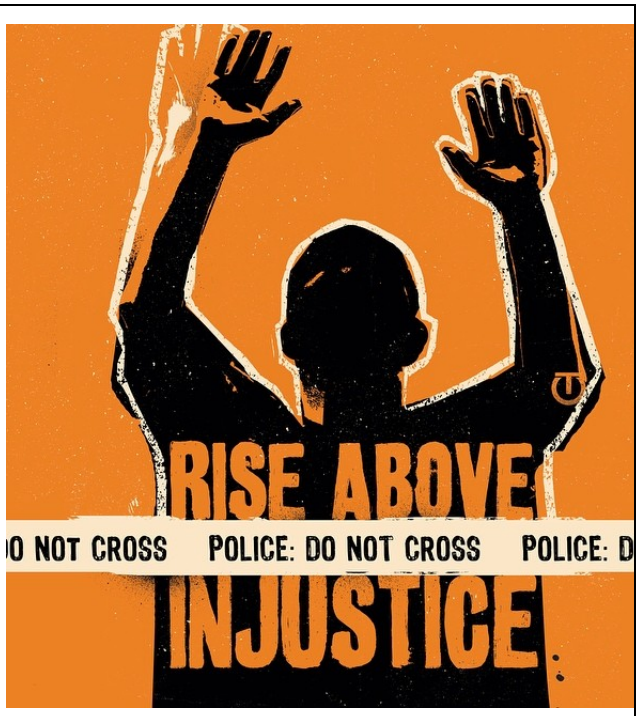
Police Brutality Action Kit

Created by Showing Up For Racial Justice (SURJ)

Showing up for Racial Justice (SURJ) was formed in 2009 by white people from across the US to respond to the significant increase of targeting and violence against people of color in the aftermath of the election of Barack Obama. The killings of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO; Eric Garner on Staten Island, NY; Ezell Ford in Los Angeles, CA; and John Crawford in Beavercreek, Ohio are the latest in a long series of extrajudicial (outside the law) killings of people of color in the United States. We mourn the loss of life, see the impact on communities of color and **believe that white people must partner across race and other differences to create social change. SURJ is here to provide resources and support for white people to make this happen.**	
	by Tes One *All artwork used with permission*

We look to each other to change the world we live, in one conversation and action at a time, and our efforts are to build a broad and deep movement of white people to work in partnership with communities of color for real racial justice in the US and everywhere. Please join us as we build on a long tradition of white people engaged in racial justice work in our local communities, our states, and around the world.

What We Can Do: Table of Contents and Quick Links

As white people, we must show up in the struggle for human rights and dignity, and demand an end to targeting people of color. This can happen in small and large ways every day.

Below are actions you can take in response to these murders and violence against people of color, ranging from one minute to a lifetime of action. Please join us in making a commitment to take one or more of these actions in this important time.

Education:

- **Get Informed**

Short Actions:

- **1 Minute Action: Join SURJ**
- **2 Minute Action: Sign petitions**
- **3 Minute Action: Tweet**
- **5 minute Action: Post a picture or video on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google+, etc.**

Medium Actions:

- **10 Minute Action: Donate to a racial justice organization**
- **15 Minute Action: Get your ideas out there - on social media**
- **30 minute Action: Engage people in your life: talk about it**
- **One Hour Action: Write about it - letters to the editor or online**

comments

Long-Term Actions:

- **One Hour+ Action: Take part in direct action or hold a house party**
- **Ongoing Action: Support Demilitarizing the Police**
- **Ongoing Action: Join a local organization and/or get involved with SURJ**

Audrey Ward, Organizer at We are Guahan, Mother: "*As white people, it is not too much to commit our lives to ending racism. It is, in fact, only right in the light of our history, and through our collective vision and action it is possible. In my shock and grief I can only recommit myself and work hard for a better world for my daughter -- and all the children who deserve safety, love, security, opportunity, and the basic right to walk home in a hoodie and not get shot."*

Get Informed

Read about and watch videos on police brutality and the struggle for justice in Ferguson and in other cities across the country facing police violence. Discuss them with white friends, family, and organizations. Check out these links:

Videos:

- The Real Crime: Mass Criminalization of our Communities, Black Alliance for Just Immigration
- Let's turn Outrage into Action, Angela Glover Blackwell, Policylink
- Trayvon Martin, a Moral Response, William J. Barber II, NAACP

Articles:

- Understanding Ferguson; Understanding White Supremacy, David J. Leonard.
- What White People Can Do About the Killing of Black Men in America, Paul Brandeis Raushenbush
- The Murder of Black Youth is a Reproductive Justice Issue, Dani McClain
- White Fear: The Single Greatest Killer of Black People in the U.S., Jenn M.

