



FORUM TRANSCRIPT

UNITED WE STAND. From Minneapolis to Johannesburg: Our Shared Fight To End Police Violence

[music]

Ngozi Odita: Welcome, everyone. Thank you for joining us today and lending your time and your voices to this important discussion. I'm Ngozi Odita and I'm founder of AfricaNXT, and we're the organizers of today's forum. AfricaNXT exists to be a space, both online and offline, that celebrates African ingenuity and empowers creatives, entrepreneurs, organizers, and all-around remarkable people who are very interested in moving Africa forward. We believe that creating spaces where we can gather and connect and collaborate is of the utmost importance and also creates opportunities for us to generate ideas and strategies that help uplift and transform our communities and industries and the continent in general. We also believe that Africa's greatest strength is its people and it's also its greatest resource. We see Black people everywhere, no matter where you're from or where you reside, where you originated, we're all African.

In this moment, it's so important for us as Black people everywhere to see ourselves in each other. As you know, if one person is being affected, an attack on any Black person is an attack on all of us. That really gets to the heart of why we are gathering here today. Essentially Black lives are being threatened all over the world. A lot of the focus right now, we're dealing with a lot of things that are happening within the US, but the same issues that we deal with in the US is happening across Africa.

It's happening in Latin America, is happening in Europe. It's really happening everywhere. Black people are dealing with not just police violence, but injustices as it relates to healthcare, as it relates to just policies, criminalization of communities. This really is just really widespread and is a pandemic on its own. We're hoping by gathering here today, you'll soon be hearing from an amazing group of people who are going to share their insights and the work that they do and the impact that they're having and strategies that we can employ ourselves.

We'll start off with a panel and then following the panel, we will have round table discussions in smaller groups that'll allow all of us to really begin to think collaboratively about how we want to transform the communities that we're in. How we want the communities and how we want police and state and policies to serve our interests as Black people and ultimately how we want to be able to be free, safe, and prosper in this world as Black people.

A few housekeeping things. One is everybody is currently on mute. If you have any questions you have for the panelists, please put them in the chat. We'll be gathering all those questions for later. Again, definitely introduce yourself in the chat, let us

AFRICA

NXT

know where you are listening from. The hashtags for the event are #BLMUnitedwestand and #AfricaNXT.

[music]

Ngozi: Without further ado, we are going to get started with the first part of the program which is the panel. We have four amazing people with us this afternoon or evening, or if you're on the West Coast of America morning still. We first have Andre Perry, he is a Fellow part of the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institute in the United States. We also have Monifa Bandele who is a policy leader for the Movement for Black Lives.

We have Nomsa Mazwal from South Africa, who's a social activist, a Fulbright Scholar, and founder of #Funkitimwalking. Then we have Yemi Adamolekun who is from Nigeria and she's the Executive Director of Enough is Enough. **[unintelligible 00:05:11]** who was also supposed to be joining us from France, unfortunately, had an emergency and she will not be with us today.

We'll move forward and I'll let everybody introduce themselves. If you can just introduce yourself and then essentially say how your work is impacted by this moment, or how are you perceiving this moment informed by your work? We'll start off with Monifa. Monifa, can you? Oh, I have to unmute you. Yes, that would be important. Okay, I've asked to unmute you.

Monifa Bandele: Okay, now I can unmute myself?

Ngozi: Yes.

Monifa: Peace, everyone. Thank you so much, Ngozi, for pulling together this panel. Our work is international and we need to always remember that. That's something that our elders and mentors have always taught us. Thank you for continuing to convene and to have these conversations. My name is Monifa Bandele. I am a leader on the Policy Table for the Movement for Black Lives and we are being hugely impacted by this moment.

The Movement for Black Lives is an ecosystem of 150 Black-led organizations from all over the United States and we also work in alliance with organizations around the world. We came out of the Ferguson uprisings back in 2014 and have built an infrastructure and a network that has really brought us to where we are today. Many of our organizations in different cities and states have been fighting different aspects of police violence since before Ferguson, in fact, some for decades and some for two decades.

Ngozi and I go back to the early 2000s doing cop watch in New York City in the wake of the killing of Amadou Diallo. What we've learned over these past two decades and especially these past seven years, is that tinkering around the edges of police reform doesn't prevent Black death. It doesn't defend Black lives. In fact, when we put money into things like police training and trying to figure out ways to make better friendlier policing, we end up throwing a lot of good money behind that.

AFRICA

NXT

Our movement has taken a firm stand and has emerged over the last month with a national call to defund the police. Essentially saying that we need to diversify from policing infrastructures, from criminalization infrastructures, from prisons, from jails, and we need to invest those resources into the infrastructure that we know makes our communities safe. Affordable housing, mental health services, healthcare, education, all of the things that have been starved because our cities and states dump tens of billions of dollars into policing.

This moment has been very powerful for us. Coming out of the death of George Floyd, we have been marching in the streets in every state in the United States sustainably now for six weeks. We had a Juneteenth mobilization that had 600 separate demonstrations and rallies across the country [inaudible 00:08:41] in many cities continue to [inaudible 00:08:46] to this day.

Just yesterday, I'll finish by saying we launched a piece of federal legislation called the BREATHE Act. This is a piece of legislation coming from activists as well as the mothers of Mike Brown and the mother of Eric Garner, essentially saying now's not the time to figure out the 12,000th way that you can ban chokeholds. Chokeholds have been banned in different cities for decades and still, our folks get choked to death.

How do we reduce policing, take away the power and the money from an institution that cannot be held accountable to our communities? If you get an opportunity, check out the BREATHE Act, it's called the breathact.org. We just threw up a separate website, but you can also link to it at infobl.org.

Ngozi: Thank you. Nomsa, you can go next.

Nomsa Mazwai: Hi, I'm Nomsa Mazwai and I'm from South Africa. I am the founder of #Funkitimwalking. The reason why I founded #Funkitimwalking was because when I came back from the US where I did my masters, I realized that in South Africa, it's very difficult to walk especially for women. The organization aims to make it safe for a woman to walk at any time of day in any condition. At the beginning, the walks are mostly activism driven so that there was a theme around the walks.

We started during the walks, with #Funkitimwalking, we were walking for purpose. One walk that we did was for the autopsy report for Steve Biko not to be auctioned because they'd have auctioned the autopsy report. More recently, it's been more about how do we make our community safer because in South Africa, we don't have the freedom to walk. That's due to the high levels of crime in our country.

The organization is working with community policing forums and also looking at ways to work with the police. Because the police in South Africa, before apartheid, the narrative of the police hasn't really changed. They're not part of the community. They're not adding any value. Well, the experience is that it's not adding any value. When you see the police in the street, you don't feel safe.

AFRICA

NXT

You rather feel like you don't want to be victimized. That's as a Black person in general. The police are over-policing in Black areas. #Funkitimwalking focuses on townships. At the moment, our work is primarily in Soweto. It's more about how do we create communities where we can walk. That's the work that I'm doing. At the moment, in this moment with COVID-19, and Coronavirus, we're really seeing how police in South Africa victimize people with the lockdown.

Because we saw more active police violence in Black communities. That comes into our work in terms of really looking at if people can't walk, can't enjoy their environments, then how can we say that we are actually free?

Ngozi: Thank you. Andre, you can go next.

Andre Perry: Yes. Hi, my name is Andre Perry. I'm a fellow at the Brookings Institution where I study majority cities. I've specifically examined the assets in Black communities cities that are undervalued or devalued because of racism. Then, I seek to identify that lost value so we can begin to restore it economically to Black communities that have essentially been robbed by racism in a number of areas.

