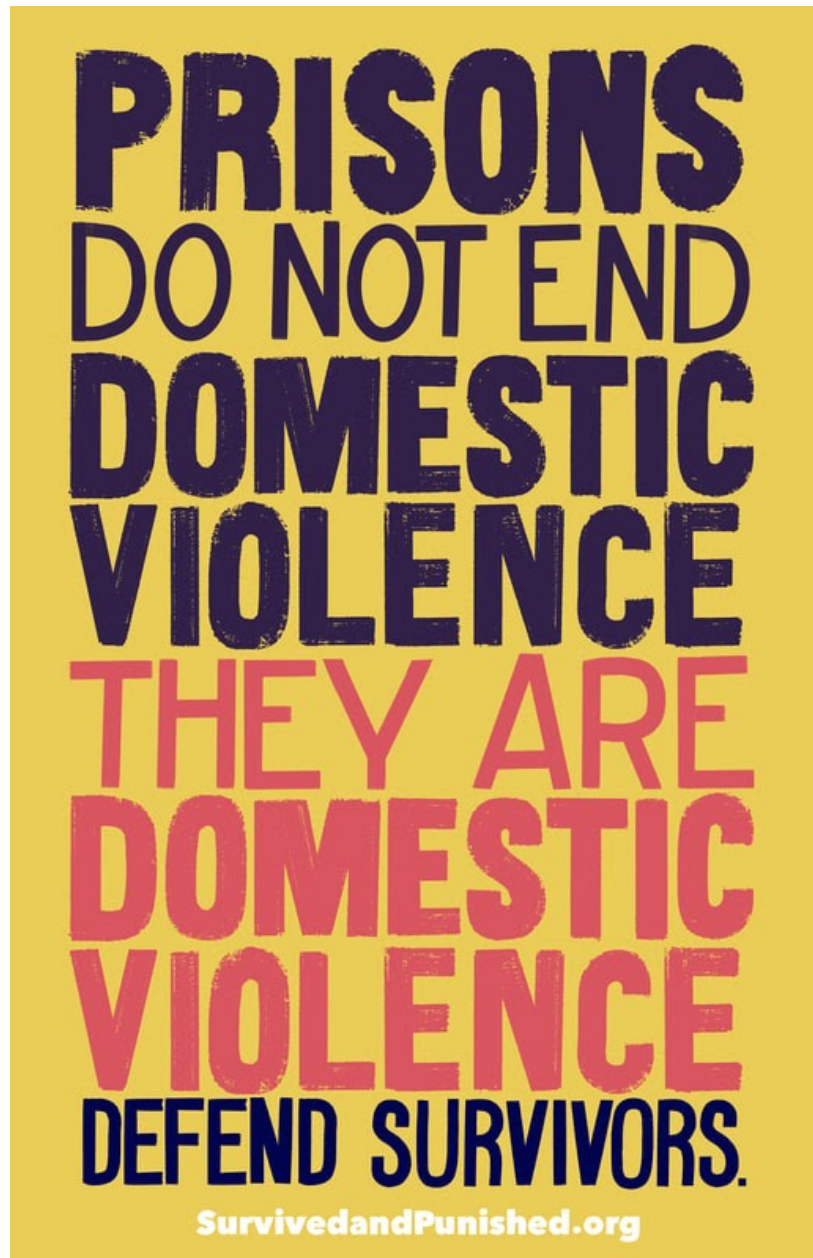


# **SURVIVED & PUNISHED**

**2020 ANNUAL REVIEW**



Art by Alyssa Johnson for Survived & Punished CA's [#DefundPrisonsDefendSurvivors Campaign](#)

2020 Survived & Punished National Steering Committee:  
Alisa Bierria, Mariame Kaba, Colby Lenz, Deana Lewis, Hyejin Shim, and Stacy Suh



Dear Survived & Punished Community,

As we close out 2020, a year marked by painful collective struggles and immense loss, Survived & Punished is deeply humbled by the outpouring of support we received in the past year. While it has been a challenging time for us, we write to you with gratitude and a renewed sense of hope. With your help, we are strengthening our commitment to decriminalize efforts to survive domestic and sexual violence, support and free criminalized survivors, and abolish all forms of gender violence, including policing, prisons, and deportations.

We found true solace in witnessing the resilience and ingenuity of our members and allies who, with a grave understanding that COVID has hit people inside prisons and jails hardest, adapted rapidly to the pandemic and initiated a wide variety of liberatory efforts under uncompromising conditions. Organizers and advocates in our network launched several mutual aid projects to support survivors behind bars, organized direct actions calling for mass release, practiced art-based organizing to uplift criminalized survivors and their stories, and hosted different political education and training events to help ground our movement in more rigorous analysis of how gender violence and our systems of punishment intersect.

