

Asian American Allies Call with Movement 4 Black Lives

Tuesday, June 16, 2020 | 8P EST

#SixNineteen #DefendBlackLife #DefundThePolice #TrumpMustResign

01:33 [music plays]

**04:50
Chhaya
Chhoum**

Hi everybody, sorry that took a while. Thank you for the music, and hello everybody, and welcome! It looks like there's about five thousand of us that registered for the Asian American Allies call tonight with the Movement 4 Black Lives (M4BL). The 40 organizations you saw on a slide before us came together to convene this critical call. So before we begin we wanted to first let you know that we will have ASL interpretation and closed caption, so a reminder to the speakers to speak slowly as well. And if you would like closed captions, please be sure to turn them on in the bottom of the menu. We also will do our best to spotlight the ASL interpreters and if you're having issues or have any questions, please feel free to drop them in the chat. We have a crew of folks who will be monitoring on the side, and so the chat and the Q&A will also be places where you can ask questions that you would like answered during the Q&A section, which is at the end. So I wanted to say again, good evening and welcome. My name is Chhaya Chhoum and on behalf of the Southeast Asian Freedom Network (SEAFN), we want to welcome you and say thank you for joining us tonight. Five thousand people, wait till you see the incredible, beautiful faces that are going to be on tonight. The Southeast Asian Freedom Network, we represent 8 organizations across the country; that includes Mekong NYC, Viet LEAD, PRYSM, ManForward, ReleaseMN8, Freedom Inc., Formerly Incarcerated Folk Healing Together (FIGHT) and Khmer Girls in Action. Tonight we are joined by Cha Vang from Hmong Innovating Politics (HIP), Esther Jeon from NAKASEC, and The Movement 4 Black Lives leaders to talk about what Asian-Americans can do in this historic moment and a call to Action for the Movement 4 Black Lives Six Nineteen (6/19) mobilization. This is a call to action so you are here, you're already here so that's great. Once again thank you for joining us tonight.

A little bit about the community I represent, as Southeast Asian, and as one of the largest refugee resettlement programs to be resettled in the United States that includes Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian folks who came and were resettled in the US after the war in southeast Asia. We know what it means for lives to be taken away by armed bodies of US government while no one pays attention, even here and in the homelands. To be forced constantly to find peace with our own trauma and find justice in our own community without solidarity from the outside world and then to have to live with our truth in the shadows. And to be invisible in our own intergenerational trauma and pain. So for us, as Black folks charge genocide, war, and state violence on their lives, we know deeply the meaning of those very words and experiences as we carry the weight and history of mass human rights violation against our people from one side of the world to the other. And we know that healing is a lifelong process and justice will come. And if we can fight for justice for Black community, I say we as Southeast Asians are all in and I'm saying we're calling in justice with everyone in this tonight. We also know that our solidarity work must begin with organizing and transforming ourselves, and our families, and our communities, and our loved ones, by understanding how actually anti-blackness, racism shows up in our own community. You know we were taught to value those who are light skinned over those who are dark-skinned, and the struggle of Black communities against police state violence

Asian Americans for Black Lives - M4BL

directly impacts our community survival as we face that violence as well. With this understanding, we know that while our oppressions are deeply, deeply connected, they are also not the same. Black bodies are systemically and historically dehumanized in this country in ways we will never face. We also own our own failure as a Southeast Asian Community to be in solidarity with Black communities in times of crisis and movement. We can do better and we must do better right now.

We also know that we must ready our minds and our hearts for a Black liberation movement that all of our lives depend on, because our liberation as Southeast Asian must demand that people and the system truly believe that Black lives matter. And as a Southeast Asian Community, we remember our deep, resilient, and collective healing through our own struggles and offer ourselves, and our love, and solidarity to the Black community. So now it is the time for us to show up and unveil the truth of our beings as Southeast Asian survivors and warriors, and bring it with our Black family. We cannot remain calm. We will not believe that property is more valuable than life -- and one of our OGs talked about 'Fuck Target.' We will respect and follow the leadership of those most marginalized on the ground - Black youth, Black queer folks, Black trans folks, Black voices and bodies to demand justice and dignity. We can no longer just watch. We have to roll up our sleeves, hit the streets, and do our part to make the world stop and listen. With that I want to invite you all once again to this call and as we hear from organizers from the Movement 4 Black Lives (M4BL) on their action plan for Juneteenth. But first let me pass it to Cha, from Hmong Innovating Politics, to share a little bit about her community and who she works with.

10:46
Cha Vang Good evening everyone. Thank you for passing it along, Chhaya. My name is Cha Vang and I am the Director of Statewide Organizing with Hmong Innovating Politics (HIP). HIP is also a part of a statewide coalition called AAPI, AAPI is for civic empowerment, and we are located in California. HIP is a grassroots organization whose mission is to strengthen the political power of Hmong and disenfranchised communities through innovative civic engagement and strategic grassroots mobilization. We envision a California of empowered communities that thrive in a socially, economically, just democracy and HIP has dedicated ourselves to organizing, mobilizing, historically disenfranchised communities and support a systems change that reduces health disparities and dismantles institutions that perpetuate social economic disparities. One of our core strategies is social justice and coalition building. In our work, we believe that Black lives matter because the advancement of our community is tied to the realization of social justice and justice for all. We believe that Black lives matter because in our work we want to make sure that we are always centering the most impacted and to achieve the vision for our own communities, that we are tied in our communities, but in the liberation of Black lives. The Hmong community does not live in a vacuum and does not exist in a vacuum here in the US, and we must understand that our Black community are not just our neighbors, but they are also our friends, our families, our loved ones. I share that because as a personal story, we also understand that because as the Hmong community continues to live in the US, our relationships are interconnected and that we are not just one community, but we are actually multiple communities together. And so we have individuals who will have multiple identities and I share that because September 6th, 2018, one of my great nephews was shot