As was mentioned, the defund police example or movement is a great example of how investment in policing does not lead to economic or social mobility. It literally arrests it. The goal is to move money from organizations that suppress or stifle economic and social mobility and move those funds to people so that they can live healthy lives and that money can help build strong communities. I have a new book out, *Know Your Price*.

Devaluing Black lives and property in America's black city that details how wealth has been extracted from communities through things like policing, through housing discrimination, through job discrimination. The whole point of the book is to say, "Hey, here's the amount of money that will take to restore value to communities that are constantly being robbed by racism."

Ngozi: Thank you, and, Yemi.

Yemi: Right. Good evening, everyone. My name is Yemi. I am in Lagos, Nigeria. I'm executive director of Enough is Enough, Nigeria. Not an organization I founded, not an organization that had a plan. It basically came out of a protest. Over the last 10 years, it's basically worked to get citizens in Nigeria to understand their rights and responsibilities and hold government accountable.

The moment is interesting for me as an individual, and I guess, contextually for our organization. Because it's over the last I guess, for example, five years that I've really paid attention to the history of policing in the US and understanding the context of why the framing around police brutality. The conversations around police officers are also Black so why is this an issue.

If one want to understand policing in the US was within the context of slavery and the fact that they were designed to operate in a particular way and what we see now shouldn't be surprising. You take that across the oceans and come to the continent,

AFRICA

NXT

and it's quite different. Majority Black nation that Nigeria is but we still see a lot of police brutality as well. Police is definitely not your friend.

I think, as Nomsa was saying, you see the police, you tend to be afraid. The interesting thing that's different from defunding the police is that in Nigeria, we're more likely to say that the police need to be funded because a big part of their brutality and their aggression is because as human beings, they've been dehumanized. They live in barracks, really close quarters, they're not well paid, don't have resources to do their job so the citizens become their, for lack of a better word, a punching bag.

Citizens become people that you can oppress because you're in a position of power. This is also situated in Nigeria's historical context as most of our years since independence has been spent in military rule. The whole notion of security agencies being oppressive and wielding power, and not necessarily being friends with the citizens plays out very much so in the way our police relate to citizens.

I think globally, what this moment means is really about voice with Black Lives Matter and even within Nigeria, with the context [unintelligible 00:16:35] office of the citizen campaign that we run around citizens understanding that whoever is in a role of authority in government works at your request, is there to serve you. As a citizen, you have the power to basically hold them accountable.

Within Nigeria's context, relatively novel, 20 years straight of a democracy, so the idea of electing people to serve you and then holding them accountable is quite a new concept. We're learning and evolving in that space.

I think that if anything, I would say that's what really connects it. I think for us as well, the interesting bit of a quote by Nelson Mandela.

Nigeria is the largest black nation, and Nelson had this to say he said, "The world will not respect Africa until Nigeria earns that respect." The Black people of the world needs Nigeria--

[silence]

I'm confident and so the whole sort of next [inaudible 00:17:45] conversation. Thanks, Ngozi.

Ngozi: Sorry, I'm not sure if-- I think the connection. Can everyone hear me okay? Just confirming. If you can give me a thumbs up if you can hear me.

Yemi: Now, we can.

Ngozi: Okay, great. Thank you. I think that that bit that you said was like, very interesting, Yemi, in terms of like drawing the lines and connecting kind of like-- Well, first expressing what the difference was between here but then you brought it back I think to like oppression. I think that ties the line between the experience of Black people everywhere. There's this outside entity that is wielding power. I think you all

AFRICA

NXT

mentioned power and what you talked about, against Black people and it oppresses them.

As we think about this moment, and the uniqueness of this moment in that almost everywhere and-- Well, not almost, actually every single place in the world, everybody is focused on this issue of Black people injustice. That there is clearly something wrong in how communities are policed, and how the policies within communities that are affecting people. If we can talk about this moment, and I want to--

Michael Eric Dyson said something really interesting about a week ago, and he said that "It's like currently right now there's this global acknowledgment, to match the current global pandemic and it seems that there's this global explosion of consciousness." Really, it's like, the first time that I can think of in my life that every single-- Almost every city in America for sure was on fire and focused on this.

You can just watch on the news on the internet, how every single city was hyperly focused on what was happening now. When you think about that, how do we draw the line? What more can we do so that-- I guess what I'm trying to say that we're working as a coalition or in cohesion with one another. It's not just like if I'm in Nigeria, I can see something happening in America and I'm like, "Wow, that's bad. Here's my situation in Nigeria," and, "Okay, that's bad."

What's the advantage of us looking at each other and saying, "Well, if we all experienced this as Black people, there needs to be a way that we elevate it and talk about what are we going to do as this global Black community that is experiencing the exact same thing." The world currently is looking and saying, "Wow, something needs to be done.

If you can all maybe share how can we maybe leverage this global sentiment and build upon it? We can start with-- we'll start with Andre.

Andre: Yes, you know what's interesting, I think there are some distinctions to be made between colonialism, apartheid and white supremacy. But for most Black people, it generally looks the same, because many of the same practices that suppress the voices of black people, really are borrowed from country to country, from town to town. You can be in a Black majority place, but you still see the same types of White oppressive practices in those places.

I actually think the answer to your question is actually happening now. There's been tremendous groundwork all across the world, particularly inspired by Black Lives Matter, the movement for Black lives and the Black Lives Matter movement in general, but the criminal justice issue is taking center stage. Now there are other issues related to that. I think it's a great policy anchor to build upon clearly. We're advancing to issues of housing, education, health care, and all of those other injustices.

AFRICA

NXT

You'd be surprised of how neat a solution in America can help the conditions in South Africa, can help conditions in Nigeria because many of the assumptions under colonialism, apartheid and white supremacy are essentially the same. There have been systems built to devalue and suppress Black voices. It's occurred in all of those sectors, but the practices in criminal justice really look similar in very different contexts.

Ngozi: Nomsa, let me unmute you first. Nomsa, building on what Andre just said, and the idea of them being exactly the same thing. White supremacy, colonialism, apartheid are all basically extensions of the same thing. When you look at for South Africa, coming out of apartheid and everything that's happening now, how do you-- because during apartheid, that was a moment where everybody in the world because it's probably some people's most recent memory of really seeing White power in your face impacting a community of people.

Coming out of that, what are some of maybe the learnings or how do you see that we can build more global coalitions where people in South Africa are reaching out to maybe people in Nigeria or reaching out to people in France just to build this coalition to keep amplifying what's happening and keep pushing for this wider structural change?

Nomsa: From my perspective and South Africa's perspective and my experience as a Black woman living in South Africa, and the learnings that we've gotten from #FunkItImWalking is that the role of the police has not really changed over time. What the police were doing in apartheid, they're still doing it now. On top of that, it's compounded with what I would say is almost a lack of training, so people don't actually know what they're supposed to do at work.

One of the things that we struggle the most with is the fact that most police people that we engage with don't actually have an understanding of what they actually are at work to do. Their understanding or their knowledge of what police are supposed to do is what they're doing, but that's not what the role of the police in a democratic South Africa is supposed to look like.

That's one of the major things that that we are grappling with. How do you effect change then when there is that kind of culture in policing? A culture of intimidation, a culture of victimization, a culture of hiding, and wrongdoing by the police in the police station. A culture of just not doing your job as well, a culture of just going to work to get a paycheck.

What we've looked at and I presented to the President about a month ago, and one of the main things that I was saying there was, the police really need to understand what their jobs are. They need to be given targets and they need to have performance indicators and a measurable way that we can say, "Okay, the police are doing what they're supposed to be doing." Basically, better performance management and reporting and review. Are the police doing what they're supposed to be doing? Being reviewed by the community.