In 2020, we welcomed home Liyah Birru, Tewkunzi Green, Patrice Smith, Tracy McCarter, Chrystul Kizer, Ky Peterson, and other criminalized survivors who have been granted releases this year with the backing of community organizing and advocacy. We're deeply grateful to the survivors, family members, community members and advocates and organizers who initiated and ran these powerful freedom campaigns and modeled for all of us what urgent and unrelenting solidarity for criminalized survivors can look like. We know from experience that these wins do not come nearly as often as they should -- but also that we are learning more about how to fight more effectively for our collective freedom from violence every day.

On April 28, 2020, our friend and comrade **Darlene "Lulu" Benson-Seay** was taken from us by COVID-19 and the violence and cruelty of prisons, 13 days before her 62nd birthday. Known to her loved ones as Lulu, she was a beloved poet, mother, grandmother, friend, artist, and comrade. As we mourn her passing, we recommit ourselves with love and rage to our collective vision of abolition.

In the following, we'll review some of the biggest Survived & Punished highlights from 2020 as we look to the future. We hope you are as heartened as we are by seeing what the grace our collective efforts have brought to life, even in times that were not gracious by any means. We thank you sincerely for your support.

As ever,  
Survived & Punished

## DARLENE TRIBUTE STATEMENT

\*This statement was first published in Issue No. 4 of Survived & Punished New York's [Free : Survivors Newsletter](#).

*Darlene, Ms. LuLu, as many affectionately called her, was and remains a revolutionary artist and poet who graced us with her words, drawings, and story. Many of us corresponded with Darlene and forged comradeships based on an appreciation of movement art, building trust, and responding to the needs of fellow friends + comrades inside Bedford Hills prison. The last centerfold of Free : Survivors, the center of Issue #3, was a drawing Darlene sent us. Vibrant pinks, reds, greens, and golds leap out from the line drawing of a Black power fist with red fingernails. The solidarity fist is set within an opened heart-lock chain, with banners reading, "Innocent," "Women," "Let Free." Underneath the drawing, the words, "We've been punished for a life time. But we steal survived." A silver key and golden peony-rose also frame the fist.*

*Darlene looked after many people, inside and out, with an intensity. She cared about what happened to people, she fought for herself and others daily.*

*I am still haunted by one of my last correspondences with Darlene. In it, she requests I share a public plea: "The corona virus has hit Bedford Hills Corrections. One of the unit of about 75 women are locked down being supposed quarantined with no sanitizer/anti-bacterial/just watered down bleach that is not real. We have already been exposed to it because everyone goes to the yard together/meds/chow and other places. Please contact people in higher places and let them know. The president, The governor, Albany and any one else you can think of. I have underlying serious illness so I can not afford to get this virus, it may kill me. Please tell people we need help..." S&P NY shared this alert and others from our comrades inside, organized call-in and email campaigns, fax jams, social media blasts, and continued our mutual aid and support work. We will continue to do so.*

*The Free : Survivors Editorial Collective wants to hold space for all that our S & P NY family is feeling about her being taken from us by state violence and by COVID-19. I am angry, still, months on. We are sad, collectively distraught at another death behind the walls. We are also honored to have been in community and struggle with Ms. LuLu, her memory blessing us with courage and art. I personally feel all of these things, and have moved through various stages of grief to greater or lesser extents. I wish I could have mourned Darlene in person with my comrades. We created virtual spaces to grieve, I felt held by those spaces, and yet being unable to touch and share physical space for this specific loss...there aren't adequate words for that lack. I have brought Darlene's memory with me every time I've been able to take the streets. I will continue to speak her name, and reflect on her beautiful works of art.*

*-Red*

## I. SURVIVOR DEFENSE CAMPAIGNS

As a collective founded by members of defense committees for criminalized survivors, we recognize the transformative potential of survivor defense committees for both survivors and their supporters. Participating in survivor defense committees have remained a mainstay for our organization's work, and many of the survivors who have been successfully freed through our campaigns are now active outside members of Survived & Punished, fighting to get others like them free. These priceless relationships we've built with criminalized survivors and their supporters help us persist in creating new strategies and frameworks to end interpersonal violence while also divesting from policing, mass incarceration and other forms of state violence and control. We thank you for your fearless solidarity with criminalized survivors.

### FREE TEWKUNZI

Cultivating Love & Solidarity  
for Criminalized Black  
Mothers

Tewkunzi Green was granted  
clemency by Governor Pritzker  
and freed after 13 years of  
incarceration for defending  
herself and her child. Love &  
Protect in Chicago worked with

Tewkunzi and her lawyer Rachel White-Domain for years to make community organizing integral to the efforts to free her and other incarcerated survivors in Illinois. Reunited with her family, Tewkunzi continues to advocate for the release of other survivors behind bars. Within days of coming home, she publicly urged prosecutor Kim Foxx to free Erika Ray, another criminalized domestic violence survivor in Illinois.