Jackson

- 11 Things White People Should Stop Saying to Black People Immediately, Derrick Clifton
- Why don't we hear about women victims of state violence?, Verónica Bayetti Flores
- The Death of Micheal Brown and the Search for Justice in Black America, Mychal Denzel Smith
- In defense of black rage: Michael Brown, police and the American Dream, Brittney Cooper
- Why I Don't Call the Police, Emily Bazelon
- Becoming a White Ally to Black People in the Aftermath of the Michael Brown Murder, Janee Woods
- Things to Stop Being Distracted by When a Black Person Gets Murdered by the Police, Mia McKenzie
- Ten Things White People can Do About Ferguson Aside from Tweet, Kate Harding
- Israel-trained police "occupy" Missouri after killing of black youth, Rania Khale
- A Mother's White Privilege, Manic Pixie Dream Mama

Blogs/News:

- Colorlines
- #ferguson
- Black Lives Matter
- Crunk Feminist Collective

-Erin Zipper, Graphic Artist-- "On this day I consider myself utterly lucky to have had the company of many people who refused to accept these misgivings, rather than do what is considered "polite" in our culture and passively ignore them, or worse to join me in slipping into a denial where they can believe wholly that they are not any kind of problem. Because this evening has made it very apparent to me that I would rather be called out, embarrassed, shamed, flunked, fired, pummeled in the street, or called the worst of the worst -- a racist -- by my closest friends, colleagues, or people on the street than to be allowed by them to continue nurturing ideas, intentionally or unintentionally, taught to me from birth or not, that support a

system where an armed white man can stalk an unarmed black teenage pedestrian from the protection of his car, get out of it and confront him against the orders of the police department, respond to that teenager's alarm and defensiveness by murdering him, and not only walk the streets as a free man after a rigorous trial in our court of law, but set a precedent that allows others to do the same."

ONE MINUTE ACTION: Join SURJ

SURJ is a national volunteer-led organization of white people engaging other white people in racial justice work. We have chapters across the country and are always looking for new members. To join, go here and we will connect you with other people in your area.

TWO MINUTE ACTION: Sign petitions

Petitions are one way for us to show a united force. Please take a minute and sign these important petitions.

- Sign on to demand police accountability for the killing of 18-year-old Michael Brown
- Sign a petition to Congress: Demilitarize Police! No More Fergusons!
- Sign on to urge your representative to pass the Voting Rights Act recently gutted by the Supreme Court

Harmony Goldberg, Writer & Educator: "It's not about being "surprised" by the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the brutal murder of a child, an innocent Black teenager named Trayvon Martin. On a conceptual level, I understand that - more than baseball or apple pie - racism is what defines the United States of America. But I will never stop being shocked and heartbroken at this nation's absolute and profound disregard for the lives of Black people."

THREE MINUTE ACTION: In just one click you can spread the word through twitter

Use the hash-tags:

#ferguson, #blacklivesmatter #handsup #mikebrown #Showup4RJ

Until the killing of black men, black mothers' sons, is as important as the killing of white men, white mothers' sons #blacklivesmatter #Showup4RJ

An injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere #ferguson, #blacklivesmatter, #Showup4RJ

White privilege is the difference between life and death. My white son will never be murdered by Darren Wilson. #JusticeforMikeBrown #blacklivesmatter #Showup4RJ