AFRICA

NXT

Another thing that we've been doing a lot of is working with our community policing forums. Community policing forums is basically a neighborhood watch kind of thing [laughs], but mostly they work at big events. Now it's about how do you work with the community policing forums in terms of everyday life? What does this moment represent for me and for #FunkItImWalking? I think it's a great opportunity for us to look at the different experiences that we're having around the world.

I think that the experience of Black people all over the world is the same and I think we need to stop thinking borders, and we need to start thinking about what are the issues that are affecting us. I think technology has given us the capability to allocate resources even outside of where you are. It's possible for me to contribute resources to a community in Nigeria, just because I understand that the struggle is the same.

That's it. For me, it's about how can we take this moment to create a better experience moving forward for Black people?

Ngozi: Thank you. Monifa, a lot of what Nomsa says is directly tying into the work that movement for black lives is doing around defunding the police. Maybe you can share some of that but then also talk about how you're disseminating that information and that platform and that agenda for defunding the police but you're doing it in cities around the world. It's just not in America.

Monifa: Right. Well, first, I wanted to just take one minute to step back, and just to push back a little bit because, in this work that I've been doing for a long time, people who are abolitionists in our country have really pushed back on me. I think if we actually sit for a minute and ask ourselves, why do we need police? Really, and then unpack that, this idea that there needs to be better police or better-trained police or better-paid police? It all starts to fall apart.

When we look at what's happening in our community and did the crime happen because there's an issue of poverty? Is there unstable housing, is there lack of access to mental health treatment? Is there community mediation that could have prevented the escalation to where this has gone? Not only do we find that those interventions are more effective, they're hugely less expensive.

We have all been groomed in this idea, in an era that really just like Yemi rightfully said, came right out of slavery. This concept that communities need to be patrolled in a military manner firmly sits on how are we going to control freed slave populations and even before that, how we capture people who run away from slavery?

When we're really able to sit and ask members of our community, even people who have suffered from all kinds of violence, they've been robbed, they've been beat up and ask them, "What does safety look like to you? What does it feel like?" It never involves a police officer. It always involves safe housing. It always involves access to food. Then we combine that with data we did that said, what exists in the safest communities in the United States?

AFRICA

NXT

They actually have drastically less police that it really puts the question why do we think there is a role for police in safety? Of course, it's not something that can happen overnight but it's a dream. It's a freedom dream that we have that we think we can be on a path to and I believe we could be on a path to it globally if we come together, and pull away at this idea that members of our community need to be policed, any member needs to be policed.

It's hard because we know we've experienced a lot of trauma. We've also been hit a lot with the propaganda of policing. Policing was [inaudible 00:30:42] popular before we weren't 50 years ago, they couldn't stand police. They were underpaid. They were very similar, like everything that Yemi was getting was describing. Hollywood put forth this propaganda machine. We got *Law and Order*, *Hillstreet Blues*, *Boys in Blue*.

Color changes organization here did a whole data review and just showed how this idea hammering in people's heads, one that police are good, that they're necessary, that they're your homies, that they prevent bad things from happening was really something that was created on the screen. I mean even stuff people like, *The Wire*, all the shows reinforce this idea that if we want to survive, you have to have somebody with a gun patrolling our families and our neighbors.

I'm not sure actually how we bring the conversation together globally. I think this is definitely one of the forums, and this is a start. I also think that once COVID has passed, hopefully, we need to actually have convenings and go and really see how our different communities are working on this issue and have these conversations that go beyond just like how can we not be victims of police violence but what does safety really look like and means to African people.

Ngozi: Thank you. Yemi, I want to bring you in on this because a lot of what Monifa stated like the going to the root of the problem and the fact that it's lack of social services, inadequate housing, food insecurity. There's so many issues that result in the things that we see and then policing becomes the solution, which is not the solution. It's addressing the social inequities in our community. I think that's really like within Nigeria, right?

The government is unwilling to provide any social services to the people and you're really left to be on your own and then you have the police there. Maybe talk about the work you're doing around that and your learnings and some of the things that people in other places can gather from the situation and the dynamic within Nigeria.

Yemi: Thank you. Thanks really for that, that was really helpful. I mean, you were talking, I was going yes, yes. For me, it's fascinating in a lot of ways. I think it is one big thing, though, is the need for us to be very deliberate about education and about anchoring our population with understanding our history and context. A lot of the things that Monifa was talking about around the role of Hollywood, I mean, I didn't even know that part. As you're saying it, it made sense.

AFRICA

NXT

Hollywood has a track record of slightly changing our perception of what is right or wrong, just because we were bombarded with so much over a period of time. It's interesting that in Nigeria, we actually paralleling that to what Nollywood could do in terms of changing behavior, how can we use the movies and the arts to project a difference, in this case, positive messaging. Recognizing the power that movies and the arts generally have in shaping how people think. One, I think it's just the very Clemson's. **[unintelligible 00:34:19]**

I think Monifa also made reference to that, that this is a marathon, but it's a marathon that we need to be consistent about. She talked about from Ferguson to now realizing that all the attempts to reform and modify and to the chip at the police and its existing state doesn't really do anything. That now it's the time to really unpack that and decide this is what we want, and this is what we need.

It's the same thing, just realizing that the process to change how people understand issues, how people engage issues, is a long process because this is what you were born into. This is what you understand. This is what you've seen. It can't be left to one powerful motivational speech, one powerful preacher, one fantastic article that someone writes that suddenly, that's it.

It must be consistent the same way Hollywood consistently bombards your mind until what is abnormal becomes normal just because you've seen it so often you're like, "Oh, this is good," is the same way that we must take on this work to change the way us as people of color see ourselves and relate to ourselves. Namsa's point about the police is so apt around the police do what they do **[inaudible 00:35:43]** you think just because this is how we got to be, this is what we get paid to do.

In our particular context, when you have a bankrupt political leadership, from even from my military days now use the police deliberately to oppress us is how they're used. The police don't see themselves beyond that. To Monifa's point about what does security, what does safety look like? One of my favorite stories to tell is that of elections that we had probably eight or nine years ago.

At the community poll unit, some grandmas were sitting down there and some young boys came in and they were going to cause trouble. The grandmas literally got up and they were like, "I don't know you. I don't know you. We know everybody in this neighborhood. If you were registered to vote in this polling unit, we would know you so you definitely don't belong here so stop." Now, they didn't need police, they didn't need guns, they didn't need anything but the boys failed because, the grandmas just were like, "No, we're not having this here."

Again, to Monifa's point around what does safety and security look like, we didn't need guns. We didn't need many blue or black, whatever colors they wear in the country to get them to go. I think lastly, I just really want to make the point around as we educate as well, understanding the need for us to interrogate issues and stories. It was this year, for example, that I realized Africa Day that was celebrated, I think it was in May.

AFRICA

NXT

It took me a while to realize that, wait a minute, the history of Africa Day was African Liberation Day. What's significant in the name, because it was a celebration of African nations gaining independence. Now when you strip it of the word liberation and you call it Africa Day and turn it into a, I don't know three-hour special on MTV Base, problems, problems problems.

As I agree with Monifa that I'm not quite sure how this global business but conversations like this are extremely important, but just really the need to understand educate. For those with Monifa working on policy that are already parallel going along in parallel about educate, educate, educate. Sorry, I wanted to say as well, that also the role that security agencies, the police industry guard play in countries like South Africa or Nigeria where there's a lot of inequality.