*Love & Protect will be launching a Coming Home fund for criminalized survivors like Twekunzi in Illinois to provide support with re-entry. To support, please donate here: [donorbox.org/embed/love-protect](https://donorbox.org/embed/love-protect)*





## STAND WITH TRACY

Moving toward Freedom for Black Survivors and Caregivers

The Stand with Tracy campaign, partnered with Survived & Punished New York, launched during the earlier months of the COVID crisis to free Tracy McCarter,

a Black survivor, mother, and nurse who was being held at Riker's Island for defending herself against domestic violence. Campaign members actively agitated for Tracy's freedom, drawing attention to how New York City DAs are inflicting willful violence on Black survivors and caregivers during a devastating pandemic. In late September 2020, Tracy was released from Riker's Island with electronic monitoring and will continue to fight for full freedom from surveillance, prosecution and punishment from her home.

*To support Tracy, you can continue to donate to her legal defense fund at [bit.ly/tracyfund](https://bit.ly/tracyfund).*

## FREE LIYAH

Showing up for Criminalized Survivors in the Immigration System

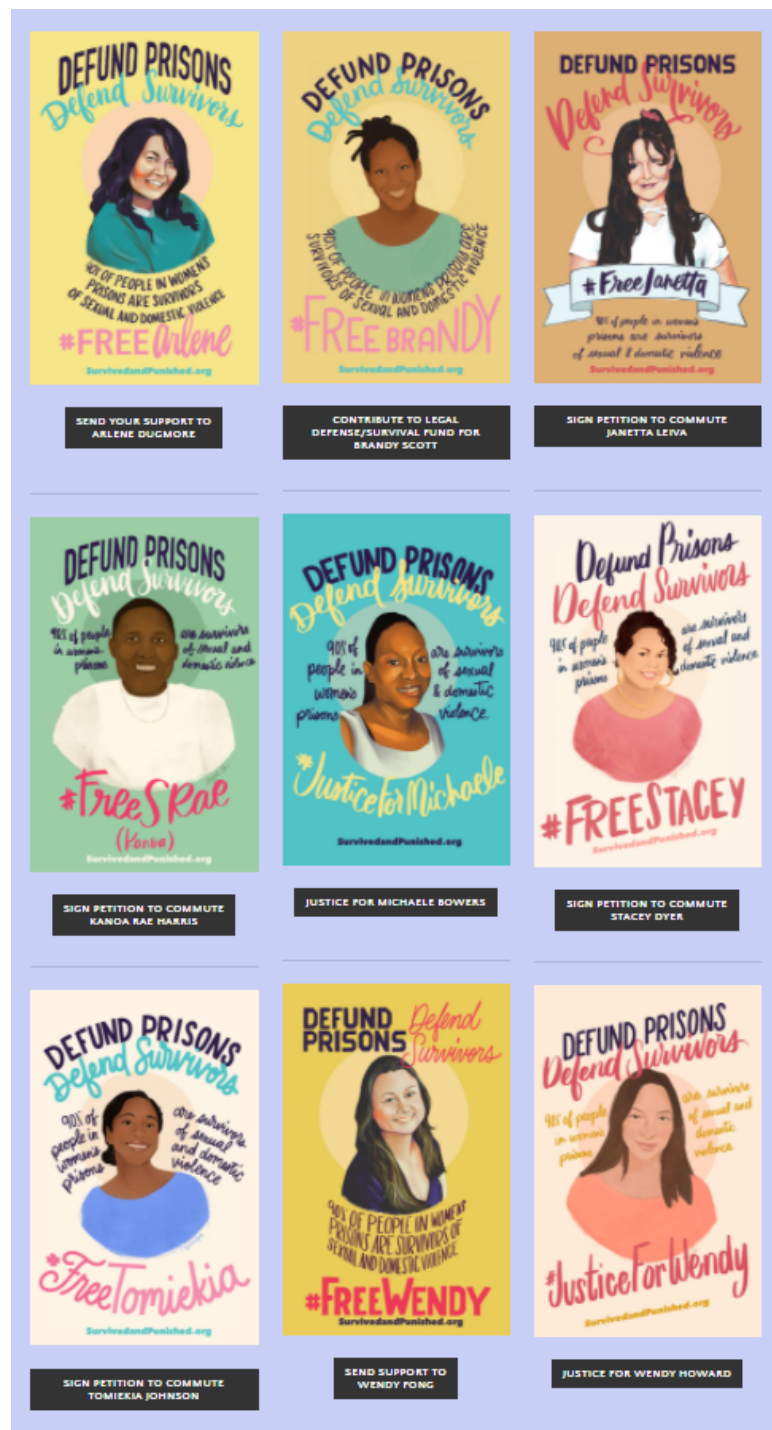
The Free Liyah Campaign, a collaborative effort by S&P California, Asian Law Caucus and California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance, worked tirelessly to mobilize thousands in support of Black immigrant survivor Liyah Birru's freedom. Campaign

members made rapid COVID adjustments to organize a car rally during her immigration hearing, hosted several online actions to build steady momentum, and fundraised her bond in full. With Liyah's leadership and your support, Liyah was freed from immigration detention on May 21, 2020. She has since joined our California chapter to continue advocating for the freedom of all criminalized survivors.



