PEACE AT HOME

When fear is allowed the central role in U.S. foreign and domestic policy, millions of Americans endure hate speech and violence because of their religion and/or the color of their skin. Systemic racism in the United States is entrenched, but popular movements are making seen what had been invisible white privileges. To have peace at home and abroad, we have to confront how racism and Islamophobia are perpetuated at the community and national level by discriminatory policing and dehumanizing rhetoric.

1. Islam is Not Terror: We Must Refuse and Refute Anti-Islam Language and Policing

Muslims around the world have denounced IS, but it is not their responsibility to rid the West of its racism and Islamophobia. IS/ISIL/Da’esh does not represent Muslims, and it does not make a terrorist more or less a terrorist, by calling that person an ‘Islamic terrorist’. What that does is further the public relations of IS, and marginalize and put at risk of retaliatory violence Muslim communities at home. Some of this is state violence and deeply unconstitutional. For example, the NYPD engages in the religious profiling and surveillance of Muslim and Muslim community centers throughout NYC. The program is based on a false and unlawful premise: that Muslim religious belief and practices are a basis for law enforcement scrutiny.

2. Protect Religious and Political Freedoms of Marginalized Communities

All Americans, regardless of race or religion, have the same constitutionally protected rights to religious speech and practice and political activism. There is no reason why some protests in particular should be met with police violence or why some houses of worship should be under surveillance. When these rights are infringed upon, everyone suffers from a less free society.

3. Listen to Communities When They Say They are Not Safe in Their Country

When a community of Americans says they feel unsafe in our country, and there is ample evidence, all persons of conscience must listen. Communities of color are experts in policing, much like those who survived the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are experts in nuclear war - because they have lived through it. We encourage you to seek out solutions to discriminatory policing from leading voices within the Movement for Black Lives, including Alicia Garza, Sean King, and Charlene Carruthers.

4. Criminal Justice Reform: Demilitarize Police Departments; End “Broken Windows” Policing

Routine, tragic harm has been caused to communities of color through a combination of “broken windows” policing and a militarized police force. Persons of color, questioned or stopped for a minor offense, face police officers with military-grade weapons and without military training. There is no evidence that “broken windows” policing has reduced more serious crimes. And, sending a heavily armed team of officers to do “normal” police work dangerously escalates situations that need never have involved violence. That is why the Pentagon’s 1033 program (sending surplus military gear to local police departments) must end.