Your elite use the tools of the state to keep that so that as Ngozi said, you're not providing social services that people need, but you have a police that you, in essence, empower to oppress. The police themselves are oppressed but then they get paid to oppress other people so they do that with joy.

Ngozi: Thank you. Andre, building on what two things that Yemi mentioned. One is the idea of the importance of education, educate, educate, educate. In your book and in your work, you're educating people on knowing your value, and the fact that how our communities and everybody, and everything that they're saying is talking about the devaluing of Black people and Black bodies. That's why all this is happening.

If you can speak specifically about that reeducation or recalibration as we look at the value of Black people and the assets within our communities, because I think it's applicable, regardless of where you are.

Andre: Yes, what's interesting when I talk about education, in the book, I often say and you will hear me say this, that there's nothing wrong with Black people that ending racism can't solve. The education that I'm really pointing to oftentimes falls in the laps of White people. The data that I present often just validates the concerns of Black communities. I'll just give you an example.

I looked at home prices and Black majority neighbor hoods where the share of the Black population is greater than 50% and I compare those to housing prices where the share of the population was less than a percent. I control for all those factors that people say cause lower home values. I control for education, crime, workability, all those fancy Zillow metrics you find. What I found at equivalent homes in equivalent social circumstances are priced 23% lower by about 48,000 per home. Accumulatively, that's 156 billion in what amounts to loss equity. That equity we know is used by-- and at least in the States for people to start businesses. In fact, that money would have started more than 4 million businesses based on the average startup that Blacks used to start businesses. It would have funded more than 8 million, four-year degrees based on the average cost of a four-year public education.

AFRICA

NXT

It would have replaced the pipes in Flint Michigan. For those abroad Flint Michigan had a poisoning of the water. It would have replaced the pipes there are 3000 times over. It's a big number. The reason why I say that, that's money that's extracted from communities simply just for being Black and the same as is true for policing. We've essentially created a jobs program that extracts wealth from people.

If you invest in a teacher, that investment amplifies because when you're creating a middle-class job generally, and that person is in teaching others in ways that advance our human capital. When you invest in a police officer, guess what they're doing? They're, in some cases, literally taking people out of the economy, fining them and charging them fees, so you mitigate any kind of gains from that.

Now I'm talking economically for a largely a moral issue, but this is important. We need to invest in things that's going to help us grow. I think that's what I found the most powerful thing about the defund the police movement, because for centuries, we've been investing in things that protect whiteness and we've got to shift those funds in ways that benefits Black communities and benefits Black people.

One other thing around this, there's arguments around quality policing. What do we need? Like clearly the officer Derek Chauvin that killed George Floyd, he needs to be jailed. He needs to be prosecuted. With that said, if we would have had the systems in place where people had power, that would have never happened. It would have never happened.

We need a strategy to quickly defund the police and then, but we also need to build in systems that will prevent those kinds of things from happening. Monifais absolutely right. You don't see police in classy high borough neighborhoods. You don't, they're not to be seen and it maximizes the activity in that place. I believe Derek Chauvin should be in jail. I do, but we would have so fewer incidents like that if Black people had adequate housing, adequate transportation, adequate pay.

I'll just throw this in there. I think we have an opportunity because of COVID. Ironically, this is forcing us to look at our budgets in the United States, states and cities have to now prioritize. In that prioritization, they really do have to find ways to increase jobs, to increase economic activity. Investments in police don't do that. We have leverage now, not only from the movement but from the economic conditions of cities and so now's the time to really drive this home.

If you really want to build up communities, you've got to get rid of the impediments to that group and housing discrimination is there, job discrimination is there, but also police are there. This is a complicated issue. I want to say, when I talk about education, it's really to say, hey, here's the actual number. What I always say, there's nothing wrong with Black people that ending racism can't solve.

That we're not the ones that needed **[unintelligible 00:45:23]** and in so many ways, Black people have known about the police problem since slavery. Now we're seeing power shifts in ways that are elevating the issue where we're having a political movement around it. I say this, **[inaudible 00:45:49]** I really do believe that. I'm

AFRICA

NXT

close to 50 years old. I've never seen the kind of enthusiasm, commitment, organization. Essentially, I was born right after the civil rights movement.

There's nothing like this. I have to be encouraged in a lot of ways. I mean, this has taken on a global level of significance. I'm encouraged at this point so keep pushing wherever you are, keep pushing because the winds are at our back at this point, and we've got to keep moving because-- and nothing has shifted. Nothing in the United States or elsewhere has shifted without protests.

This is another important thing, I hate when people disconnect social justice from economic justice. There's nothing that like the saying that a person doesn't belong in an economy like a police officer killing a person right dead in broadband light. Nothing is said that they don't belong in economy. Police are protecting and serving supposedly a community, it's just that Black people aren't considered members of the community but they're considered threats.

So so much of this is about our second-class citizenship and the status and police represents that. If we want to be full members of society, full citizens, you need to get rid of those things that signify and say that you're not a citizen. That's a long-winded answer to your question, but we got momentum. Things are good, things are happening and I'm encouraged by it all.

Ngozi: Cool. I think you got us on track to talking about moving beyond the moment, going from a moment, how you said protest is necessary to the movement and then like, okay, now what's the action? What's the policy piece? What's going to happen? I think there are many a ways to approach it. I think sometimes people get stuck in there's only one way. Like we're going to strictly focus on doing this particular thing or changing this policy when there's so much that needs to happen.

There's so many tools we have, and there's so many roles as Black people that we can play. That kind of gets to the community action piece and one of the reasons why we're gathering here. What can we all be doing right now when this momentum is here? I want to go to Nomsa to kind of talk about, as we close out and talk about what's next and calls to action, because you're taking something that seems like maybe trivial or small and saying like, "I want people walking.

#FunkItImWalking, we're going to get in the streets and walk." That's so powerful. The idea of people saying, "I want to be in control of my own life. We control the streets, not you the police, and will be out here walking." That's something so simple but it is at the same time revolutionary. Can you talk about that as one of the solutions and one of the things that you're doing in this moment, and then we'll have everybody kind of talk about like calls to action and some solutions?

Nomsa: Thanks, Ngozi. Okay. I want to say, Monifa, what you said there, it took me back and I started to think. In America, you've been saying defund the police, defund the police. For me in my context, I've been struggling to make the connection, because my experience with the police, I'm still in the paradigm where it's like what's a world without police? [laughs]

AFRICA

NXT

As Andre was speaking, I was thinking about #FunkItImwalking and #FunkItImwalking is really that. At the moment in South Africa, #FunkItImwalking is focused in Soweto. Soweto is a Black township, poverty, inequality, it's basically built as a dormitory for Johannesburg. That's where all the Black people go to sleep because the White people didn't want the Black people around them, but they still needed the Black people as a patrol to run the engine of Johannesburg.

That's how it was built in. So it's got all the issues, poverty, crime, drug abuse, and these are some of the things and the reasons why we can't walk. Even Soweto the way that it's built. It's not built for pedestrians. It's not built for you to enjoy walking. The actual way that it's built, it's kind of like a built environment that must belittle you and make you feel the experience is violence of walking.

#FunkItImwalking is really about how do we create spaces or celebrate spaces and support things that the government has done that are of benefit to Black people. The government over the last 25 years has built theatres with bicycle lanes, put parks in Soweto. I'm taking that and I'm using that as an advantage to get people walking more, and my thinking around is more people that are walking.