## DEFEND SURVIVORS DEFUND SURVIVORS CAMPAIGN

[DefendSurvivorsNow.Org](https://DefendSurvivorsNow.Org)



While stories about sexual violence are often wrongly leveraged to justify increasing criminalization, many survivors support the call to **abolish** the prison industrial complex *because* of its role in reinforcing and facilitating gender violence. Survivors are punished and disappeared into prisons for the various ways they try to survive violence in their homes and communities.

Survived & Punished California, with generous support from Forward Together, is proud to present

### #DefundPrisons

**DefendSurvivors** Campaign, a series of illustrated portraits of nine incarcerated survivors in California by artists Alyssa Johnson, Azul Quetzalli and Havannah Tran.

Each of these portrayed survivors continues to need growing public support in their fight for freedom. Along with each of their portraits are links to take action in support of their release. We hope these portraits and the accompanying website will serve as a resource to catalyze collective learning about how prisons are a central driver of domestic and sexual violence. To defend survivors, we *must* defund prisons.

Visit [DefendSurvivorsNow.Org](https://DefendSurvivorsNow.Org) to view the portraits, take action to support each criminalized survivor, and learn why survivors support the call to abolish prisons.

## II. MUTUAL AID AND TRANSFORMATIVE GIVING

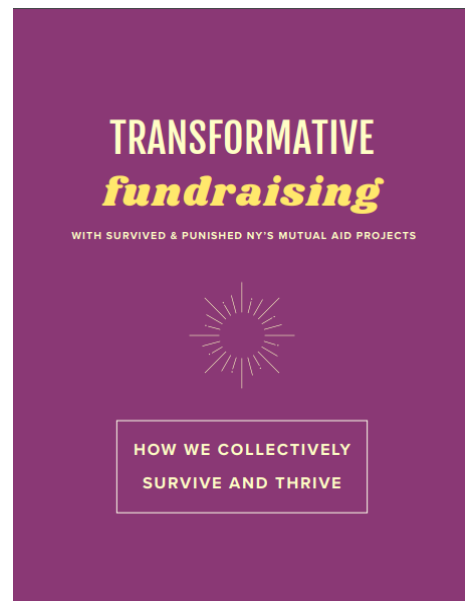
Survived & Punished members tirelessly worked to ramp up our mutual aid work this year amid the COVID crisis to support our incarcerated comrades whose lives are in peril. With transformative giving, we are able to deepen our connections with organizers inside and build richer networks of care. See below for highlights of our biggest mutual aid projects this year.

### **NEW TOOLKIT! TRANSFORMATIVE FUNDRAISING W/ SURVIVED & PUNISHED NEW YORK MUTUAL AID PROJECTS**

<https://www.survivedandpunishedny.org/mutual-aid/mutual-aid-toolkit/>

After successfully launching a giving circle to distribute monthly commissary funds for more than 60 incarcerated survivors in New York State and a rapid response project to disburse tens of thousands of fundraised dollars to incarcerated people across the U.S. during the first months of the COVID outbreak, S&P NY's Mutual Aid team published *Transformative Fundraising with Survived & Punished NY's Mutual Aid Projects: How We Collectively Survive and Thrive*. Although this guide was initially created as a resource for people interested in contributing to Survived & Punished NY's mutual aid commissary giving project, the toolkit also includes general recommendations, tips and steps for doing grassroots fundraising across different movements.

You can visit [the toolkit's webpage](#) for a PDF of the toolkit, samples of fundraising emails and graphics, a guide for sending money to incarcerated comrades through JPay, and a list of additional reading about mutual aid.



*To reach out with questions, feedback or joy-sharing regarding the toolkit, email the team at [SPNYmutualaid@gmail.com](mailto:SPNYmutualaid@gmail.com).*

*To donate to Survived & Punished NY's Giving Circle for incarcerated survivors in New York State, please visit [www.survivedandpunishedny.org/mutual-aid/](https://www.survivedandpunishedny.org/mutual-aid/)*



## **NEW \$400,000 BOND FUND ESTABLISHED FOR CRIMINALIZED SURVIVORS!**

[Chrystul Kizer](#) is a young Black survivor of sexual violence currently facing criminal prosecution for actions taken in self-defense. For almost two years, Chrystul has been incarcerated in the Kenosha County Jail

while awaiting trial and presumed innocent. In June 2020, Chicago Community Bond Fund, along with Chrystul Kizer's Defense Committee and Milwaukee Freedom Fund, paid for Chrystul's bond in full, thanks to the unprecedented grassroots support received during the June uprisings, and Chrystul was able to come home.

