

HUMAN RIGHTS HERE AND NOW:

Addressing Contemporary Human Rights Issues



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BLACK LIVES MATTER

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The phrase ‘Black Lives Matter’ began as a hashtag in July, 2013 immediately following the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the killing of Trayvon Martin. Launched on social media by community organizers Alicia Garza, Patricia Cullers and Opal Tometi, #BlackLivesMatter quickly became a US-based international grassroots movement against institutional racism, police brutality, and extrajudicial killings of Black men, women and children¹. After the killings by police officers of Tamir Rice, Mike Brown, and Eric Garner during 2014, the Black Lives Matter movement picked up momentum. Although these murders received increased media attention, the national outrage rose from decades-long disproportionate state surveillance and brutality against Black lives in the United States. Activists across the nation organized protests to demand reforms in police training and practice as well as judicial proceedings. The community in Ferguson, Missouri, faced militarized response by the police department during marches, rallies and protests.

The Black Lives Matter movement calls for more than police reforms, it calls for an end to state sanctioned violence. As Alicia Garza explains, “When we say Black Lives Matter, we are talking about the ways in which Black people are deprived of our basic human rights and dignity. It is an acknowledgement Black poverty and genocide is state violence”².

In response to questions about recognizing that all lives matter, Garza responded, “We know that our struggles are intricately connected and we need

¹ <http://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>

² <http://thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/>

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each other to get free. The argument that we're making, however, is that Black lives are central to everybody's freedom. Fighting for Black liberation is also fighting for your liberation."³

BLIVES MATTER AS HUMAN RIGHTS

The Black Lives Matter movement moves beyond male-centered leadership. The movement affirms and centers the lives of Black women, queer, trans, undocumented, and disabled persons⁴. Therefore, Black Lives Matters demands international human rights codified in multiple treaties including;

[The Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

[International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#)

[International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women](#)

[Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

GENERAL RESOURCES

PBS News Hour; Timeline of Events in Ferguson

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/timeline-events-ferguson/>

Colorlines; Ferguson

<http://colorlines.com/ferguson/>

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander

<http://newjimcrow.com/>

Black Lives Matter

<http://blacklivesmatter.com/>

RESOURCES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Type: Resources and Library Guides for Teachers

- [Context for Black Lives Matter by Oakland Library](#)

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http://colorlines.com/archives/2014/10/facing_race_spotlight_organizer_alicia_garza_on_why_black_lives_matter.html

⁴ <http://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>

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- [Teaching Black Lives Matter by San Francisco Unified School District](#)

Type: Educators' Articles about Teaching Black Lives Matter

- [Teaching the #FergusonSyllabus by Marcia Chatelain](#)
- [Teach about Mike Brown But Don't Stop There by Renee Watson](#)
- [Talking with Kids about Ferguson: Recommended Titles on Race & Equality by Sprout's Bookshelf](#)

Type: Lesson Plans and Curriculum

- [Teaching the 'New Jim Crow' by Teaching Tolerance](#)
- [Civil Rights or Human Rights? by The Martin Luther King, Jr. Resource and Education Institute](#)
- [Teachable Moment: What Happened in Ferguson- and Why? By Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility](#)

Type: Film and Video

- [Race: The Power of Illusion by PBS](#)
- [Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequality by Shatki Butler](#)

ALIGNMENT WITH STATE AND COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Links to this topic and the Common Core standards will be posted on HRE USA's website in the next few weeks. Please help HRE USA by aligning this topic with your own state's Social Studies State Content Standards. Please send them to *Human Rights Here and Now* editor, Nancy Flowers: [**nancymaryflowers@gmail.com**](mailto:nancymaryflowers@gmail.com).

TEACHING CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS

A generic statement about teaching controversial topics will be available on the HRE USA website and should be cited.