Asian Americans for Black Lives - M4BL

by Sacramento police and to this day, we are still -- I'm going to share with you all a photo of him as I have a conversation about him because I know I had a conversation with his mom and she is also on this call. His name was Darell Richards and as a Black and Hmong student, he was 19 at the time, he was walking home from his grandparents home and the neighbors called the cops on as he was walking through the neighborhood to say that there was a young man acting weird, so the cops came out, and unfortunately he was shot and killed in the neighborhood, and to this day we are still fighting for justice for him. I say this because when we talk about the Movement 4 Black Lives, it's like the movement for our loved ones and we don't want to wait until one of our loved ones is the victim of police brutality before we start doing the work necessary with our Black community. So I'll end that and I'll pass it over to Esther.

14:58
Esther
Jeon

Hi everyone! My name is Esther, I'm an organizer with NAKASEC from Houston, TX and I'm one of two million undocumented Asian-Americans. I have to say I really wish I could see everyone's faces but I'm just thankful to all of you for making the time to join us today. I know I'm really excited to know that a lot of us are on to hear from Black leadership as to how we can throw down and be accomplices in the Movement 4 Black Lives, so I'll be brief. If you have, at any point, believed at all that ICE should be abolished, you should also believe in defunding and abolishing the police. I make this point to say that we need to be precise in our analysis of systems and power. Here in the United States, contact with the police funnels undocumented immigrants into the prison-to-deportation pipeline, and local prisons and police officers are paid to jail us until ICE can deport us. To say it more clearly, police and ICE are intentional products of the one, and same system designed to deport and murder Black people and immigrants. This means that our calls to abolish ICE, CBP, and detention centers cannot, should not, and do not exist outside of calls to defund and abolish police and prisons. If we are serious about abolishing ICE being more than just an empty political slogan, then we have got to get serious about Black liberation. Because we know that we cannot be free until Black people are free. Abolishing ICE means nothing if we continue to let the anti-black, racist police exist as they are in their violence today and we need to be able to wrestle with and sit in these inherent connections if we want to win as communities together. So with that, I'm really excited to turn the mic over to Maurice Mitchell from the Movement 4 Black Lives. Thank you so much again for speaking with us tonight Maurice.

16:55
Maurice
Mitchell

Thank you and thank everybody, the thousands of you that have assembled here to be in conversation, and be in struggle, and be side by side with us as we seek to defend Black lives, as we seek to ensure the dignity, and the the righteous anger and the hope, and the prayers of our ancestors, as well, as future generations are realized. And so we want to thank everybody again for the solidarity. So I just want to share some top line, some big picture thinking, and then I will pass the mic to some of my other comrades in the Movement 4 Black Lives. Again, my name is Maurice Mitchell, and on behalf of everybody in the Movement 4 Black Lives, goodnight and thank you. We think of this as a 50-year, unique moment in the Black liberation struggle. Now our struggle is long, our struggle spans for centuries, and people have asked us 'Is this about a particular police killing?' The answer is, for those that were moved by the death of Breonna Taylor, yes. For those that were moved by the death of Tony McDade, yes. For those that were moved by the death

Asian Americans for Black Lives - M4BL

and murder of countless other folks, absolutely. But it's about so much more, it's about all of the people that were killed by and murdered by white violence and the structural violence of white supremacy, which includes gender violence. It includes inter-community violence, it includes all of the many different levels of violence. When we want to end the state violence against Black people, we're talking about the economic violence, we're talking about everything that limits Black people's ability to thrive. And when we talk about the concept of Black lives mattering, if Black lives matter, that means we have to transform our social relations, we have to transform our society, our economy, and our democracy in order for Black lives to truly matter. This moment is at a scale that we did not even imagine over the past few weeks. People are out on the streets, it's intergenerational, it's across sectors, it's many folks from many different racial backgrounds. People are beginning to question the fundamental myths that this society and this country are built on and recognizing that the foundations of this society are not whole, and this is an opportunity when we can reimagine what type of society we want to live in. And this is the promise of the Black liberation struggle: when Black folks win, we all win and our liberation is tied into your liberation. This is not charity, this is not a solidarity offering. Solidarity requires a deep relationship tied to a mutual understanding of mutual, collective struggle and collective liberation, and we want to stress that. We want you to build with us and walk shoulder-to-shoulder with us in this liberation journey. That's what this is about and this is an opportunity for all of us to get in formation across every sector, across every community, and to really examine what we're willing to challenge within our communities and what we're willing to risk in order to achieve lasting, systemic change, and actually focusing on all those things that have held us back from becoming a united force, to becoming aligned across race, in order to challenge white supremacy and racial capitalism.

So, I'm going to share our top-line demands. We seek to defund the police and we want to be clear that we are seeking to defund the police. That the size, scope, and the authority of the police needs to be put in check, and we need to shrink it absolutely. With no questions about it, our plan is to defund the police and take the resources of the police and invest it in Black communities. So, our second demand is to invest in Black communities. We need to find opportunities in order to invest in the things that make us whole and keep us safe. We care about public safety, but we understand that having our communities occupied by police do not keep us safe. We know what keeps us safe and we are committed to investing in these community ties, committed to healthy jobs, healthy communities, great education, access to mental healthcare, access to healthcare in general. We keep us safe and so we know that an investment in our communities is the one thing that'll keep us whole. And the last thing is Donald Trump represents an existential threat to people here and people abroad, and he needs to go. So we're calling for his resignation and we understand that Trump is being held up by enablers in the federal government, as well as enablers all the way down, so when we call for his resignation that also means all of his enablers in city councils, judges, sheriffs, DAs, senators, congress people, anybody who in this moment -- in this very binary moment, this 'which side are you on moment' -- does not choose the freedom side, it's time for those folks to go. The corporate leadership and the political leadership that has led us to this place, it's time for them to go. So our call for the resignation of Donald Trump is serious. He's crossed the red line by having the military

Asian Americans for Black Lives - M4BL

attack our folks and it's time for all of us to unite to end this reign of authoritarianism and white supremacy.

