



Statement by Black Women's Blueprint Regarding the March for Black Women

**From Staff and Chair
September 18, 2017**

We live in a nation where the right to peaceful protest, to march, and engage in direct action to address oppression and the well-being of our children is protected under the constitution. Black women are not exempt from those constitutional protections.

To break silences as an imperative, through art, speech and movement is part of the legacy of women of African descent. The September 30, 2017 [March for Black Women](#) and other demonstrations to ensure our own safety, and the survival of our communities are traditions inherited through generations, practiced in diverse ways around the world, through physical, vocal resistance and ritual to confront indignities and dehumanization. In the words of the late great feminist poet Audre Lorde in *I Am Your Sister*: "All of our children are prey, ...and this is why we cannot be silent, because our silences will come to testify against us out of the mouths of our children." Therefore, on September 30, 2017 we will raise our voices.

Why September 30th

[September 30th is sacred](#). September 30, 1919 was the culmination of the infamous "Red Summer" when Black sharecroppers dared to organize themselves as the Progressive Farmers and Household Union of America, to demand better pay from white plantation owners. In response, white mobs went on a state sanctioned killing spree. It is estimated that upwards of 240 Black organizers were massacred that day. This Massacre was one of many in a wave of racist lynchings in nearly 36 cities that rocked the nation. At the center of this narrative is that by the "end" of the Jim Crow Era, more than 150 Black women and girls were also lynched, and evidence reveals many of them had been raped first. These Black women and men fought, against all odds, for the protection of their bodies, families, communities and freedom. On September 30th we march for ourselves, for our rights, and we mourn our ancestors, their lives and honor their resistance in our time. Their courage reverberates through generations and inspires our struggle today.

Unapologetic, We Have No Quarrel with Jewish Women or NOW

To be clear, Black women are unapologetically marching in all their diversity to denounce the propagation of state sanctioned violence through the widespread incarceration of Black women and girls, rape and all sexual assault, the murders and brutalization of Black transwomen and the disappearances of our girls from our streets, our schools and our homes.

This March is not organized by the National Organization for Women (NOW) as some sources would have the public believe. NOW has issued a statement in support of the March for Black Women. [Black Women's Blueprint](#) has no dispute with NOW, and we request an immediate end

to the dispersal of misinformation about NOW or feminist groups in relation to Black Women's Blueprint or the March for Black Women.

Furthermore, we have no quarrel with Jewish women, or persons who for various reasons believe there should be no march for Black women on September 30, 2017. Instead, our issue is with a social, economic and political system which bequeaths such privilege and special rights to one group of people or persons, to the point that this group or anyone from this group would presume to tell Black women what to do, when to march, what day is appropriate to fight for our safety, dignity and freedom—with no regard for Black women's lives or the impetus for their march. This scenario is testament to the ways in which Black women are scripted not to be seen and their issues scripted to be invisible.

We have high regard for the history of collaboration and struggle for equality and justice by Jewish and Black peoples together. We profoundly respect our Jewish sisters as they observe their sacred holiday, and expect the same respect in return as we march to end oppression against us.

To elaborate on the statement by the March for Black Women made in July 2017—if you cannot march with us, then pray with and for us. If you cannot march with us then shout from your front yards, your kitchen tables and from your street corners. Shout from the pews of your religious centers and LGBTQ centers, from your HBCUs and healing circles, from the halls and stairwells of the public housing complex where they put you, and from your conference tables and board rooms. You can also support the march by [giving](#) what you can and learning more at www.marchforblackwomen.org

Conceiving of a March for Black Women

Black Women's Blueprint conceived of the March for Black women and invited co-chairs and partners in a rally cry to value Black women's lives as we confront state sponsored violence and the complex oppressive conditions which persist in our communities. This is the first national march to occur after the Million Women March which brought us together twenty years ago.

We give *ourselves* permission to believe in the power of our demands and the strength of our convictions to take back what is already ours—dignity and agency. We will not allow an isolationist impulse to dictate our movement strategy given the political urgency of now, and welcome anyone who believes in equal and human rights for all. As various communities of allies prepare to march with Black women, including Black Jewish women, know that we are well acquainted with personal, and unspeakable brutalities. We will not allow this dismissal of our issues, nor the need for truth, justice and healing to derail Black women's efforts. The recent uproars surrounding this march point to the persistent disregard for Black women's existence, prerogatives and desires. We ask our allies to continue to act to eradicate oppression whenever it shows up.

Our Demands to Community at Large

We ask that people and various communities at large stop ignoring Black women's reasons for marching. Recent actions by our federal government and leaders to dismantle our civil and human rights by pushing to eliminate access to health care, and in particular reproductive

health has led us to this moment. The increase in prisons while threatening to eliminate resources to communities of color that empower all of us to prevent violence against cis and trans identified women; and the undermining of economic justice for Black women in America have led us to this moment. The physical, financial and social enrichment of the nation-state at the expense of Black bodies and at the expense of Black lives is too old a strategy, and Black women will speak, march and organize against it. It is us, and in particular trans Black women and our girls, our seniors and those of us with low incomes, who bear the brunt of a multitude of racialized and sexualized abuses which are not challenged with outrage, do not make the screens of our televisions or our social media pages.

The September 30, 2017 March for Black Women, is a mass mobilization which calls for the following actions:

1. Issue a Congressional resolution to apologize to all Black women for centuries of abuses, including sexual violence and reproductive violations against Black bodies, especially the brutalization of trans women.
2. Beyond the 2016 Gender Bias Policing Guidance, ensure immediate and sustainable measures by the U.S. Government to eliminate incarcerations, incidences of rape and "sexual misconduct", police murder and violence against all Black women, and especially transwomen.
3. End the threat against the human right to health-care and increase access, including all reproductive health care, bar none.
4. Ensure economic justice for Black low income women at the communal and federal level, many of whom are at increased risk for violence due to lack of economic power.
5. Cease and desist all threats of deportation of immigrant women across the country, especially those whose deportation may cost them their lives or safety.

This is our focus as we approach September 30, 2017's March for Black Women.

The date for the March for Black Women falls on Yom Kippur. This date was chosen before any knowledge or realization that September 30, 2017 would be Yom Kippur, which falls on various dates each year. Lastly, please know that months ago, the **March for Racial Justice**, with which the March for Black Women is affiliated, addressed the issue of Yom Kippur in collaboration with several Jewish community leaders, and issued the [following statement](#).

We believe we can and will move forward from this point.

Contact:

Farah Tanis, Co-Founder/Executive Director

Shawnda Chapman Brown, Board Chair

Blackwomen@blueprintny.org

347-533-9102

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 24713

Brooklyn, NY 11202