throughout social media Black trans writers and activists such as Kuchenga, Travis Alabanza and Munroe Bergdorf have been spreading awareness and sharing their experiences to highlight the injustices faced by black trans people.

For example, Munroe Bergdorf shared she was the first-ever trans model by the beauty cosmetics company L’Oréal. However, was subsequently dropped by them after speaking out about white supremacy in 2017. Now in June 2020 she has been hired again but as a diversity consultant by L’Oreal. She states part of her work as an activist is to encourage big businesses to "understand their responsibility with regards to diversity and inclusion."

However, as you may know activism is an exhausting process so it should not only fall on the Black trans people to educate us. It shouldn’t be normalised for trans people constantly for them campaign for their visibility in society and their human rights not violated.

It would be ignorant to say or think this doesn't happen in the UK – there is an alarming rise of killings and violence against Black trans people. For instance Naomi Hersi aged thirty-six was a Black trans woman who was brutally murdered back in March 2018 near Heathrow airport.

As one of the organisers of Black Trans Lives Matter march which happened in London on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020, Ren Mars aged twenty-five says "We know because we live it, and we know it when we see it happen to someone else even in a far flung part of the world that isn't us. If it happened to that person it could happen to me, it could happen to any of us."

“Are you including Black trans women in that list of Black names?”

Linda LaBeija, Model, Poet and a member of the House Ballroom community. Asks when we remember George Floyd and others that have been killed by police brutality at the BLM protests.

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation reports “Transgender and gender-expansive people face stigma surrounding who they are from an early age. Often rooted in inaccurate beliefs and politically-motivated attacks on transgender identities, this stigma erects barriers in virtually every facet of life, denying transgender people the equal opportunity to succeed and be accepted for who they are. Moreover, anti-transgender stigma can have long-term impacts on mental health and economic and housing stability, especially if individuals experience familial rejection and isolation from social support systems.”

Writer Dean Atta comments how Black trans people have been disproportionately affected by these barriers. He writes “Due to systemic racism and transphobia, many working-class black trans people are unable to access gender affirming surgery, mental health services, safe housing and safe workplaces and turn to online fundraising or rely on support from charities in order to survive.”

Meanwhile, **one-third** of Black transgender women who had interacted with law enforcement in the past year report that officers assumed they were sex workers. The reality is that many transgender people – and especially transgender people of colour – distrust and avoid law enforcement altogether, leaving many victims of violent crime unprotected and unsupported. We must educate policy makers on how criminalization of sex work contributes to a higher risk of violence and hold law enforcement agencies accountable to equally serving transgender individuals regardless of their engagement in sex work.

We strongly suggest reading the report ***Human Rights Campaign Foundation: Understanding Anti-Transgender Violence and Ending the Crisis.***

Sources:

<https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2020/08/14/munroe-bergdorf-vogue-hope-waking-nightmare-lockdown-pandemic/>

<https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/politics/article/black-trans-lives-matter>

<https://metropolisjapan.com/black-trans-activist-juniper-alexander/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-53192703>

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/start-black-lives-matter-lgbtq-lives/story?id=71320450>

“My community dies every day, whether it is from HIV and AIDS or from transphobia or from homophobia. I ask you consider this that is a human being, we’re all human beings. It’s about inclusivity and I will never ever ask any of you for respect... I will demand it.”  
Dominique Jackson, Actress and Activist, at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual HRC National Dinner.

# BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT AND EDUCATION

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

How to Plan it? Inclusive and Intersectional Education

*"The mere imparting of information is not education. Above all things, the effort must result in making a man think and do for himself." – Carter G. Woodson*

Implementing Black History Month into national curriculums profoundly benefits from understanding the origins of this month hence its importance. This toolkit focuses on Black Lives Matter in the United Kingdom however its precedent, the United States, hosts the origins of the many subsections of this movement, including the Black History Month. These two Western and cosmopolitan nations have been a great source of racial injustice to its BAME citizens and other BAME individuals in various countries. Therefore, it is crucial to emphasize the history of this age-long mistreatment towards marginalized groups such as Black individuals while also highlighting their contributions, actions, battles, and achievements.

Carter G. Woodson, a leading African-American historian, conceived the first form of the Black History Month. In 1926, accompanied by the Jim Crow laws and segregation, Woodson channeled the need for education about anti-Blackness with the Negro History Week. Soon after it was renamed as Black History Month, in 1980s (during the reign of Margaret Thatcher) the UK government started facing riots from their Black citizens about marginalization, racism, anti-Blackness, and invalidation of colored identities and purposes. In October 1<sup>st</sup> 1987, a special projects officer in Greater London Council and London Strategic Policy Unit, Akyaaba Addai-Sebo, developed and brought the notion of Black History Month to the UK with its first official event.