Some quick outcomes that I want folks to focus on, and then I'll pass it over, we have some desired outcomes. We think that this is an opportunity for all of our movements -- progressives, people on the left, our organizations, our institutions, our grassroots movements, our family and all of the folks we're in solidarity with -- to come together. We think this is a unique opportunity for us to truly act as a movement. Secondly, we know that people want to co-opt what's happening on the ground and we need to defend the organic embers that are burning throughout the country. So we seek to flank and support anybody that is in motion on the ground. Number 3, we want to elevate and crystallize our demands just like I did. Number 4, we want to make it clear that there are individuals that are responsible for this; for example, Donald Trump and others that are responsible for this. And we need to ensure that we build enough power in order to topple the systems of oppression, not just the individuals, but the systems of oppression that they sit on, where they get their authority from. And so we want to be clear that this is an opportunity to go deeper and to finally root out the systemic roots of our suffering and our oppression. Lastly, we just want to say that this is a long-term struggle and we're so excited that you're committed to being on this journey with us, and with that, I'm going to pass the mic to Lumumba, who'll share a little bit about the action plan. Thank you.

24:33
Lumumba
Bande

Absolutely. Peace and good evening, goodnight to everyone, thank you all for sharing this space with us. I'm Lumumba Bande, I am the Strategies and Partnerships Director at the Movement 4 Black Lives, and I want to talk to you about some of the action items and what we're planning to do, and how we can begin to do this collectively. So this weekend, Juneteenth is a very significant holiday for Black people in this country, and so we are calling for action this weekend, all across the country in defense of Black lives. We're calling for three days of actions to be exact. On Friday, we're asking for people to rise up and to do actions in celebration of Black resistance and joy, and demand an investment in Black communities. So when we talk about defunding the police, we know that the flip side of that is actually investing in Black communities and we're going to take this particular day to talk about what that actually looks like and how specifically, the re-investment in our communities are part of our full liberation. Saturday, we are using it as a day to commemorate and to mourn those who've lost their lives both to the Covid-19 pandemic, but also lost their lives to police and state violence. So we'll be raising those names, we'll be re-committing ourselves to making sure those names are never forgotten, we'll be re-committing ourselves to making sure that that list does not grow. Then Sunday, we will be rooting ourselves in the work to make sure that the administration that sits in that white house does not have another term. The demand for the resignation of Donald Trump will be lifted, we will be sharing strategies and all kinds of work that people are doing across the country to ensure that there is no other term for Donald Trump. And these asks will be centered around the demands that Maurice shared, the defund the police demand, the invest in Black communities demand, and calling for the resignation of Trump. I'm going to now kick it to my comrade Nikita to talk about the Rising Majority, Nikita.

Asian Americans for Black Lives - M4BL

26:52
Nikita
Mitchell

Good evening everyone. It is such an honor to be with you all tonight, it is such an honor to be in the struggle with you. My name is Nikita Mitchell, I'm from Oakland, CA and I'm a part of the Rising Majority. The Rising Majority is a multi-sectoral, multiracial coalition seeking to build a left that fights for and wins radical democracy in this country. We were born out of the Movement 4 Black Lives' analysis that we needed an intentional solidarity arm, to not only follow Black leadership, but also to take the fight and make it so that we can hit multiple targets from our sectors, from our lanes, and from our lenses. We have been a part of this journey with the Movement 4 Black Lives as they call for action, as they call for these demands, and as they call for the mobilization in DC. We are so excited, as a Black and POC lead coalition, to be a part of this fight with the Movement 4 Black Lives because we see it as critical that we follow Black leadership in this moment. We see it as critical that we connect issues across economic justice, to climate, that we call out, unapologetically, white supremacy, racial capitalism, and that we connect that to the role of the police. We see that as critical and so we're excited to be on the front lines. I want to share a little bit about the principles as we go into Juneteenth mobilization, which will be this weekend, June 19th through the 21st. We have some principles that we want to be inside of to ensure that as we're in mobilization, that we keep in deep commitment and deep solidarity with each other.

So the first principle is that we keep us safe. We understand that the role of the police has never been to keep us safe, it has never been to ensure community health and wellness. The role of the police has always been to protect capital and so we are going to keep us safe. We're going to lean into the wisdom and the knowledge of our folks who never had the chance to call the police when things got rough. We're going to keep us safe this weekend. The second thing that we're committed to doing and that we ask folks who are in the front lines with us to do is to respect and follow Black leadership in this moment. This is a moment where Black folks are putting themselves on the front lines and as folks take up the mantle of being in defense of Black life, our ask is that you follow the thought leadership, the strategic direction, the love, care, and intention that Black folks are putting out in the streets right now. The third is: find your lane. As a Rising Majority, we believe that every sector, every issue area, every identity movement has a lane and a role to play in this moment. More specifically, in this mobilization, we're asking folks -- some folks are coming to DC, some folks are going to come and be a part of the 20,000 folks that we're mobilizing -- not everyone can do that, right? So some folks might be turning up digitally, some folks might be turning up in local actions, all of that is necessary. We need every last one of us to be in this fight, so find a lane, be inside of it and know that we are in this movement together. The fourth is: make all Black lives matter. So it is critical -- Moe started off by talking about -- when we're talking about violence, we're not just talking about violence between white men in uniforms and Black men on the street, we're also talking about transphobia, homophobia. We're also talking about eradicating intimate partner violence, domestic violence, sexual violence, so ensuring that when we talk about the lives that matter, we are talking about everyone, all Black lives are important. We are fighting to ensure that we are all able to live in dignity, and humanity, and free from violence. The fifth principle that we're rocking with is: change the system; we are calling for systemic change. I know most of y'all might have seen some reforms that have come out,