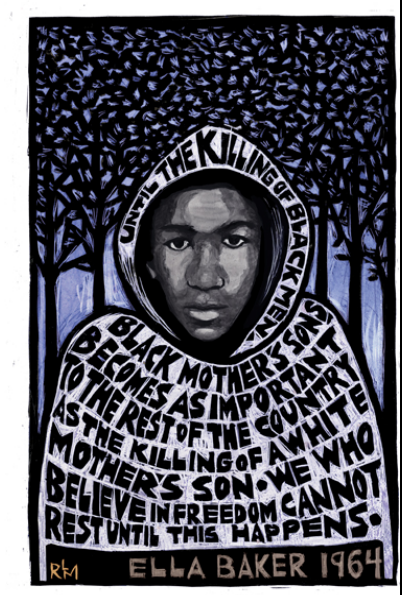
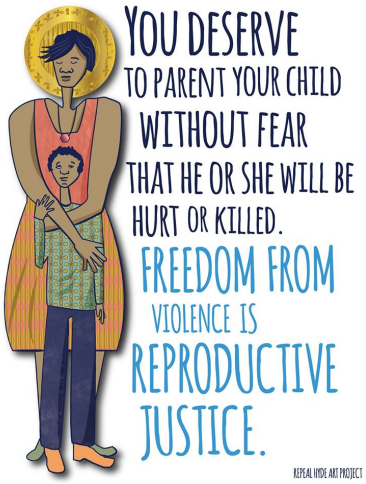
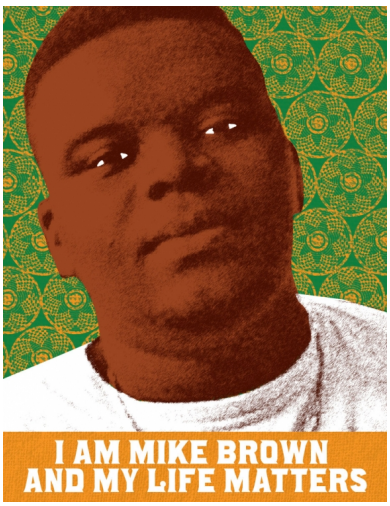
Speak out against racial profiling. No more Michael Browns. #blacklivesmatter #Showup4RJ

Every 28 hours there's another #mikebrown. http://mxgm.org/report-on-the-extrajudicial-killings-of-120-black-people/ #blacklivesmatter #Showup4RJ

Has anyone ever followed you with a gun because you looked like a threat to their neighborhood? #Showup4RJ #whiteprivilege #justiceformikebrown

5 Minute Action: Spread the word through Art

Share one of the following images on your Facebook page or (via other social media outlets) and write a message about why it is important to you as a white person. Thanks to the artists who have offered to use their artwork for this project. Visit their websites to see more of their art. Paste the link onto Facebook, Twitter or Instagram if you post the picture**.**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	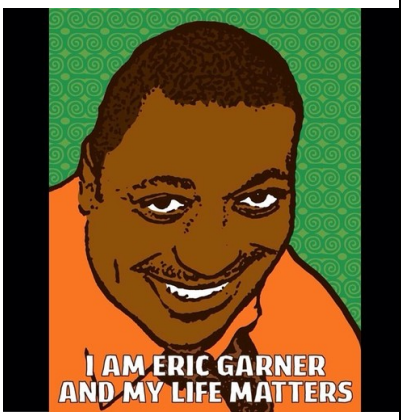	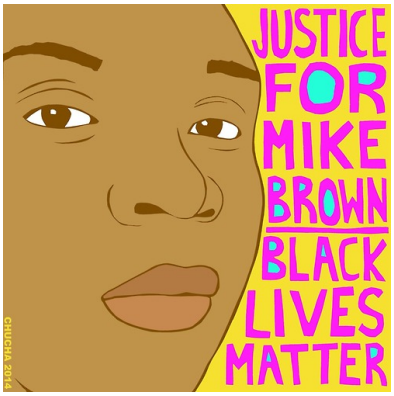
By Oree Originol	By Dignidad Rebelde	By Chucha

10 MINUTE ACTION: Donate to a racial justice organization

There are thousands of organizations across the country that are working to combat structural racism in different ways, nationally and in local communities around the country. Ferguson, and St Louis are but one example of

grassroots-powered organizing. These organizations depend on the donations of people: 85% of funding for non-profits comes from individuals. Whether you can give $5 or $500, it is a valuable action to contribute your money to make sure that this organizing, educating, and mobilizing continues. Think about the work that you find most inspiring. Do you think national or local work is more important? Legal strategies? Education? Mobilization? Policy change?