When Chrystul's case ends, the bond money will be used to establish a national bail fund for criminalized survivors of domestic and sexual violence under the direction of Survived & Punished National and housed at the National Bail Fund Network. We are sincerely grateful to our partners at Chicago Community Bond Fund, Chrystul Kizer's Defense Committee, Milwaukee Freedom Fund and the National Bail Fund Network for their fearless support of Chrystul and all criminalized survivors.

*Continue to support Chrystul's fight for freedom by [contacting DA Graveley](#) to demand he drop all charges against Chrystul, and donating to [Chrystul's Healing Fund](#)!*

## **LOVE & PROTECT'S EMERGENCY FUND FOR COVID-RELATED RELEASES & MASKS TO PRISON PROJECT**

We are clear that our goal is to #FreeThemAll but we also need to engage in harm reduction to support our friends inside while we advocate for their release. Love & Protect established an emergency fund to provide up to \$200 for survivors who are being freed due to/around the COVID 19 pandemic. In line with their mission, Love & Protect committed to supporting women,





trans and non-binary survivors of color, who are incarcerated for self-defense and have created a Google Form to be filled out by survivors or their loved ones to get fund disbursements.

In collaboration with Mothers United Against Violence and Incarceration, Love & Protect also organized community members to purchase and mail in protective masks to incarcerated people throughout Illinois, sending roughly a thousand masks inside through this effort.

*Love & Protect will be launching a Coming Home fund for criminalized survivors like Twekunzi in Illinois to provide support with re-entry. To support, please donate here: [donorbox.org/embed/love-protect](https://donorbox.org/embed/love-protect)*

### III. POLITICAL EDUCATION

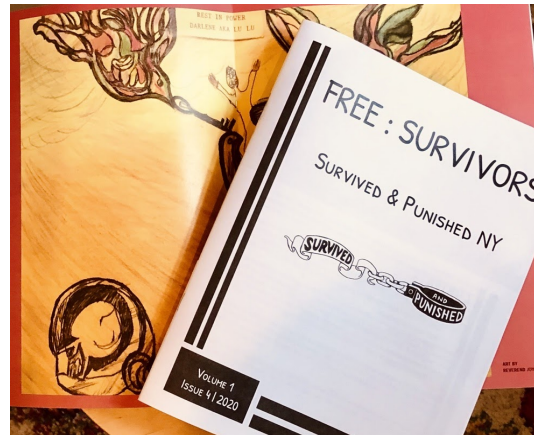


Members of S&P NY's Newsletter Working Group & Editorial Collective for Free:Survivors visited the Barnard Archives to read and discuss issues of the "bi-monthly women's prison newsletter" No More Cages, in February 2020. Three of those comrades are shown here in discussion with copies of the newsletters around them. Photo by Red.

*Free : Survivors* is mailed free of charge to anyone currently incarcerated who would like a subscription and can be viewed for free online by the general public. The latest issue is "largely a tribute issue, created in remembrance of our recently passed comrade, Darlene Benson-Seay, may she rest in power."

#### **ISSUES NO. 3 AND NO. 4 OF *FREE : SURVIVORS*, S&P NY'S INSIDE/OUTSIDE NEWSLETTER!**

*Free : Survivors* Issues No. 3 & 4 have been published! A project of Survived & Punished New York, this newsletter helps foster connection among criminalized survivors to each other and to organizers outside the prison walls by building an inside/outside dialogue and sharing news and art grounded in abolition feminism.



Issue No. 4 of the *Free : Survivors* newsletter debuted in September 2020. The centerfold and front cover are on display. Photo by Red.

Visit <https://www.survivedandpunishedny.org/newsletter-campaign/> to view online editions, to request a print subscription for an incarcerated comrade or to purchase print editions and yearly subscriptions.

To support our vital effort to create and send free printed newsletters to incarcerated people, please donate to [the Free : Survivors Newsletter Fund](#).