Asian Americans for Black Lives - M4BL

we're not talking about small money moving from police budgets to community. We're not talking about changing laws around use of force. We know that some of that is harm reduction, however, what we're talking about is full systemic change. We're talking about stopping state-sanctioned terror domestically and internationally. We're talking about going after capital and white supremacy. The things that the police rest upon, we're going after that. Six: invest in Black communities. So we're talking about defunding the police and the flip side of that is that we need to invest in our folks. So, as we take action, we're asking folks to be mindful of supporting Black communities, local Black vendors, and Black institutions to ensure that when we leave DC, when we leave an anchor or action, that we are leaving it better than when we came. Lastly, do the work at home. I uplift my comrade Chhaya, who talked about anti-Blackness and anti-darkness, and how those things are deeply interweaved and connected to white supremacy and racial capitalism. So we're asking folks who are committed to being in defense of Black lives, that we actually take the time to bring the conversation home. We bring the conversation to our families, we bring the conversation to our communities, to our organizations, to our movements, but most importantly, we bring the conversation to ourselves. That we invest in uprooting the things that enable and allow for violence against Black folks, Black queer folks, Black trans folks who exist, that we do that starting with us. So those are the principles that we are inviting folks to be inside of with us, experiment with us, to learn and grow with us as we're in this protracted struggle. I'm going to pass it to the lovely M Adams who can talk about the specific ask as we're going into Juneteenth.

33:39
M Adams

Thank you, Nikita. Like my other comrades on the line, I'm very excited to be here with you all and to see some familiar faces. I am also a leadership member of the Movement 4 Black Lives and I'm co-executive director of Freedom Inc., and so I recognize some of the partner orgs of Southeast Asian Freedom Network, so sending love and shout out to you all. I'll just take us through the asks in a deeper level. One, we need you to elevate the Six Nineteen (6/19) mobilization through your networks, so if you're in social media, we'll send you a toolkit to make sure you can share it. We'll also send a draft email so you can share out to your networks. We need you to donate to the mobilization fund, you can direct donations to M4BL, you can go to our website: M4BL.org. You can make a fundraising appeal to your networks by sharing the information that we'll get to you, the toolkit, and also the email, and/or you can move a donor to the effort. Again, we need all of the support, all of the resources to be in the work and to continue the fight. If you will be in your local city or you run a community-based organization, or have a place-based chapter or affiliates, would you commit to bottom-lining in action? Especially you all as Brown folks, but especially if you're in a Black and Brown organization and you're down to be accountable to local Black leadership. If you can take local action, be a part of a local action, we encourage it. Four: we need you on message. We will be sharing messages, we will be sharing messaging guidance on how to talk about the mobilization, how to talk about M4BL, and how to also talk about our local and national demands. We need you to combat pushes to drive communities and organizations to more reformist demands that are actually weakening our fight and weakening our foundational demands. You will hear arguments to do this. We both understand that everybody does not need to engage in the narrative and policy space of M4BL and progressives should not be undermining our efforts, but flanking and complementing them. Again, we will provide guidance and language on how to do this. And

Asian Americans for Black Lives - M4BL

don't forget we are winning! So now I'll kick it to whoever is going to facilitate the Q&A.

36:17
Gregory
Cendana

Awesome! Thank you so much to all of the speakers who spoke throughout this call. We definitely have some questions that we want to pose. My name is Gregory Cendana and I'm with Can't Stop, Won't Stop Consulting, and I will be helping facilitate this alongside Timmy Lu with AAPI Force. The first question that we have is for our family with the Movement 4 Black Lives. The question is: Could you walk us through the differences in approach and impact of defunding the police versus abolishing the police, or any resources you'd recommend to get a better understanding of the differences in impact?

37:10
Maurice
Mitchell

This is Moe, I could start and I would appreciate anybody sharing anything else. I think one great resource is a recent Mariame Kaba, New York Times op-ed that discusses and lays out the concept of why we say defund the police and there's a spectrum. So, in that article Mariame Kaba breaks down the fact that there are people who are committed to the abolition of the police, that clearly are committed to defunding. But people who are serious about reforming the police understand that defunding is the most effective reform. So there's people on a spectrum of understanding who are committed to the strategy of defunding the police and using those resources in ways that invest in our actual public safety. There's this, I think, unhealthy discussion and discourse about it that frames defunding on one level and then on the other side is the concept of reform. All reforms aren't the same, there are reformist reforms and there are non-reformist reforms. So when we talk about reforms that don't undermine us, what we're talking about is ensuring that we deal with the fundamental crisis. It's a crisis of capital, a crisis of democracy, the fundamental things that undergird the fact that Black people are essentially occupied and that we don't have civilian control, there isn't Black control of the police. Right? And so the way that we deal with that is by seizing control of the police, seizing control of democracy, reducing the power of the police, the scope of the police. and the ability of police to harm us. I don't know if anyone else wants to add anything to answer that question.

39:13
Lumumba
Bande

I'll just add, I think part of what has unfortunately grabbed the attention of this particular demand is the framing that the opposition has been allowed to take hold of. But when we talk about defunding the police, we have to recognize that administrations across this country, both local, city, and federal administrations, have not shied away from defunding other human services over the years. Our education has been defunded, systemically. Our employment, all of the human services that we need have been defunded without a blink of an eye. But when we talk about this particular component, we're met with this kind of reaction. It's important to understand, also, that this idea of defunding the police really talks about us dismantling this idea that a militarized occupied force keeps us safe, and I think what that stands on has been a fallacy that we all have bought into to some degree because to remove that disrupts what we what we believe to be true, that that is actually it. But if we recognize that nowhere has that actually happened, that we actually have, now, the responsibility and the challenge to re-imagine what a safe and healthy community looks like, then we can have a real discussion.