The more people that are walking in the streets, the safer it is. By walking out of leisure, not walking out of necessity because people do walk out of necessity, but we want people to walk out of leisure, it's an option to walk. Everything and I liked what you said, Andrea, about property prices. For me, if I can get Soweto to be a place where a woman can walk any time of day in any condition, I've now changed the quality of life in Soweto which will have a positive impact on property prices.

I do see property prices as a really important source of equity for Black people in South Africa because most of the property is owned by Black people. It's not a fight that we have to have where we are taking land, even though that fight must still happen, we still want the land, they want the land. [laughs] #FunkItImwalking is really about that and it's about keeping the currency in Soweto because Soweto being this dormitory where people would go to sleep.

We make money in Johannesburg and then we take the money and we go and spend it in the city, so it's just multiplying in the city so people are benefiting outside Soweto. A walking Rand is a local rand and that's about getting people to spend more money locally. #FunkItImwalking even though it's based on making people walk, I really do see it as a way in which I can drastically change the experience of Black people and create access to opportunity for the community that I live in.

Ngozi: Thank you. Yemi, we will go to you to kind of talk about what are some things-- I mean, here there's so many issues that you approach and you're constantly trying to open these conversations with government and policymakers and kind of create an environment that allows for dialogue but also allows for action. What are some things, if you were to say a call to action or a particular project or anything that you're kind of working on that can resonate with anybody anywhere that they can maybe put into practice?

AFRICA

NXT

Can you kind of share some of your work that you're doing that might relate to that?

Yemi: I think the easiest one that could translate is a campaign called Office of the Citizen that I mentioned earlier. Really at the heart of that is again, the two bits of what I spoke about one educating. Andre talked about the fact that Black people know about policing. You might know the police, people are bad and brutal but I mean the context there or the history there, maybe not as much.

Well, that's why, what I find for me is a bit of the nuance and really understanding what that is and which ties to what Monifa is saying around what the police do, why do we need them and Nomsa's point around a world that she can't imagine without police. I definitely can't imagine life without police. I grew up on a university campus in Nigeria. We had police, but we never saw them. I mean, they were just kind of there.

To be honest, as I'm talking, I'm trying to remember where they would be, but they weren't in your face because again it was a university campus. There was no need for a system to keep people contained or keep people within certain confines. Office of the Citizen really focuses on within Nigeria's context. I think even in the US at this point really if one looks at, for example, the upcoming elections, even if all of this in addition to the policy and all the bits that we're trying to do, what do the elections represent?

Everything from getting people out to get registered to vote, getting people out to actually vote on election day, and what that means in terms of choices and what that choice as a vote is actually, what does that say? One of my very good friends jokes around **[inaudible 00:55:47]** past the Western side at the end of an electoral content and about our dictators and our corrupt leaders and our crazy heads of state.

Now, we are offering our funders insights from their grantees on the continent about how to deal with a crazy head of state. We can offer you a world of experience on when you have a head of state that's lost his marbles. The dynamic is really very interesting, but the elections are really extremely important in my view. Maybe those two things I'd say.

Office of The Citizen, it really focuses on citizens owning their voice and realizing that anybody who's in an elected position or who's an appointed position in government is there to serve and there's a duty to hold them accountable. Our history makes that particularly challenging. As I said, 20 years of democracy, not really understanding this whole concept of government of the people by the people for the people.

Also having two other elements that are added to us in this context, religion, and culture. I am Yoruba by ethnicity and for any of Nigeria's major ethnic groups, respect for elders is key. If you have political leaders who are old enough to be your dads and old enough to be your uncle, mode of engagement, and asking them about money they spent or stole, or how they're using their power gets a bit difficult to have those conversations because of those cultural dynamics.

AFRICA

NXT

Respect, I've gotten quite a few names because I really don't care. They have religion where we've outsourced responsibility for the country that we have to a God who will fix it. We're very religious, very different from faith, but extremely religious. We pray a lot Muslims and Christians and pray to a God that will solve problems, who will make things okay.

The psyche of that, for us as a big thing in terms of unpacking and letting citizens on their voice and realize that they're in a position of power to demand that government is accountable. We've seen sort of the light bulb moments when citizens realize that, "Oh, I can call my legislator. That's quite novel." I mean, for example, EIA has built the only website now that makes it easy to find who represents you in our equivalence of Congress, National Assembly based on numbers on your voters' card.

For those of you in the US, that's pretty basic, for us here, it's quite novel to be able to pick up the phone and call your senator and have a conversation without having your senator scream at you, asking you, "Who gave you my number? Why are you calling me? What do you want?" Like, "Calm down, dude, relax. It's not that serious."

Office of the Citizen is one bit and then and then election is the other bit. I guess that's also a parallel for the US and really getting people to participate in that process. We had elections last year. I think we had 30 something percent voter turnout which is ridiculous, but it's an opportunity that yes, candidates might not necessarily be the ideal, but it's also an opportunity to use your voice against.

Yes, **[unintelligible 00:59:12]** to vote for who you want, but it's also sometimes just as important to vote against who you don't want to make that position.

Ngozi: Monifa, we'll go to you to kind of like quickly share, I know you have to hop off. In terms of calls to action because there's a lot that movement for black lives is working on, what in terms of calls to action or what can we be doing in this moment? Something that is very easy for the community to begin to adopt?

Monifa: Sorry. Okay. Thanks. I think that we need to flank each other's movements

because our targets are different. The infrastructure is still not there for people internationally to influence the decision-makers in their local areas, but we can flank you, and you can flank us. Maybe what we can do as our next conversation is figure out how do we shore up the letters and the messages that Yemi is talking about that people are sending to their representatives saying we echo this and we support and we flank as part of this global movement for black lives. Then also the other way around, and then continue to have these conversations because it's so complicated when you think about the hun--

[sound cut]

- and dismantle that. Just like Andre said, there's nothing wrong with black people that the white supremacy can't solve. As long as we have that same general goal in mind, I think we can actually move faster and move more powerful. A call to action

AFRICA

NXT

for us and for BL is to flank, to uplift. I'm going to share two links in the chat room, both the movement for Black Lives website, where you can sign up, you can get the texts that we get, and amplify stuff on social media or share with your communities, also amplifying the Breathe Act, we should maybe discuss offline mainly get letters of support. We can send them letters of support and we can get letters of support.

One of the reasons why I have to jump off is because we have a meeting with the senator to talk about the bill because now people like, "On the police? Oh, y'all are serious. Oh, y'all not leaving the streets. Oh, the celebrity supports you. Oh, it's 150 organizations." So let's talk, but to show that there's international global support is helpful too. Definitely, sign up for our emails is a huge support, and then making sure that we follow up and stay in touch. I also want to point out that I know that you all around the globe experience this all the time. We've had a huge peak in attacks on activists and protesters.

In fact, last night right here in New York, an SUV just ran into people marching on 42nd Street. Then a few nights ago on Seattle where BLM protesters shut down a highway, a car got on the exit ramp and ran them over and actually killed one of the activists. I just want to send just a lot of love, and light, and solidarity to everyone globally that's doing this work. When we say we're putting our bodies on the line, that is literal. We are literally putting our bodies on the line so that in the next 50 years, I'm also almost approaching 50, our children won't have to witness a George Floyd or be a George Floyd.

That's what's happening in the face of COVID. We're strong because we see all of that activism out of the continent, we study the history of South Africa. I can't tell you how many times we've had deep political education sessions within our movement, looking and dissecting that movement in South Africa, and figuring out the interventions that will work or just inspire a new version of it, so this is really great. Call to action is really for us to be in the community, but if you can uplift our bill and our campaigns that's good as well.