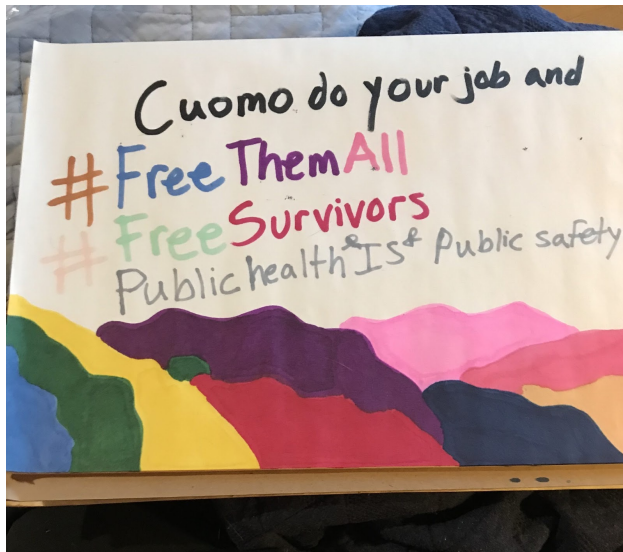
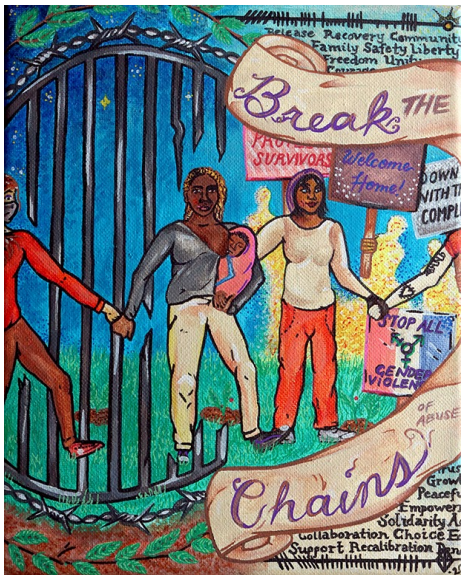


Illustration created by unnamed artist for S&P NY's Apr. 6  
#FreeSurvivors: Make Art For Abolition event.

## #FREETHEMALL NATIONAL VIRTUAL WEEK OF ACTION FOR APRIL'S SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

Survived & Punished affiliate organizations and our partner organizations in our national Survivor Defense Network hosted 15 different virtual events in a National Week of Action to educate and mobilize thousands across the country to demand mass release for all survivors behind bars as prisons became hotbeds for COVID due to dismal conditions and the unwillingness of prison and other public officials to take necessary measures of safety for incarcerated people.



Art by Eeden Shale

## NEW SURVIVED & PUNISHED NEW YORK WEBSITE

[Survivedandpunishedny.org](https://www.survivedandpunishedny.org)

First launched on April 5, 2020 as part of S&P's National Week of Action for Sexual Assault Awareness Month, this new website is a hub of amazing resources about the criminalization of survivors in New York State created by Survived & Punished New York.

The website also includes updates about S&P NY's ongoing projects and working groups: Mass Commutation, Mutual Aid, Newsletter, Anti-Prosecution, and *Preserving Punishment Power*, an "abolitionist report card" on various legal reforms currently underway in New York.

Visit <https://www.survivedandpunishedny.org> for updates about Survived & Punished New York and resources on organizing against the criminalization of survivors.

# **“PRISON IS ABUSE: UNDERSTANDING PRISONS, ABUSE OF POWER, AND CONTROL”**

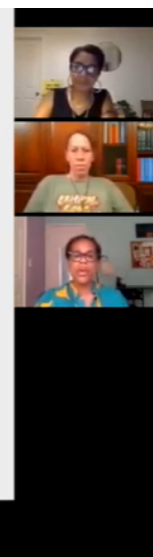
A VIDEO DISCUSSION  
[Link to Video](#)

Moms United Against Violence and Incarceration (MUAVI) and Love & Protect are very

excited to share “Prison Is Abuse: Understanding Prisons, Abuse of Power, and Control.” This video documents a timely conversation between feminist-abolitionist activists Monica Cosby (MUAVI, the West Side Justice Center) and Dr. Beth Richie (head of Criminology, Law, & Justice at the University of Illinois at Chicago). The conversation is facilitated by Love & Protect member Rachel Caidor.



Power and Control wheel conceived by Monica Cosby and created by Sarah Ross.



A pattern that's fundamentally dynamic in relationships where the person who has the most power uses arbitrary authority to dominate to manipulate, to regulate through fear.

Monica and Beth discuss how prison is gender violence, how incarceration replicates the power and control dynamics in abusive relationships, and why feminist work to end gender-based violence must be abolitionist. Their insights and expertise are unparalleled, and their passion for this work should motivate all of us to #FreeThemAll and to continue to build alternatives to the criminal legal system in order to create real safety in our homes and communities.

Watch the discussion in full by clicking [here](#).

You can support the creators of this video by donating to [Love & Protect](#), [Mothers United Against Violence and Incarceration \(MUAVI\)](#) and the [Monica Cosby Fund](#).



## #DefundPrisonsDefendSurvivors

[HOME](#)[MAKE CONNECTIONS](#)[SURVIVORS FOR DIVESTMENT](#)[DEFEND SURVIVORS](#)[ABOUT](#)

### PRISONS DO NOT SUPPORT SURVIVORS. THEY PUNISH SURVIVORS.

The criminal punishment system -- ICE, prisons, jails, juvenile detention, policing, prosecutors, etc. -- is fueled by the criminal punishment of survivors of sexual and domestic violence.