Asian Americans for Black Lives - M4BL

40:40
M Adams And I'll just quickly add that there's nothing natural about policing. We didn't get here because it was a natural or an inevitable thing. We got here by systems and structures, and heavy investment in particular policing institutions. This is a strategy that directly tackles -- and I think what Moe said is really important -- this is a strategy that directly goes at the resources that make this possible. So, this is not at all -- and I think the question was about what's this relationship to abolition -- this is not at all about saving policing or finding a better way to maintain this version of policing, but this is about directly taking back the resources that should have been invested in our community, about taking back the resources that should have gone to fund Black lives, directly from institutions that are harming us. So people just really wanted to lift up that we got here by heavy investment in the system, and so this strategy directly addresses that historical reality.

42:11
Timmy Lu Great, thank you for that response, M. I'm going to line up the next question. Again, my name is Timmy, I'm with AAPIs for Civic Empowerment. I think the next question really gets deep into the question around allyship and solidarity with Black folks and Black communities. How do we balance the need to follow Black leadership and include Black voices, while also giving the Black community space to heal and not ask too much from those same leaders in our communities?

43:17
M Adams Thank you, that's such an important question. So, Freedom Inc., we're based in Madison, WI and we are a Black and Southeast Asian organization. I've been with Freedom Inc. for almost 12 years and we have done a lot of work to really answer that question in practice. So, briefly what I'll say is that there is a way to both follow the leadership of Black people and to build solidarity and be shoulder-to-shoulder in the work. So that is where we need to move to. We are not looking for unequal or uneven partnerships, but rather to build a movement where we have a shared analysis about how anti-Blackness orders the world and that all of our communities are joined in a fight to upend that, to disrupt that, to stop that from continuing to happen. Inside of our organization, some of the practices that we have that meet the need that the person asking the question is raising, is one: we do culturally specific work. We think it's really important for Black folks to have a space to talk specifically about what's happening to our communities, and to invest resources and our talents in addressing those issues inside of our communities. And similarly, and in parallel to that, the Southeast Asian folks do that same work. They work inside of their communities to talk about how they are being impacted by the world order of white supremacy, anti-Blackness, patriarchy, capitalism and develop strategies to advance their communities. But from this place of us doing our work inside of our communities, we have been able to actually build deep ideological alignment and when we have that alignment we are able to develop a strategy that does both, allowing Black folks to lead and have this space and resources that we need to do so, as well as Southeast Asian people being in movement with us and not requiring Black labor to advance the work. And not requiring that Black people put in an uneven and an unfair amount of work. Freedom Inc., is an example of how we do that and I'm down to talk more about that at another time.

45:44 I would love to jump in here for a moment. I really appreciate this question as I'm coming

Asian Americans for Black Lives - M4BL

Nikita Mitchell from the Rising Majority and one thing I'll name that M spoke to is that solidarity is not necessarily a science or a math equation, but it's a commitment to a praxis. It's knowing that in some ways you're going to get it right and in some ways there's going to be room to continue to grow and evolve, and I think it's the commitment and the willingness to be in that balance. The other thing about this is that there's been lessons, right? There've been lessons, this is not the first movement uprising, this is not the first moment of solidarity, this is not the first time nor the last time that we will try to come back to this question and answer it. So a few things that I will add that M said is one, clearly responding to the calls to action. Two, being inside of investigation around anti-Blackness, around what does it mean to be in solidarity, continuing to be in investigation even outside of a moment of crisis, even outside of a movement uprising. How do we continue the political development work and investigation work that's so important for solidarity? Lastly, I think it's important to note that while there's anti-Blackness and the levels in which terror enacts on Black bodies, we know that that system is not disconnected from the ways in which folks globally are impacted by white supremacy, racial capitalism, and militarization. So how are we investing in the political development work that connects our issues, that connects our sectors? So even inside of our own lanes, even inside of our own work, we are continuing to elevate the issues that Black folks experience but connecting it to the ones in which we do everyday.

47:58 Gregory Cendana Is there anyone else that wanted to answer that question? The next question that we have is a question folks wanted some clarity on the demand around the call to remove Trump. Is it a call to make sure we vote in the upcoming election and vote him out or are there other actions for immediate removal that folks should be pushing for?

48:25 Maurice Mitchell Sure, it's a call for his resignation and we understand that we will have to build a mighty, mass movement in order for that to happen, but we're inspired by times when people have risen up and decided that it was time to reject leadership, and leadership toppled. And so we take that very seriously and at the same time we want to use every tool possible. So if the calls to resignation aren't heard, we're going to continue to mobilize, continue to organize, and to use every tactic including electoral justice. This is a serious demand but it's one that we think opens up a lot of opportunities for many people to use many tactics and to keep pressure on the target. And just to recognize, fundamentally, that not only has the president ridden the wave of white Christian identity in order to win elections and to be the president. Since he's become president, his commitment to authoritarianism, his commitment to align with white supremacy, his recent commitment to actually utilize the military on us means that he isn't fit to lead, that his leadership is bankrupt, and we're deciding whether or not to acknowledge his leadership, and we hope that this creates an opportunity for the millions of people out in the street in order to do everything possible to ensure that his presidency ends as soon as possible.

