



OAESV Statement on Ma'Khia Bryant

This week, we join you in grief, rage, terror, numbness, tension, fatigue, and struggle surrounding the killing of Ma'Khia Bryant, by Law Enforcement in Columbus, Ohio. This occurred minutes before the verdict of Derek Chauvin's trial was announced and only a week after Miles Jackson was killed in Westerville Ohio by Law Enforcement and Hospital Security. We continue to hold our breaths, knowing that justice would still never come for the Floyd family, only a semblance of accountability. This loss was reported during OAESV's annual Advocacy Day, in which we centered on how forms of oppression intersect, including Racism and sexual violence and how institutions and systems continue to fail our Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities.

We will not engage with questions of guilt, blame, or demonize the character, life, and memory of Ma'Khia Bryant. She was only 16-years old. We encourage conversations within communities to shift attention to how she was failed by systems, especially law enforcement, that could have protected her when she called for help. Systems that could have responded to her request for safety by believing her and supporting her.

As we uplift her name, we also center the movement, [#SayHerName](#), as Black girls and gender non-conforming children continue to be left out of the Global, National, and local community conversations regarding #BlackLivesMatter and police violence. Black girls are [adultified](#), criminalized, sexualized, and punished at disproportionate rates. [You can see this in the 1 in 4 Black girls who experience sexual violence before the age of 18. You can see this in the number of Black girls in Kindergarten who are suspended.](#) This leads to heavy system involvement and contact with punitive systems, not because of the actions of Black girls, but rather how they are [stereotyped](#), misunderstood, vilified, and not believed or supported by systems who claim to protect and serve.

Black girls, women, and gender non-conforming people continue to lead the Anti-Sexual Violence Movements, conversations on justice, accountability, Restorative and Transformative Justice. Even as, many are silenced, co-opted within activist communities and [non-profit, professionalized fields](#). We, as a movement continue to fail Black girls and gender non-conforming children, and adults through our prevention and response efforts and programming through a white supremacist lens. We must continue to take time to center conversations of accountability, Anti-Racism, particularly Anti-Black Racism, in our movements, organizations, and individual accountability processes. We can and should have this work intersect with, Disability Justice, Transgender Justice, Immigrant Justice, and more. We must shift our resources, planning, and framework to center Black Women, Femmes, and Gender non-

conforming people and pay them for their labor. We ask you, and ourselves: how will you take this back to your family, your community, your colleagues, your work?

Justice for Ma'Khia is not possible in death. Justice is when a 16-year old is believed and supported by her community. Justice is preventing the conditions for violence in the first place. Justice is Black girls living a joyful life, uninterrupted by violence. We are demanding accountability and an end to police violence. We demand immediate action to phase out policing systems that continue to kill our communities and cause harm, replaced by community-led efforts centered on accountability and justice outside of systems. This is beyond just policing, but will take all of us including preventionists, advocates and social workers who work in systems that also failed to protect Ma'Khia. We must and can do better, in her name and in memory of all of the Black girls and gender non-conforming children's names who we do not know.

In Community,