- Look for organizations that are led by and working with people of color.
- Ask a trusted friend which organizations they think are doing good racial justice work.
- Make a gift. Write a check. Put it on your credit card. Sign up as a monthly donor. Whatever you can give will help them do their work more successfully.
- Here are a few great local racial justice groups based in the Ferguson/St Louis area:
    - The Organization for Black Struggle
    - Bail Legal Fund for Ferguson
    - Feed the Students of Ferguson
    - Missourians Organizing for Reform and Empowerment
    - Black Youth Project
    - Faith Aloud

15 MINUTE ACTION: Social Media

Write down your thoughts on police brutality and the ways to stop it. Send them to your friends, family, and organizations through Facebook and other social media. Post them on our Facebook page.

30 MINUTE ACTION: Begin to engage people in your life in dialogue about race

Malcolm X: "*Don't be in such a hurry to condemn a person because he doesn't do what you do or think what you think. There was a time when you didn't know what you know today.*"

It is tempting to separate ourselves from other white people who disagree with us on this or other racial justice matters. It can be painful to know that someone you know or care about holds views that you know to be biased. However, as white people committed to racial justice, a powerful way to create change is to **engage other white people in dialogue**, to see talking about race with them as our responsibility. Think back to how your analysis and perspective were shaped:

-- Listen well to what the other person is saying, and why they see things the way that they do.
-- Ask questions to help clarify.
-- Withhold judgement. The goal is to move them forward, not to prove something about yourself.
-- How did the people in your life move you through dialogue? When was it about the presentation of facts that you didn't know, and when was it about shifting a framework, asking questions, or a deeper connection?

The following are some suggestions for how to respond to conclusions white people often come to around police brutality. The goal is not to read these as a script, feel free to modify as makes sense for your conversations and life. We also included some questions that spark deeper conversations:

Comment: "But the murder of Michael Brown was an exception."
Response: " There is a pattern of police violence against black men, especially young ones. In just the last few weeks, 4 unarmed black men have been gunned down by the police."
Discussion question: How has police brutality affected your community?

Comment: "We should let the legal system take its course. If the policeman did something wrong, he'll be convicted.
Response: "The legal system is biased against people of color. For example, African Americans are twice as likely as whites to receive the death penalty."
Discussion Question: "How do you see bias in the criminal justice system playing

out in your neighborhood, town, region?"

Comment: "Demonstrations don't accomplish anything. In fact, they make things worse."
Response: "If it had not been for the visible community response, we would never have heard about Michael Brown. Most police murders of black men never come to light. Besides, demonstrations are a form of peaceful assembly that is protected by the Bill of Rights."
Discussion question: "How do you think we can show that all lives--including African Americans and other people of color-- matter?"

Comment: "My TV station shows scenes of violence and looting during the demonstrations.
Response: "There was a small amount of this behavior by only a few demonstrators. The news media features what is sensational, leaving out the peaceful actions of ordinary people."
Discussion Question: "How does the media distort our perception of current events, especially the ones involving people of color?"

Comment: "Well, it's too bad about Michael Brown, but what does it have to do with me?"
Response: "Police brutality is a threat to our basic freedoms, including the right to live in a peaceful society governed by the rule of law. White people need to stand up for racial justice, in public ways."
Discussion Question: "What do you think could make the legal system work for all people?"

Comment: "But what can I do about it? I'm just one person."
Response: In American history, individuals coming together have made real changes, such as the end to slavery, Jim Crow laws, and DOMA. In fact, things don't change without attention, pressure and mobilization. The police brutality toolkit produced by SURJ suggests actions ranging from one-minute to one-hour and beyond."