50:12 Lumumba Bandele I'll just add really quickly that while the explicit demand is for Trump to resign, we're also pushing for a resignation of Trumpism, so not just the president who sits in there, but the mentality, those who actually reflect the particular policies and beliefs that he has, we are calling for that to be removed as well.

Asian Americans for Black Lives - M4BL

50:37
Timmy Lu Great, thanks for those responses. For this next question, I actually wanted to call up our presenters Chhaya, Cha, and Esther to tackle one that is focused on the question of the role of Asian-Americans in this movement, and so the question is: How do we address anti-Blackness in Asian-American communities while also dealing with our own issues of colorism between different Asian-American communities, even within that? I think related to this question too, and I think all of the presenters have, from what I understand of their work has also worked on this as well, is building allyship and connection to community members who may not get it, immigrant community members, folks who have not quite yet embraced this work.. What have you done to help build that and to just offer us all some examples of what that looks like in your work.

52:01
Cha Vang For us, it's about how do you connect with our community -- direct families, having conversations with family members around what anti-Blackness looks like. In reality, the term 'anti-Blackness' is really new to, particularly the Hmong community, we don't have words translated. So what we have seen over the course of the current situation is that young people are stepping up to translate this information into language so that multiple generations of our community members get the necessary language, so that they can understand. This work is not going to happen overnight but it's a long-term struggle for us. We also feel, for the Hmong community, we do have people in power -- people who have positions of power who can make decisions. One of the things that we have emphasized for our local elected is that their platforms are used to really help us educate our communities around what Movement 4 Black Lives is and what anti-Blackness is in our communities. And it is our responsibility to call in our community members, from a place of love, to have a conversation about what our own biases are like the color, the lightness of our skin, and the way we use terms to describe folks who are darker. So those are the beginning conversations that we have to have within our own community. I'll stop there and let Chhaya and Esther.

54:03
Chhaya
Chhoum Thanks, Cha, for that. I totally agree. Go organize with your people, see how your people are talking about Black folks, and yes like dark-skinned and light-skinned in our community. That's been actually the ways in which we've entered the conversation with our elders, actually talking about colorism. What is it about my skin color that makes me ugly? And it is a term 'Black.' Right? So going back even to our language, your hatred of my skin color is actually rooted in anti-Blackness, and so to Cha's point as well, which is that we don't have language around anti-Blackness, so yes we are developing that as well. So calling in and calling out, I mean I'm at a place, and all of us I think, are at a place where even if our elders say things that are anti-Black, you have to call them out immediately and also call them in, and so creating PE not just for our young folks, but also for our elders. And one thing that I learned over the years is that once our elders are taught something, they actually come, and really then it becomes intergenerational, and having those intergenerational conversations around how do we address colorism, anti-Blackness, what it means for you to walk across the street when you see a Black person coming. For us, we're also unpacking what it means when we were in Vietnam, and Cambodia, and Laos when the front line soldiers were all Black folks killing us, and then being resettled in the refugee camps where all the white folks are saving us, and then coming to be resettled in

Asian Americans for Black Lives - M4BL

the ghettos throughout the countries where communities were already marginalized and not invested in. So, for me, being resettled in the Bronx -- it was a war on drugs during that time. And me being resettled in the Bronx meant that I was also taking the limited resources that Black and Brown folks already had, so that recognition is really important in the teaching of our people around undoing anti-Blackness and that we actually benefit from it. Even as refugees were resettled here and even if we experience all the violence, systemic, individual, all that stuff, so yeah for us the entrance has been talking about colorism.

56:30
Esther
Jeon

I don't think I have too much to add to everything that was already shared. I really appreciate the question. Two immediate things come to mind, so for me, I think in a lot of the conversations I try to have with myself and with other community members, is to always remember the natural connections that exist between our communities. So, for me, I always try to remember that as Asian-Americans and non-Black immigrants, our racialization is always in dialectic with anti-Blackness. So it's not a coincidence that, for example, the Immigration Act of 1965 was passed after the Civil Rights Movement or that the 1996 Immigration Bill that expanded mass deportation was passed only two years after the 1994 Crime Bill, that expanded mass incarceration. So, a lot of the work that I try to do with myself and with others is to draw those natural connections that exist in our communities and in our histories. I think, secondly, it's worth really thinking about what frameworks work when talking with other community members. For example, as a Korean-American, I know that we've found it really effective to talk to our community members about this when we frame it within our history. So, South Korea was colonized by Japan for a really, really long time and actually by a lot of other countries in East Asia in centuries before. So we found that when we connect the struggle that Black folks face here in the United States and globally, it helps for people like my parents and other first-gen folks to connect it to the struggle that Koreans faced in Korea when Japan colonized us, took away our language, our names, and our money. So I think it's always worth thinking about what historical frameworks already exist so that we can have more deep and productive conversations with our people.

58:21
Gregory
Cendana

Thank you all so much. Some really fruitful conversations and some important work that we need to do with our communities and our families. We have two more questions for our folks with the Movement 4 Black Lives, if that's okay, then we're going to end with a poll before we close out.. just to give folks a heads up in terms of what we have left on this call. The next question is: How do we respond to those who critique the word choice of 'defund' when they say use a different phrase or word that doesn't sound as extreme, and how can we communicate with centrists who shy away from concepts like abolition and claim we need immediate action to get Trump out, so we don't have time for big concepts right now in this moment? How would you all respond to folks who push back in that way?