<https://everygeneration.co.uk/index.php/black-british-history/bhm-black-history-month/black-history-month-origins>

Today, there are many organizations that plan and set up Black History Month modules. These range from exercises that engage students with creativity, crafts, safe-space discussions and debates, training with speakers, conferences, research assignments, playing movies and documentaries while keeping in mind the particular needs of different education levels of students. For example kindergarten-elementary school pupils can struggle to concentrate for a long period of time - thus, it would be reasonable for teachers to focus more on creativity, crafts, movies/documentaries and easy research assignments for the students to acquire knowledge and develop interest into learning Black History. As the students get older, more advanced level material would be suitable. Safe-space discussions and debates, attending conferences and trainings play an immense role in shaping their worldview through the lenses of racial justice, ally-ship, and self-validation of BAME identity. However, in order to keep this month enjoyable

for every student while maintaining its informative core, each education level should balance these materials which will keep the learning process sustainable and appealing.

Sources that address how to plan Black History Month and the materials to use while doing so, for every education level:

<https://globaldimension.org.uk/event/black-history-month/2021-10-01/>

<https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk>

<https://www.truetube.co.uk>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk/interactive/2008/oct/13/black-history-month-timeline>

<http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/black-history-month.htm>

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/collections/teaching-content/black-history-month/>

### **Black History Month Is Over, Now What?**

Black History Month should not be an excuse to white-wash education for the rest of the year. The Black Lives Matter movement exceeds the month of October and the schools must make BAME students feel included all-year-round. One of the primary elements in achieving this goal is having zero-tolerance policy in schools towards racism. Even in the cases of the least harmful micro-aggressions, the teacher, student or the staff should be warned and the consequences for continuing this misconduct should be evaluated and presented to the perpetrator. Another step that should be taken is a nation-wide establishment of training session for teachers and staff before they start a new job. The training session can combine the approaches toward Black History Month and pedagogy.

In addition, a school or campus that is predominantly white would is likely to have adverse effects on the mental state and identity of BAME students. Hence, diversifying the demographics of students, staff and teachers is a must. For the student section of this goal, a critical evaluation about tuition fees and scholarships especially for international pupils can take place. In terms of educational materials, white-washing is highly prominent in the current system. Studying the works and contributions of remarkable Black scholars, thinkers, inventors, historical figures, scientists would both open the gates for furthering education and building a sense of belonging to BAME students.

## **FOLLOW BLACK ACTIVISTS**

Education does not start nor end in the premises of a school/campus.

- People who have finished school
- People who do not have access to physical teaching,
- Students whose schools do not suffice the primary teaching about racial justice and Black Lives



- People who simply want to access information easier in their daily lives and keep themselves updated

All these people can benefit from following Black Activists on their preferred social media platform. Keeping in mind that these Black activists do this task voluntarily and not by the request of white followers. It is not their given job to educate white people or even allies about Black Lives, racial justice and anti-racism.

For a list of Black activists on social media (more found at the end of this toolkit):

<https://www.thegoodtrade.com/features/anti-racism-activists>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/black-lives-matter-anti-racism-activists-instagram-social-media-a9554186.html>

## **MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR BAME STUDENTS**

Privilege and lack thereof, disproportionately affects BAME students' mental wellbeing. News about police brutality, conservative Western countries' anti-immigration policies, mistreatment of BAME individuals in everyday life especially in the health sector, colonialism and its impact on the economy, terrorism and many other detrimental "norms" increase the need for a special mental health support system in universities. Especially in the UK, most universities have deficient counselling services. The waiting time for an appointment is a deterrent for the student that want to seek help. In addition, having to explain your racial struggles, battles and oppression to a white professional –even if they are an ally- is uncomfortable. Not ever having to relate to these injustices and the possibility of a condescending attitude towards the patient can produce more harm than good. Diversifying support staff would be substantially advantageous for everyone.

Some universities that apply this approach to counselling services:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-bme-students>

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/bame-students>

Findings about this topic:

<https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/mental-health-and-wellbeing-in-doctoral-students-from-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-bame-backgrounds> 'Uniquely, BAME students are affected by the conscious or unconscious non-inclusive behaviour of other individuals and groups within the HE setting.'

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jun/21/covid-19-hits-bame-youth-mental-health-worse-than-white-peers-study>

<https://londonstudent.coop/maliha-reza-londons-university-mental-health-services-are-failing-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-students-its-time-we-had-more-bame-counsellors/>

# BAME AND ACCEPTANCE INTO UK UNIVERSITIES

“Homogeneity in the content of higher education – from the scholarship studied to the scholars themselves – results in homogenous social institutions, which all too easily become hosts of practices and policies that contribute to enduring racism. As racial homogeneity in educational institutions does not serve democracy or make society better, pursuit of the decolonisation agenda is therefore something more – it is the key to a stronger democracy.” – *Professor Iyiola Solanke, Chair in EU Law and Social Justice, University of Leeds and founder of the Black Female Professors Forum <https://blackfemaleprofessorsforum.org/>*

As students, one of the areas we have the most power to advocate for systematic change in is our university institutions. According to an LSE study in 2014, applications of university candidates from a range of BAME backgrounds including black African and Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian were less likely to result in the offer of a place, even once factors like educational attainment were controlled for. Although 8% of first-year undergraduates were black across UK universities in 2016, for Russell Group Universities the average was less than 4% and at the University of Cambridge only 1.5% of its intake was black, with only 1.2% at the University of Oxford.