Discussion Question: *"What can we do today to engage more people more deeply?"*

ONE HOUR ACTION: Do some writing

Letter to the Editor (LTE) : Write an LTE about why this is an important issue for you and what needs to change. Post it on our Facebook page.
Click here for tips on writing an LTE.

Here are some writing prompts:

- As a white person, this case matters to me because...
- I am standing up and raising my voice to say enough is enough because...
- Michael Brown would still be alive today if...

Claudia Horowitz, Stone Circles: "Now is an opportunity to check ourselves through some honest reflection and let that lead us to thoughtful action."

1 HOUR + ACTION: Take a day off your usual grind and spend a few hours in the street!

For any action, meeting, or in-person event please take pictures or a short video and upload it to the SURJ Facebook page.

***Go to a local action*:** There will be ongoing actions, check here for updates. See if there is a local action near you and go with some friends. Make some signs to get your message out. Great messages to use:

Black lives matter ----- Showing up for Racial Justice ----

Racial justice, not racial profiling ----- Abolish "Stand Your Ground" ----

Civil rights don't expire at sundown ----- White people who believe #black lives matter

Poster from SURJ contingent in NYC, July 14, 2013

At the action: engage with other white people. Talk to them about why they are there and whether they're involved with local racial justice efforts.

Hold a house party-- Bring together friends and family to discuss Ferguson, police brutality, racial profiling, and the criminalization of people of color.

Use YouTube videos, a short movie, or an article on police brutality and Ferguson to spark conversation with people in your community. Or go to a movie with a racial justice theme -- like Fruitvale Station, about the killing of Oscar Grant by the transit police in Oakland, California -- and meet for discussion afterwards.

In addition to the videos listed earlier, here are some other videos to show:

- The Killing of Michael Brown: Missouri Police Shooting of Unarmed Black Teen Sparks Days of Protests, Democracy Now!
- Michelle Alexander: "Zimmerman Mindset" Endangers Young Black Lives With Poverty, Prison & Murder, Democracy Now!
- The Deaths of Black Men in America, Melissa Harris-Perry on MSNBC

Additional Resources:

Racial Profiling Resources, Rights Working Group

It IS about Race: Study Finds Significant Racial Bias In 'Stand Your Ground' Laws, Lorraine Devon Wilke

Report on the Extrajudicial Killing of 120 Black People, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement

Ongoing Action: Demilitarize the Police

The growing issue of police militarization in United States communities is reaching frightening new levels. Call on Congress to end the Department of Defense supply of excess equipment to local police departments.

Ongoing Action: Join a local organization; get involved with SURJ!

We meet a lot of white people who care about the issue of equity and justice, but often feel alone and isolated in their neighborhoods, communities, and families. Within SURJ, many of us have also felt ostracized for not going along with the "norm" of how racism happens. That is part of why we come together--so that we have a like-minded, like-valued community who deeply cares that every single human being deserves to be treated with love and respect--and that with a supportive community we are able to take a stand, speak the truth, and be part of creating a better America and beyond.

Contact us to be connected to a local SURJ group or help form a local chapter.

Conclusion

Australian Aboriginal activists: *"If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."*

This is a historic moment. There is an opportunity to decide what type of person

you want to be -- someone who stands up against injustice in all its forms or someone who sits back and watches. What values do you want your peers and colleagues, family members and spiritual community, children and grandchildren to learn from you? As a white person, you have the opportunity to dig down deep and find the person you want to be and live it out loud.

Will you stand up for what is right? Will you dare to speak above the status quo? Will you rise to the challenge of being your best self?

PLEASE DO! We need you! We need your voice, your brilliance, your heart, your soul... we need you to be part of this moment, right here, right now, to create the world we want to all live in. Be bold with us, be courageous with us! No one is free until we are all free!

About Us:

SURJ is a national network of white groups and individuals organizing white people for racial justice. Through community organizing, mobilizing, and education, SURJ moves white people to act as part of a multi-racial majority for justice with passion and accountability. We work to connect people across the country while supporting and collaborating with local and national racial justice organizing efforts. SURJ provides a space to build relationships, skills, and political analysis to act for change.

Stay in touch:

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/ShowingUpForRacialJusticesurj

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