59:22
Maurice
Mitchell

I'll respond very briefly. We actually have a history of defunding, we're very familiar with defunding. The neo-liberal era starting in the late '70s is all about defunding; education, our commons, healthcare, mental health, provisions for homelessness, you name it. For 40 years, we've seen the greatest theft and looting from working people, from our commons, all the way to the top, to corporations in the 1%. So we have a long, decades long history of

Asian Americans for Black Lives - M4BL

defunding and we have a long, decades long history of investment; investment in the military, investment in the police, investment in the prison industrial complex, and the related. If you defund the things that keep us whole, and safe, and allow us to have dignity, then you have to be more repressive. You need the greatest police state in the history of humanity, you need the greatest, most elaborate prison and jail system in the history of humanity, in order to maintain social order, and so these things are linked. Neo-liberal capitalism and the repression of our people are deeply linked, and so what we're saying: it's time to flip those things, to invest in the things that have been disinvested in -- Black people in our communities have been uniquely disinvested in -- and defund the things that we know hurt us. Right? So when we actually paint that picture and we talk about the legacy of defunding that that this country has abided by, it actually isn't a very radical idea at all. It's an idea that is very comfortable and safe when the things that we defund are working for Black folks and working for other working people and we invest in the status quo. But when we talk about investing in our people that's when it becomes scary, that's when it becomes radical, but it's just common sense and we have so many common sense juxtapositions. Recently they talked about the fact that there are rocket launchers in L.A. that are being paid for, for the policing of schools at the same time that our students need a quality education and teachers need dignified pay. So these are just common sense allocations, do you think it's more important to spend money on rocket launchers or education so all of our children could thrive? That's what we're talking about and we think when we engage people on that level, most people agree that the system that we live in does not work, that it's rendered itself incompatible for humanity and we actually have to build new systems. It's the most common sense thing when you have the dialogue and we think that people are throwing up straw man arguments because we're winning. We know we're winning when, already, we have victories. There is a major city that has already decided to start from scratch and rethink public safety. There are cities and localities all around the country that are thinking seriously about serious cuts to their police departments, and not just cuts to the budget, but cuts to the role and scope of the police. This is happening in real time.

1:02:51
M Adams

I'd also like to add, and this is a conversation we have a lot inside of our organization Freedom Inc. and cross communities, is that this moment is an invitation to be bold. This moment is an invitation to radically rethink what we thought was normal. So we are not interested in changing our language to sound like something that currently exists and I think that's important for people to understand because in order for us to create a society where Black people are no longer murdered by the state, means that we have to build something that doesn't exist. It means we have to end things that we were comfortable with and it does mean that we have to build things that don't currently exist. So, if it makes people uncomfortable, I think that that's okay because we are directly challenging what people think should be social order, what people think is appropriate order for society. We are saying to people 'No, we're here to disrupt that.' The other thing that I often do when I find myself having this conversation with people who are not yet quite bought in or vested in the idea that we need something as big and as transformational as defunding the police, I remind people that we are the benefactors of radical thought. Right? Black folks, but also Asian people, all of us have histories in wish there were radical movements. All of us are

Asian Americans for Black Lives - M4BL

beneficiaries of radical actors, radical freedom fighters, radical resisters, who said 'no more' to an oppressive order, an oppressive regime. This is something that we talk a lot about with the Southeast Asian folks inside of our organization, is: hey, your folks fought for y'all's freedom and it took radical action. It took, like what Moe described earlier, it took people saying 'we're not going to allow this anymore and instead we're going to build something very different.' So this is a time to call in imagination and this is a time to fundamentally question. And we cannot betray this moment, we cannot fail this moment by trying to maintain what exists. So we are fighting for, as I said earlier, we're fighting for all Black people, so this is an opportunity to bring in our queer imagination, to bring in our pro-women and girl sensibilities. It's an opportunity to bring in our pro-Black thinking in this moment and so yes we are directly confronting centrist values.

1:05:39
Maurice
Mitchell

And just imagine what people were saying when folks decided to abolish the institution of slavery. People were having similar dialogues about how rash that would be to de-mobilize a whole economic engine, a whole sector of the economy, and there were all these arguments for gradualism. And all of these demands throughout our history have seemed impossible until they've happened.

1:06:12
Timmy Lu

All right, so I want to close with one last question and then a poll. I'm actually going to structure this question as a checkout for our Movement 4 Black Lives speakers who are still on, Moe, M, Nikita: let's just imagine if you were talking with somebody on the street, like you were canvassing or something like that, how would you explain the concept of collective liberation and what it means that the liberation of Black people means the liberation of all people?

1:05:54
Maurice
Mitchell

Comrades, who wants to start? Okay, well I'll start. One of the most fundamental things that makes it so challenging for us to do really big things that challenge existential threats to us, for example, climate change is going to require all of us to come together, and it's an existential threat to us. State violence against Black people is an existential threat. The one core factor that has prevented us from marshalling the resources to do so is white supremacy. The fact that white working class and poor folks have been organized around the solidarity of whiteness means that they are aligned with white billionaires, white corporate leaders, over working class and poor people of color, working class and poor Black folks in an alliance against the corporate order. White supremacy is a form of solidarity, and if we don't build a form of solidarity that is more powerful than white Christian identity, a solidarity that aligns our struggles, then we can't amass the amount of power necessary in order to topple these systems, to challenge patriarchy, to challenge racial capitalism. We need to create enough power and that means we need all of us, but not just all of us in a weak solidarity, in a strong solidarity that's aligned around principles and an ideological North star, which is why we're so insistent on lifting up an intersectional analysis, lifting up challenging anti-Blackness, lifting up these principles. But if we do that, we'll unlock the power to transform all of our lives and that's when we talk about a Black liberation struggle, one that is led by Black people but has enough room for accomplices, that's what we're talking about. A struggle that will challenge all forms of repression and create the foundation of a new one.

Asian Americans for Black Lives - M4BL

1:09:14
Nikita Mitchell I love this question, I love it. Any campaign that I do, I always test the language out on my grandmother 'cause if my grandmother understands it, then anyone will understand it. So, like a true organizer, I wrote a quick script. Let me test it out on y'all. Y'all ready?