#### A BRIEF ARGUMENT:

**1. Women's rate of incarceration has skyrocketed and almost EVERY PERSON incarcerated in women's prisons, and many more in men's prisons, are survivors of sexual and/or domestic violence.**

#### LEARN MORE

- The number of women serving sentences of more than a year grew by **757%** between 1977 and 2004—nearly twice the 388% increase in the male prison population.
- Among all Black transgender people, **nearly half (47%)** have been incarcerated at some point.

**4. Rape and domestic violence are part of the culture of policing.**

#### LEARN MORE

- Up to **40%** (four times the national average) of officers are violent against their spouse and children. Officers who are domestic abusers are **systematically protected** by police departments and review boards.
- Sexual misconduct is the second **most** common form of reported police misconduct. Most reports involve forcible nonconsensual sexual activity such as sexual assault or sexual battery.

We *must* defund prisons in order to defend survivors. Visit the #DefundPrisonsDefendSurvivors website launched for Domestic Violence Awareness Month 2020 at [www.defendsurvivorsnow.org](http://www.defendsurvivorsnow.org) to:

- Download **illustrated portraits of incarcerated survivors in California** as well as **two #DefundPrisonsDefendSurvivors posters** and learn about each of their fight for freedom after being criminalized for surviving domestic and sexual violence.
- [Make Connections](#) about how our criminal legal system systematically punishes rather than protect survivors of domestic and sexual violence.
- Read reflections by survivors who make the case to defund, divest from, and/or abolish the criminal punishment system on the [Survivors for Divestment](#) page.



**PAST AS PROLOGUE:  
STORYTELLING ABOUT  
RESISTANCE TO THE BRUTALITY  
OF INCARCERATION**

[Click for full video of event here.](#)

Too often accounts of the brutality given by incarcerated people are met by the general public with indifference or tacit support. This is to all of our shame. The reality is that incarcerated people have

always and continue to resist daily and everywhere, and we must act in solidarity with incarcerated people who deserve freedom and at least to be treated with care while locked up.

Survived and Punished NY and the Barnard Center for Research on Women (BCRW) brought together formerly incarcerated organizers and leading thinkers on criminalization, Monica Cosby and Kathy Boudin, along with historians Toussaint Losier and Laura McTighe for a discussion of the current horrific conditions that incarcerated people are enduring under the COVID-19 pandemic and how they are resisting this violence. Moderated by Survived & Punished co-founder Mariame Kaba, this discussion is available to stream in full thanks to BCRW.

*Watch the discussion in full by clicking here.*

*You can support more political education work from [Survived & Punished New York](#) by becoming a monthly sustainer or by making a one time donation [here](#).*

## IV. DIRECT ACTION



Photo by Brooke Anderson | @movementphotographer

#FreeLiyah (a collaboration by S&P CA, Asian Law Caucus, and California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance) organizers at the #FreeLiyah car rally in May 2020 outside the SF ICE building during Liyah's immigration bond hearing. Photo by Brooke Anderson.

**By organizing and participating in direct actions to demand the freedom of all criminalized survivors, we are able to increase public pressure on our targets, strengthen strategic cross-movement relationships, uplift and affirm the struggles of survivors behind bars, and disrupt the “business as usual” violence taking place everyday in prisons, jails, detention centers, and courts. Survived & Punished members and our allies adapted rapidly to the constraints of the COVID outbreak, coming up with creative and impactful ways to engage in direct action organizing. In the following pages, you can see photos from some of our biggest direct actions in 2020.**



On July 27, 2020, Survived & Punished California, as part of the California Liberation Collective, joined criminal justice and migrant justice organizers at California Governor Gavin Newsom's suburban mansion to demand **mass releases of people behind bars** and **an end to California's collaboration with ICE** and its detention and deportation apparatus. Fourteen organizers [chained themselves](#) to his house and were later arrested, while others beautified his neighborhood with a painting demanding he #FreeThemAll.



Aerial shot of painting by organizers on the pavement in front of Governor Gavin Newsom's private home. In the top right corner, you can see some of the fourteen organizers who chained themselves to the property's gate. Photo by Matt Leonard.

*Support the organizations that planned this July action by taking action and stay updated by following their social media! See the following page for quick links.*





## Campaigns to Support and Act On

- [#FreeThemAll Toolkit](#)
- [#FreeThemCA](#)
- [#StopSanQuentinOutbreak](#)
- [#LeadWithMercy Toolkit](#)
- [#NoMoreDeaths Toolkit](#)
- [#SayNOtoGEO](#)
- [GEO out of McFarland](#)
- [#DefundPrisonsDefendSurvivors](#)
- [#DefendBoun](#)
- [#StopCCWFOutbreak](#)

