

Black Lives Matter Coalition Makes Demands as Campaign Heats Up

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ABSTRACT

The more than 60 groups connected to B.L.M. released six demands aimed at furthering their goals, including for reparations for past and continuing harm to African-Americans.

FULL TEXT

More than 60 organizations associated with the Black Lives Matter movement have released a series of demands on Monday, including for reparations.

The list of six platform demands is aimed at furthering their goals as the presidential campaign heads into the homestretch.

The release of the six demands comes a few days before the second anniversary of the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo. , which set off months of protests and led to a national conversation about police killings of blacks.

As part of the effort, the groups are demanding, among other things, reparations for what they say are past and continuing harms to African-Americans, an end to the death penalty, legislation to acknowledge the effects of slavery, as well as investments in education initiatives, mental health services and jobs programs.

"We wanted to intervene in this current political moment where there is all this amazing and inspiring work that is resisting state violence and corporate power," said M. Adams, co-executive director of Freedom Inc. , a nonprofit group based in Madison, Wis., which focuses on violence within and against low-income communities of color. The list comes right after the Republicans and Democrats held their respective national conventions, and as the general election fight is heating up, with the two nominees, Donald J. Trump and Hillary Clinton, now crisscrossing the nation campaigning. But the coalition will not be endorsing any presidential candidate.

Marbre Stahly-Butts , who is part of the leadership team of the Movement for Black Lives Policy Table , which worked on the demands, said: "On both sides of aisle, the candidates have really failed to address the demands and the concerns of our people. So this was less about this specific political moment and this election, and more about how do we actually start to plant and cultivate the seeds of transformation of this country that go beyond individual candidates."

The groups worked on creating the demands for a year before making their demands known on Monday. They now plan to start local campaigns aimed at pushing for changes in law enforcement and community programs in cities across the country.

"We seek radical transformation, not reactionary reform," Michaela Brown, communications director of Baltimore Bloc , another participating group, said in a statement. "As the 2016 election continues, this platform provides us with a way to intervene with an agenda that resists state and corporate power, an opportunity to implement policies that truly value the safety and humanity of black lives, and an overall means to hold elected leaders accountable."

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