We are told that the issues we face are personal ones. They're unique to our families, to our home, and to our people. Yet, the truth is that it isn't. The issues of the police killing Black folks is not different from the US government supporting military forces across the country. Because it's not personal, because it's a collective issue, it will take all of us, and I mean all of us, to undo it and to ensure that we can all live in our dignity and our humanity. Will you join in with me?

That's my spiel.

1:10:23
Timmy Lu I'm really glad we're keeping a transcript of this conversation (laughs). Let's go hit the doors! M, did you want to share?

1:10:35
M Adams Just very briefly, M again. So this is an area in which I think Black feminisms, Black radical queer feminisms, is so far ahead, is absolutely leading. So I think about the work of the Combahee River Collective, even before the Combahee River Collective, I think about the work of Claudia Jones and many others who sort of scientifically demonstrated that if you free the most oppressed person, that everyone would be free. And they identified poor, Black women, and I think they would also agree poor Black, queer, trans, intersex people, disabled people, etc. that in order for this group of people to be free, it requires the defeating of every system. It requires the ending of white supremacy, the ending of cis-hetero patriarchy, it requires the ending of capitalism. So, scientifically speaking, whether or not you personally like Black people, and I think everybody should personally like Black people, I love Black people. But whether or not you personally have a Black friend, or whether or not you personally have Black members in your families, scientifically, as movement folks I think we have to understand that if we free the most oppressed, and that is Black people, that everyone is free. So I think as one of the speakers or the hosts identified earlier, we've seen historically how when there is advancement for Black people, such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act which created space or facilitated opportunities for non-Black immigrants to benefit, that all people benefited. So I think that scientifically and historically, we can see that reality. But what that then translates to me, as collective liberation, it really means living in a society where we can be fully in our dignity. It means when Black people are liberated, it means the end of all forms of police terror. That includes the ending of ICE, that frankly necessitates the ending of borders. It includes the ending of exploiting people's labors, so freeing Black people means ending prison labors. It means shutting down sweatshops, it means stopping the extraction of labor, of life, of reproductive violence on people's bodies. It means a return of bodily autonomy and power, it means very queerly the ability of us to name ourselves, for ourselves, and for that to be respected. And it means, on a very simple level, it means that I might be able to go outside tonight and not worry that a police will murder me. And quite frankly, it is a lynching and that's how we have to begin to talk about it. So, collective liberation really means a just world and again this is scientifically so, whether or not you personally know a Black person. So it is all of our obligation, it is all of our responsibility to take very serious the calling of Black liberation.

Asian Americans for Black Lives - M4BL

1:14:07 That was beautiful. Thank you so much to M, to Nikita, to Maurice and to Lumumba for
Gregory your wisdom, for being in community with us.
Cendana

Maurice One request, if everybody on the line could text the word 'DEFEND' to 90975. If all 3,000
Mitchell or 4,000 of you could do that and then when you get off the line, if you could go on social
media and if you could share a word to inspire people to join us on Juneteenth and to visit
the website sixnineteen.com.

1:14:47 Thank you, Moe. Always with an ask, a prepared organizer, thank you. One thing that we
Gregory wanted to do, after hearing from all the speakers, we're going to launch a poll. We wanted
Cendana to see what you all are willing to commit to doing after hearing, and being inspired, and
being in community with the family at Movement 4 Black Lives. So there are 5 different
asks aligned with the asks that they shared with us and so we're asking you all to let us
know what you're willing to commit. Are you willing to elevate the Six Nineteen (6/19)
mobilization through your networks? Are you willing to donate to the mobilization fund or
encourage others to do so? Are you willing to commit to bottom lining an action and be
held accountable to Black leadership? Are you willing to stay on message utilizing the
message guidance? Are you willing to combat pushes to drive communities and
organizations to more reformist demands that weaken the M4BL foundational demands?
Please let us know what you're committed to. There will be additional information that will
be sent but this will give us a sense of where folks are at. We'll give it a couple of seconds to
have folks fill out the poll since there are multiple thousands of you that are joining us and
spending your evening with us, so thank you so much for taking some time.

1:16:19 I was just going to say, just to report back from the poll, Gregory, we have over 1,600
Timmy Lu people right now who will elevate the Six Nineteen (6/19) actions, 1,500 people who say
they will donate to the mobilization fund or encourage others to do so, another 1,100 who
will commit to bottom lining an action, 1,800 utilizing the messaging, and then 1,600 who
are committing to really push and hold this line around the foundational demands that
Movement 4 Black Lives has started lifting up.

Gregory Awesome. It looks like just a little over 50% of you have filled out the poll, if you haven't
Cendana had a chance to do it yet, we'll keep it on for a little bit longer. Also don't forget to please
text 'DEFEND' to 90975 , 'DEFEND' to 90975. We're now actually at 75% of folks filling out
the poll, so we'll keep it on just a tad bit longer and then we'll share the results with folks.

All right so it looks like we have a pretty critical mass of folks who have filled the poll, so
I'm going to ask that we close the poll and share the results with folks, and I'm going to
pass it to Timmy to help us close this out.

1:17:47 I will try. So I just wanted to start by deep thanks to Movement 4 Black Lives, our speakers
Timmy Lu Maurice, Nikita, Lumumba, and M, who took time out to share with us their wisdom and
also make this ask of our communities. Definitely appreciation for Chhaya, Cha, and Esther
for sharing their stories and their organizing insights for sure. As follow up, all folks who
have registered, you will be receiving an email from us that has more information around

Asian Americans for Black Lives - M4BL

the actions, how to get connected, all of those resources and I think as Moe had mentioned, text message and we will stay connected. That's it. Thank you all for joining us on this call, have a wonderful evening, and thank you all. Let's be in struggle together. Thanks.