Ngozi: Thank you for that. I'm looking at some of the questions we have and I think, for the most part, they have been answered. If anyone has any other questions, I'm looking really quickly, please drop them in the comments right now. Otherwise, I think we might be good to go. Thank you so much, y'all. We went a bit over time, but it was great. I definitely appreciate this conversation. We're going to transcribe this talk, that way we can share it more widely with more people and keep the conversation going. I thank you all for joining us.

Andre, Monifa, Yemi, Nomsa, thank you so much for joining us and setting the tone for the second part of our afternoon where we'll be talking with some people in roundtables and using some of what you've all shared as inspiration for what we're going to discuss.

Thank you so much for joining us, and we'll be moving on to the next part of the program. Thank you.

AFRICA



Andre: Bye-bye, take care.

Yemi: Thank you very much. Thanks for having us.

Nomsa: Thank you, Ngozi.

Yemi: Bye, Andre, bye Nomsa. Thank you.

Andre: Bye-bye, Yemi, Nomsa.

Ngozi: Awesome. Everyone who is still on, please hang on, do not go anywhere. We are going to go into our community round tables for those that who are still with us. This part is when we really begin to do some of the work and take some of the insights and the strategies that were just provided for us, and we break them down into smaller groups, so that's what we'll be doing next.

[music]

Everybody has their action steps, so I'm just going to go in alphabetical order and ask people to share. We will start with black liberation collective. Nick, if you can share what were some of your learnings, and then the five action steps you settled on?

Nick: We had an awesome discussion. There was five of us. We talked about ways in which we could reimagine safety, not just thinking about police and prisons, but just thinking about what does safety looks like for our communities actually. There are points that were made about like we wanted to see demilitarization of police departments, transparency to the community, we talked about what justice actually looks like for us. We talked about how land was stolen. There's many things that could be talked about in relation to how black people have been impacted. We talked about also what solidarity looks like globally, how we can show up for each other.

There was somebody from Africa next that talked about how land was stolen. We also brought the point about how Israel has stolen land from Palestinian people, a lot of which are black people, and they're experiencing police violence as well over there, so how do we all show up for each other around the globe? We also talked about how access to housing, food, and healthcare are the leading causes of violence in our communities. Not the lack of police, it's the lack of those things. We also talked about how we can treat each other better as people in regard to harm.

Our action steps, we came up with six of them, actually. The first one was thinking about how we could educate our communities about alternatives to police. When thinking about divesting from police and police abolition, we want to think about what are ways that we can engage with our communities about what safety looks like outside of police because our communities have internalized, me personally, I've internalized that it's impossible to live in a world where we're safe without the presence of police. We found out that that's not true, so how do we educate or engage with our community?

AFRICA

NXT

Other action step was talking about how we can demand that layers are put in place to prevent the use of force so that we're not constantly coming back to this same conversation about what we do about the police officer that killed this black person this time. We're not trying to go down this long road to an eventual world where black folks are no longer killed, and that road consists of black blood and black bodies. We want to figure out what are ways that we can prevent these things from happening.

We also talked about demanding transparency, and the community review board, that's something that's actually real. It's something that has been done in places all around the world where people from the community actually get to lead the investigations on police misconduct, and they actually have the power to fire a police chief and indict an officer. That's the shifting of power from the hands of decision-makers and lawmakers back into the hands of where the power belongs, which is with the people. The another thing we talked about, advocating for demilitarization of police departments.

They don't need teargas canisters, they don't need rubber bullets, they don't need these batons, they don't need tanks, they don't need ATVs, they don't need all these things. These are all things that we are spending money on as tax-paying people, spending money on that does not go into the actual things that we need that actually keep us safe and that actually cares for our well being. Lastly, we talked about demanding to divest from police and invest into the social conditions that cause us to believe that we need police. That's back to the housing, the food, the healthcare, the education, all these things. The lack of these things are the reason for crime.

I'm wearing a hat right now that says FTP. A lot of people read that maybe as 'fuck the police' or I think that me personally, I have a double meaning of it. This is eff the police, which is like get rid of the police, yes, as well as feed the people because I believe that once that happens, once we actually take funds from the police departments that we could also use those funds to invest into the people and their well being. Those were our five action steps. I really appreciated the conversation and thank you for having me today.

Ngozi: Thank you so much. We will go next to Shabaka from Cross Rhodes, Trinidad and Tobago.

Shabaka: We really problematize white supremacy in our discussion and in that respect, we acknowledged our Africaness on both sides of the Atlantic. Not just blackness, which is a political kind of social distinction which can include anyone who is outside of the food or privileged group in a society and sometimes in history. Even white people have suffered from blackness in the case of the Jews in World War II as an extreme example, and so we talked both in perspective of blacks and from the perspective of black African people on different sides of the Atlantic. We found the following issues. First, we thought it was important to collect data, to analyze that data, and to make that data known.

We thought it was really important, particularly in countries that have black majority populations like Nigeria and Trinidad, which is where most of our group came from

AFRICA

NXT

that we bring these issues to the fore. After we do the research, we collect the data, and we analyze the data, and then we bring this information to the fore because there's a tendency to believe that white supremacy doesn't operate in places where the majority is black or Africa, in particular, and so we thought that was very important. The second thing, of course, demilitarizing the police and we had an opportunity to talk about how that militarized force operates both in the Caribbean on the continent of Africa.

We were able to point out that in a country like ours, it's most certainly isle of the Caribbean, and Trinidad is a big one, for example, which has such a limited budget. Our police force looks exactly like the police force in New York, or Chicago, or any of these cities in the United States of America. They are as armed and as ready for war as any of those departments, so we acknowledge that. Nigeria, a bit different, but still similarities. We talked about changing police culture and we wanted to put a specific emphasis on neutralizing white supremacy in that context, and, of course, we have to then look at the wider society because post-colonial societies definitely have what Frantz Fanon called germs of rot.

What Ngugi wa Thiong'o talks about when he talks about empires of the mind. These germs of rot that lived in our minds and the way we perceive things with a white over brown over black, and that has a huge part to play in the way we observed in our group that police treat certain people in our societies differently to the way they treat others. We gave an example of Grenada over the last few weeks, and I advise everybody to go and find out what happened in Grenada that cause recent protesting in that little Caribbean Island and you'll see what I'm talking about. We talked about the criteria to become a police officer.

We felt that we needed to invest some time in developing aspects of the police education program that we thought were important for the community, and that's something that we would have to develop about investing in alternatives, typically called defunding police.

I think that was a huge part of our conversation, reallocating money that would go into the police forces in arming and gearing the police up into other aspects of other things that could create opportunities and development in our communities. Last but not least, we focused on the question of oversight institutions. In Nigeria, and on the continent of Africa, and in Caribbean, we find that the institutions that are responsible for overseeing police conduct tend to be very, very weak, under-resourced, under-funded, and without the necessary legislation. **[inaudible 01:16:52]**

Ngozi: I think Shabaka is having internet issues.

Shabaka: The work that they're supposed to do and of course I want to take on board **[inaudible 01:17:29]**

Ngozi: I think we completely lost him. Okay. All right, so Fanaka, I think we'll see if Shabaka comes back on, but for now, Funeka, we'll go to you.

AFRICA

NXT

Funeka: We spoke about the purpose of police. Like many other people have mentioned how it's hard to imagine a world without police and it's important to look at, historically, what they were created for in terms of slavery or rather Jim Crow era, the States, as well as the colonialism in the African continent. Also, we spoke a little bit about how the way in which American culture is exported all over the world through media, popular culture that along with that, we need to be critical also of the ideas of how black people are viewed are also exported all over the world in the same vein as popular culture is exported to the rest of the world.

