



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 6, 2021

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In the Wake of Ma'Khia Bryant's Death, End Abuse Decries Erasure and Skewed Narratives Surrounding Black Girls' and Women's Bodies, Survival, & Value

On April 20th, the same day the world witnessed Dereck Chauvin charged with the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, MN, Ma'Khia Bryant – a 16 year old Black girl – was fatally shot by police in Columbus, OH. As we held our collective breath, waiting for any form of accountability for George Floyd's death that sparked the protests and uprisings one year ago, the same systems left a Black girl-child, who called on police for help, dead. We are reminded of how little change has occurred.

The following days offered fewer and fewer media reports about the killing of Ma'Khia Bryant, with focus largely shifting to how actions of this young girl who called police for help might have contributed to her death. Narratives suggested that a knife in a child's hands were justification for a police officer taking her young life. We stand adamantly against this type of narrative and the violence and erasure it perpetuates, especially as it routinely plays out in the wake of Black girls and women surviving the systems of oppression that created their vulnerability.

In the words of Mariame Kaba and Andrea Ritchie: "Ma'Khia Bryant matters not because the timing of her killing allows for a neat juxtaposition, but because her life does." It is our movement's – the anti-oppression, anti-violence movement's - responsibility to name police violence when it occurs. It is our responsibility to name those killed by police and related systems of violence, so as not to contribute to the wider pattern of created invisibility and skewed narratives surrounding Black girls' and women's bodies, survival, and value.

Ma'Khia Bryant should be alive today. It is in her name and in the name of the thousands of missing and murdered Black women and girls in this country that we call for alternative solutions to violence, including defunding police and investing in community responses that address violence at its roots.

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End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (End Abuse, <http://www.endabusewi.org>) is the leading voice for victims of domestic abuse in Wisconsin. At End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, we educate shelter and program volunteers and advocates, law enforcement, legislators, and community members to provide safety and support to survivors. We strive to shift Wisconsin from the attitudes and beliefs that cause domestic violence to values of mutual respect and equality, and we partner with communities in the effort to prevent and end domestic abuse. We encourage reporters to include the National Domestic Violence Hotline number [1-800-799-SAFE(7233)] in their stories for victims who need help. A list of local Wisconsin domestic violence victim service providers can be found at www.endabusewi.org/get-help