## Organizations to Follow

- Asian Law Caucus (ALC): [Facebook](#) | [@aajc\\_alc](#) | [IG](#)
- California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance (CIYJA): [Facebook](#) | [@CIYJA](#) | [IG](#)
- Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice (IC4IJ): [Facebook](#) | [@IC4IJ](#) | [IG](#)
- Otay Mesa Detention Resistance (OMDR): [Facebook](#) | [@ResistDetention](#) | [IG](#)
- Survived and Punished: [Facebook](#) | [@survivepunish](#)
- Asian Prisoner Support Committee (APSC): [Facebook](#) | [@asianprisonsc](#) | [IG](#)

- Pangea Legal Services: [Facebook](#) | [@PangeaLegal](#)
- Detention Watch Network (DWN): [Facebook](#) | [@DetentionWatch](#) | [IG](#)
- California Coalition for Women Prisoners: [Facebook](#) | [@c\\_c\\_w\\_p](#) | [IG](#)

On August 22, 2020, members of Survived & Punished California joined We Are Their Voices' action at the Central California's Women Facility in Chowchilla, CA to demand **mass release** and **an end to the inhuman conditions people face inside** with COVID outbreaks unchecked and the largest wildfire season recorded in California's modern history: extreme heat, fatal risk of COVID exposure, exposure to toxic smoke, and other forms of rampant abuse.



Survived & Punished banners and posters of S&P CA inside members posted outside Central California's Women Facility in Chowchilla, CA in August 2020. Sky outside is gray and thick with smoke from the California wildfires.  
Photo by Angel Quiroz.



The family of Stacey Dyer calls on Gavin Newsom to grant clemency for Stacey and let her come home, where she will be safe.

Sign & circulate the petition to free Stacey Dyer [here](#).





Collage by the [#JusticeforWendy defense committee](#).

On October 23, 2020, Survived & Punished California joined a coalition of survivor defense committees, organizers, anti-violence advocates and community members for a Domestic Violence Awareness Month rally in Bakersfield, California, where two survivors, Wendy Howard and Michael Bowers, are fighting against prosecution for self-defense against domestic violence.



Family members, organizers, advocates and survivors in front of the Kern County Superior Court.

## V. FEATURE: DEAR GOVERNOR NEWSOM.. FROM NEVAEH SAVANNAH LEMONS

Thirteen-year-old Nevaeh Savannah Lemons wrote a heartfelt public letter to Governor Gavin Newsom describing the impact of the 9-year absence of her mother, Tomiekia Johnson.

*Dear Governor Newsom,*

*My name is Nevaeh Savannah Lemons.*

*I am a teenager who is 13 years old. It might be odd for you to hear this from a child. You might not know but I am a fighter and I am someone who gets the job done. I am writing to give you a good thought in mind about my mother, Tomeikia Johnson, who was a victim of Domestic Violence and who is behind bars for something she didn't mean to do and because she was protecting herself. Most of my life has been a roller coaster. The pain and suffering I have been going through since I was 4 years old. The life of a child growing up not being with her mother, and not having a father. It is something we shouldn't have in life. My life is like a living hell because of this, and to know my mother was beaten by my father hurts even worse.*

*[...]*

*I dearly ask of you, Governor Newsom, to support her clemency so she can have her freedom back, and so she can come home and I can know what having a mother right next to me feels like. So she can have her daughter next to her, so she can laugh and cry with me. I just want to know, if your mother was hours away when you were a kid, wouldn't you miss her? I believe people can do the right thing. So, I believe you can sign the paperwork and let her come back to me and the world that she knows and loves very much. I am her only daughter and I have been waiting for 9 years since I was 4 years old. I am also a victim in this case and I hope that my voice and my life matters. Please give her clemency so she can get a job and a life to start with me and to grow again as a person outside of prison.*

*Sincerely,  
Nevaeh Savannah Lemons*

Read Nevaeh's letter to Governor Newsom in full by clicking [here](#).

You can support Tomiekia by sharing her [petition](#) and her [interview](#) about the rising COVID outbreaks in California women's prisons.



## **DONATE TO SURVIVED & PUNISHED**

Our work relies on grassroots donations and your support is key to keeping the work moving.

Our work includes:

- organizing in coalition with currently & formerly incarcerated survivors
- developing policy research projects focused on decarceration efforts
- supporting defense campaigns including court watches, legal support, prison visits, letter-writing, digital and in-person mobilizations and more
- producing paradigm-shifting community education and media advocacy making connections between surviving gender violence and being targeted for criminalization

Please donate to support these efforts or sign up as a monthly sustainer at [survivedandpunished.org/donate](https://survivedandpunished.org/donate).

You can also donate on the website of our fiscal sponsor, Allied Media Projects, or mail a check made out to “Allied Media Projects” to:

Allied Media Projects  
4126 Third St.  
Detroit, MI 48201

Please write “Survived and Punished” in the memo line.

We thank you for your fearless support & solidarity.



Art by Alyssa Johnson for Survived & Punished CA's [#DefundPrisonsDefendSurvivors Campaign](#)