We're just looking at how black people are depicted, how black people are treated, and how the violence that exists in the States and in terms of relations with black people is no way in a very sinister way as part of the export to other areas of world, but I won't go into that. We also spoke about the fact that in the majority-black country like ours, South Africa, and Nigeria, and so forth, the difficulties of speaking about anti-blackness and race explicitly. I know in South Africa, it's something that's not that people tiptoe around and don't actually want to name as such.

We'd rather speak about class, we'd rather speak about poverty, poor areas, rural areas, township areas, all these areas are areas that are inhabited by black people. The areas where police are deployed mostly are areas with black people. We also spoke about the ideology, especially in South Africa, of reconciliation. Not just in South Africa, but in general when it comes to black people and wrongs or the violence that they've experienced, whether it's slavery, colonialism, apartheid, this idea of reconciliation, and moving on. In South Africa, we can see in terms of the continued inequalities that part of that moving on means leaving the economy, leaving wealth in the hands of white people as it is right now.

This is why we have inequality. This is why we have poor black communities. It's directly as a result of having so-called political transition without addressing the economic issues such as land and wealth that still is in minority, which is white people's hands.

We also spoke about the impunity that police have in Nigeria, Swaziland. We spoke about how the system, of course, is broken as a whole, and how the ultimate goal is to abolish police, prison systems, all these punitive measures basically, and not just policing, looking at, for instance, the school to prison pipeline, and just how all these systems are very violent about black lives, and the existence is not to serve, and not to protect and create safe environments for black people. We also spoke about how a lot of the time police are there to protect elites.

Even in majority African countries like ours, the police are black like us, but in most cases they protect elites, whether it's political elites, whether it's white elites, but, in general, they are antagonist towards poor people. There is definitely intersection between race and class, but that one should not be valued over the other, there should still be important discussions on race in the continent and especially in countries such as South Africa. Some of the action steps we spoke about are awareness-raising in communities, as well as acknowledgment of race and privilege, white allies in our communities. We spoke about accountability.

AFRICA

NXT

A lot of communities, especially poor communities don't have the opportunity to hold police accountable, so having some form of community monitoring system ensures that people who have more will be able to get justice whenever they are violated by police. Accountability is one of the important things that we noted and said that in order to have that, we need to have systems, legal reform, as well as community-based systems which monitor police as well as protect the rights of the communities, and also, a way in which to redress on some of the injustices that they faced.

Also, we spoke a bit on redirecting friends. Basically, during the lockdown period, about five billion rands was used, I'm not sure what the equivalent in other currencies is, but it was used in the deployment of police. A lot of those funds could be used for healthcare system, for the education system. There's many other issues that affect black communities and these funds can definitely be diverted towards that. It's not been effective having this many police or this much police presence. In general, it's violence. Then also, one of the things we were discussing was addressing the role of the media, rather that a lot of this is also an ideological battle.

For instance, a lot of the stuff we spoke about Hollywood and the influence of Hollywood, and the depictions of black people in terms of that industry, but also media. For instance, in South Africa, before the Marikana massacre was known as the Marikana massacre, there was a journalist who did a study on how this was documented in mainstream media. One of the things that was found was a lot of people were in a disagreement that it was a massacre to begin with. Media was siding with police, with land men mine or siding and simply depicting the miners as antagonistic in nature.

It took quite some time before media started seeing that it was a massacre. Media is quite important, so we were thinking of developing a media guideline, both in terms of across the globe in the depictions of the likes of George Floyd, of Trayvon Martin, black people in general and how they are depicted in media and how these cases become reported is quite important. A guideline of sorts in order to guide how these incidents are reported.

Another important point that we raised, which was not necessarily an action step, but just to look at the intersectionality of all these issues, especially in terms of Black Lives Movement, we're looking at also mentioning the fact that it's important to raise issues of black trans lives which have been affected, black queer lives, and black woman. In South Africa in particular, looking at other African nationals, and migrants, and refugees, and how they're treated in the country. As I stated previously, a lot of this anti-blackness is internalized and manifests in quite many ways. Femicide, xenophobia, Afrophobia.

As an overarching thing, it's a goal to ensure that all these steps take into account where we make sure we acknowledge all these different positionalities. Thank you.

Ngozi: Thank you so much. We will go next to international alerts. I don't know if Kenneth is still on.

AFRICA

NXT

Kenneth: Yes, Kenneth I'm still on.

Ngozi: Okay, great. Hi, Kenneth.

Kenneth: Hi. Our conversation today go across the Atlantic much because we have Nigerians and South Africans in the room. Beyond the white South Africans versus the black South Africans scenario with colonization, apartheid, we had similarities across the board as far as societies were concerned. Now, there are colonialists who use police for actually regiment to oppress blacks, but with the removal of colonialism, we've still got that oppression that's happening by the haves and have nots. Now you have an inequality gap where the have nots are now the ones who are being oppressed by the haves using the police as a tool.

We look at scenarios of gender-based violence, femicide, and LGBTQ in most countries, especially through COVID, where for a period, we had fatalities from police violence, the number of fatalities being more than the number of fatalities from COVID itself. Then there is that question whether the police exists in the first place, whether it hasn't run its full costs and needs to cease to exist. Perhaps it's the time for non-state actors to come into that space and begin to provide policing solutions. We looked at such things as educating the public.

There is a need for the general population to understand first what their rights are, and then what the law provides for the police to operate within societies, so we needed to know where **[unintelligible 01:29:12]** are. Again, you have such repressive laws that provide for police to arrest people without a warrant, for example, in Nigeria, and then to also detain you if they so wish. There's a need for the public to know where their rights start and stop, and also the limits to which the police can treat them. We looked at what has worked, what we are not doing right, and what needs to be repeated in other places. Then we look at policy.

If at all the police needs to be there for a short to mid-term before it becomes obvious that we need to phase them out, what are the policy changes that are needed to ensure that the police truly becomes a service that meets the needs of the people. These are concerns for the kinds of people who get recruited into the police, so the recruitment policy for the police needs to change. We need to begin to recruit people with better education, with better enlightenment to join the police. Continuing to recruit people only because they do not have jobs and the police becomes a last resort only creates a system where thugs and now armed by the state and can be used. Then the duration.

You find people who are trained for six months, which is indeed a very short time if you're going to consider gender mainstreaming, context-sensitivity, crowd control **[inaudible 01:30:59]** policing six months is usually a very limited period to train anyone to now be armed with a gun and live ammunition to go into the community. Then again, we can add the welfare of police. They're humans as well. The state needs to begin to treat them as humans. If the police are dehumanized, they would in turn want to dehumanize the people because everyone is in search for power. Then we need to create systems, such stations for police public relations.

AFRICA

NXT

People need to be able to air their grievances. There are instances where the party system where people can report police atrocities and seek redress is not working in South Africa neither in Nigeria. There needs to be that platform where people can have deliberate conversations with the police, and then perhaps a new modus operandi can be agreed on how the police needs to work, how the people will then be able to perceive the police because again, sometimes how people perceive the police now becomes a means for the police to oppress them.

We also look at how we can monitor the police. This might sound really discord, how can we surveil the surveillor, but this is basically about how we can put some gaps, checks and balances to be able to tell the police when they have stepped beyond the leanings of what the law provides them to provide citizens with service. There was a mention about Canada's monitor and evaluation system for policing that works, which could be a good case practice that can be reputed in other cases, but then if we're going to be holding the police accountable, this also means that, one, we need to bring in digital systems into monitoring police.