HESA shows that BAME students are disproportionately affected by the ‘leaky pipeline’ as well. Whilst 4% of PhD students are black, only 2% of academic staff are black. This under representation and loss of skilled students suggests that university institutions are often hostile environments for BAME scholars. To really address these issues, universities need to consider a fundamental restructuring of their policies and systems (for example applications, grant systems, diversifying curriculum) not merely tokenistic adjustments. Systems need to be in place to support BAME staff and students and to ensure that universities are places that empower their BAME students not deter them from further education.

Some educational resources:

Decolonising universities: [https://diversityuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/HEPI\\_Miseducation\\_Debate-Paper-23\\_FINAL.pdf](https://diversityuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/HEPI_Miseducation_Debate-Paper-23_FINAL.pdf)

‘Leaky pipeline’: <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2020/07/30/phds-and-value-why-we-need-to-re-think-the-leaky-pipeline/>

Discrimination and mental health: <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2020/07/24/this-is-a-low-the-enduring-effects-of-racial-discrimination-on-mental-health-within-the-academy/>

Diversity in UK universities: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-44226434>

The Black Curriculum: <https://www.theblackcurriculum.com/>

Black Minds Matter (mental health organisation): <https://www.blackmindsmatteruk.com/>

Knowledge is Power petition: <https://knowledgeispower.live/about/>

# INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY IN AMNESTY STUDENT GROUPS

Amnesty's student groups, are expected to be a safe space for all students from different ethnic backgrounds, races, and nationalities. Unfortunately, they can still contribute to micro-aggressions and tokenistic values toward BAME students. Even though these may not seem as hostile as the evidently identifiable forms of racism or macro-aggressions, they still create an insincere and unwelcoming environment for BAME students.

These some of the ways in which micro-aggressions occur in student groups come:

- Fascination to “others” due to racial background or appearance.
- “Innocent” expectations, assumptions and prejudices toward BAME individuals or their countries.
- Condescending behavior due to a constant exposure of White media and their depiction of the Non-Western parts of the world.
- Limited interest in BAME issues, history and news.
- Treating BAME students as though they are part of a quota, and that diversity within the group can be a tick box exercise.

Here are just some suggestions to make student groups approachable and genuine for BAME students:

- Clear and safe communication about the expectations of the group
- Identifying lack of knowledge, and using research materials to improve it rather than asking BAME individuals
- Using international sources for research and information
- Inviting BAME speakers and trainers
- Support for BAME students to run for elections and positions of leadership
- Having and sustaining a connection with BAME networks
- Working with BAME students on the issues that affect them campus
- Collaborating with BAME societies on campus

# BLACK ACTIVISTS TO FOLLOW

Black Lives Matter	<a href="#">@blkivesmatter</a>	
Reni Eddo-Lodge	Twitter: <a href="#">@renireni</a>	Instagram: <a href="#">@renieddolodge</a>
Dr Shola Mos-Shogbamimu	Twitter: <a href="#">@SholaMos1</a>	Instagram: <a href="#">@SholaMos1</a>
Layla F. Saad	<a href="#">@Laylafsaad</a>	
Martin Luther King III	Twitter: <a href="#">@OfficialMLK3</a>	Instagram: <a href="#">@officialmlking3</a>
Afua Hirsch	<a href="#">@afuahirsch</a>	
Munroe Bergdorf	<a href="#">@MunroeBergdorf</a>	
Rachel Elizabeth Cargle	<a href="#">@rachel.cargle</a>	
Amanda Seales	<a href="#">@amandaseales</a>	
Aja Barber	Twitter: <a href="#">@AjaSaysHello</a>	Instagram: <a href="#">@ajabarber</a>
Mireille Cassandra Harper	<a href="#">@mireillecharpe</a>	
Ijeoma Oluo	<a href="#">@ijeomaoluo</a>	
David Olusoga	<a href="#">@DavidOlusoga</a>	
Blair Imani	<a href="#">@BlairImani</a>	
Ibram X. Kendi	Twitter: <a href="#">@DrIbram</a>	Instagram: <a href="#">@ibramxk</a>
The Conscious Kid	Twitter: <a href="#">@consciouskidlib</a>	Instagram: <a href="#">@theconsciouskid</a>
Brittany Packnett Cunningham	<a href="#">@MsPackyetti</a>	
Layla F. Saad	<a href="#">@laylasaad</a>	
Ericka Hart	<a href="#">@ihartericka</a>	
Rachel Ricketts	Twitter: <a href="#">@rachel_ricketts</a>	Instagram: <a href="#">@iamrachelricketts</a>
No White Saviors	<a href="#">@nowhitesaviors</a>	
Austin Channing Brown	<a href="#">@austinchanning</a>	
DeRay Mckesson	Twitter: <a href="#">@deray</a>	Instagram: <a href="#">@iamderay</a>
From Privilege To Progress	<a href="#">@privtoprog</a>	