Again, this provides room for many people to connect to situations and also for validation. Then perhaps we also need to begin to look at care review mechanism where policing in one country was working in another country, or what's not working and provide a valid and honest feedback where the police in a country and the people can then look at that feedback, and then looking back to the police public relations to say, "Okay, we are having this feedback for social cohesion, where are the gaps that the police need to fill, what are the gaps that the people need to fill," and then find ways where new relationship can be seamless and indeed it can be truly be community policing. Thank you.

Ngozi: Thank you, Kenneth. Then we have Social Justice Bermuda. Was it Kristin? Oh.

Kristin: Yes, it's Kristen that's here.

Ngozi: Okay.

Kristin: Hi. You heard it was a great conversation and like everyone else, I just echoed how rich the dialogue was and how interesting it was to really compare and contrast our regions that are completely different sizes, have different histories, have different economy structures, all of that, but a lot of the issues are the same. From Bermuda's perspective, we're still a British colony, so a huge part of what we're pushing for is self-determination and independence as well, and that's along this whole conversation of abolishing these oppressive systems because we are still paying to have a governor here, so things like that.

So yes, a lot of what everyone else talked about, we talked about, so I'll probably be pretty quick in terms of just saying how we got to where we are, our main five action place were, but they were a lot around looking at what other organizations are doing whether in the United States, around the world, seeing what they're doing and how we can localize it. That's been really huge for us in Bermuda because we don't have

AFRICA

NXT

the situations of extreme police violence that are occurring in other parts of the world, so when we wanted to create a local Black Lives Matter chapter, that was the pushback that we got or the feedback that we got.

That's something that we would say to every organization and that's what we started with. That's the first action item is really extrapolating the black lives matter [inaudible 01:35:58] initiatives to localize it in other regions. I think that that's really key, especially around the conversation about defunding the police, because the 8 to Abolition website 8toabolition.com, they've got those eight steps for how they want to move America to a place without police and without prisons.

The conversation about divesting from police and investing in community care, healthcare, schools, housing, that's a key part of it, and so I think when we say defund the police without that other space, without explaining that other part of it, I think that's where we lose people. Really looking at the entire platform and seeing, okay, this fits my region, this one doesn't necessarily make as much sense, this one, ec cetera so that then when we are able to speak to black lives matter, we can do it from a local perspective.

For example, the data that Monifa said in the panel, I think she dropped it in the chat where she was saying that \$6 billion is spent on the NYPD budget, which is greater than they spend on healthcare, housing, and education combined. What is that statistic for our region? What is that data in our space so that we can speak intelligently to it from a local regional perspective? That was the first thing, and in that same space, the next action would be really sharing this information widely so we start to shift the language around re-imagining safety.

We talked about the shift in our language around the pandemic, how these were the terms that were widely used in the medical community are now widely used in the general community because of the pandemic and we need to do the same thing for abolition to start talking about it and normalizing the language and bringing people along with us in that conversation. We're putting it in our art.

We had a number of artists in the group photographer, radio host, so using it as part of our conversations, as part of our social media so that we're able to really educate people as we bring them along, and as I said, normalize the language so that when, hopefully, in another bit of time when someone says defund the police, people know what that means. We're not talking about the police disappearing tomorrow. We're talking about a series of steps that are divestment, and investment, and all of these things that make a world without police possible, that make it unnecessary to have the current policing system that we have because we've removed all of the systems that are in place that create crime.

That was our other action around shifting language, and then in a shorter-term or in terms of immediate actions, it was a great suggestion, which is also a part of the 8 to Abolition platform is around reviewing, calling for a review of penal laws. Whether that's your organization doing it yourself or you with as part of a community group or whatever are really looking at how people are criminalized and looking at all of the

AFRICA

NXT

laws. In Bermuda, we're in the middle of a reform around marijuana, and that's a really important new drug laws that criminalize people instead of looking at it as a public health issue, especially if it's not an addictive issue.

If it's just leisurely used and they're being criminalized, that's a huge part of why people are locked up in Bermuda. Looking at laws like that that are criminalizing activity that doesn't need to, that could be a fine, or could be not an arrest or something that's on someone's record that they then have forever. Really calling for a review of these laws because they disproportionately impact black people. We're over-policed, and so these laws that criminalize very minor activities are going to disproportionately negatively impact black people.

That could be a project that you lobby for, that needs to be done by the legal fraternity of your region, or it's something that maybe your community group undertakes that you're going to go through the laws of your land and start to educate people about what needs to be changed. That was the next action item is around that education, and really, doing it doesn't have to be formal heavy courses, but taking on the role of educating people about the law. How laws are made, how they can advocate for themselves, and just teaching them about how politics work **[inaudible 01:40:58]** at every level of government are elected, and then that reinforces why voting matters as well.

Then in terms of the other part of teaching people about the law, we looked at really teaching people about the history and the impact that black people have had globally as a way to give us, as black people, a wider knowledge of itself, but also for the wider world to start to, I guess, value our lives more and to value the impact that black people have brought to the world. It's a sad thing that we even have to have this conversation about black history or teaching people. That's one of the things around having to yell out and convince people that our lives matter that feels really strange to me, but it's necessary, and maybe history is a part of it.

I know in Bermuda, we were a big part of the Black Power Movement in the Caribbean. America had the Black Panthers, we had The Black Beret Cadre, we hosted the first international Black Power Congress, and so many Bermudians have no idea about it at all. Not understanding those moments of pride as black people, those moments of contribution also lens to black people not valuing black lives. They think that's a part of the conversation about how the education system also helps to prop up these systems of racism by not letting our young people and us know about the magic that we are, the power and strength that we are.

Really integrating that for us maybe on a more informal basis. We're doing community conversations maybe once about history, but then really lobbying for those changes to the curriculum to be made so that, on the longer term, all people of your country in your region understand more about the history of the place and the impact of black people. Those were our five.

Ngazi: Thank you so much. This was really great. I think what our hopes for in organizing this feel fulfilled, at least to me. The idea was that we were witnessing, I'm

AFRICA

NXT

currently here in the US in New York City to be specific, and just witnessing everything that was happening here and then talking to people back home in Nigeria, friends in South Africa, and hearing these stories. Kristin, you mentioned COVID, and I think Kenneth also mentioned the impact of that and hearing the stories people are literally being killed in the streets because they are contracting COVID. You're saying they're supposed to be protected, but the police are not serving as protectors, they're actually killing people during a pandemic.

You're having more people across the African countries dying from police violence during a pandemic than the actual pandemic. Just hearing all these stories and just coming to the realization that there's something that is happening around the world that's impacting us all, but yet there are different approaches and hearing what everybody's saying. Our situations are not identical, so we can't just carbon copy, cookie-cutter cut, put something like say, "Okay, this is working in Nigeria, let's do that in Bermuda."

Obviously, we have to adapt, but I think this is a good start having people listening and hearing other people's perspectives, hearing what's working in certain countries and what's not working in other countries and communities. I'm really happy we had this conversation. Just from the feedback we've gotten already, it seems that it has been impactful in terms of what happens next because it's important when we gather to then have like, okay, so what's the outcome? How are we moving the conversation forward? How are we taking real action? That was the idea behind coming up with these action steps.

What we are going to now do is we'll be reaching out to all the facilitators to get them consolidated down and given to us, and then we will create a document that we will be putting online and we'll be sharing widely. All the organizations that participated, we, of course, will be looking to you as a resource to help disseminate the information, but we've also been talking to a couple of different media platforms and people who are interested in knowing what were the outcomes of today's forum, and the different conversations that happened. So we'll be sharing that out and really is just to continue to keep this momentum going.

[music]

[01:46:13] [END OF AUDIO]