

## Bay Area Solidarity Action Team

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# Protocol and Principles for White People Working to Support the Black Liberation Movement

The Bay Area Solidarity Action Team (BASAT) is an ad-hoc group that initially formed for white people to respond to the call from Ferguson for white folks to take big action in solidarity with the Black Liberation Movement. After our first action at the Oakland Christmas Tree lighting ceremony on Dec 5, 2014, the next big event pivoted to be a multi-racial action that shut down the Oakland Police Department with 11 simultaneous blockades for 4 hours and 28 minutes on December 15th. In the wake of the action, we are distilling lessons and determining whether BASAT should be a multi-racial vehicle, or one specifically for white people to work with non-Black groups of color in solidarity with this Black-led movement. We have been using protocol and principles to guide us in this work, and now have a new updated document, integrating some of what we have learned, that we would like to share and spread publicly. This is a living document that will continue to evolve. The foundation for this protocol came from The Ruckus Society's Action Framework. Additionally we are collaboratively writing an article that distills specific lessons, which will be shared soon.

### **Protocol & Principles for White People Working to Support the Black Liberation Movement:**

#### ***Frontline Leadership***

- We commit to following leadership from the front lines; in this struggle that means Black organizations who are locally and nationally connected to this movement. We follow the guidance from Black organizers and their groups specifically on strategy, goals, vision, tone, and message of actions. Receiving such guidance is a gift of capacity and time from these Black groups, and we are

committed to taking direction, while learning from them how much time they wish to give to solidarity groups trying to do this work.

- In this moment of ad-hoc group formation and self-organization, we commit to building infrastructure that allows for organizational accountability. We will distinguish between consultation with individual Black organizers, and ongoing group consultation (recognizing that some Black-led groups are also in formation stages), and include a diversity of perspectives, strategies, and tactics.
- We commit to building accountable relationships with non-Black people of color with whom we collaborate to support this Black-led movement. We will learn from and support their leadership, remain conscious of internal power dynamics between white folks and non-Black people of color, while co-creating multiracial spaces.

### ***Solidarity is a Verb***

- We make solidarity real through action and behavior. Accountability is a relationship. There may be moments where we are out of alignment, and we commit to our own course-correction with each effort, action, meeting, mobilization, and agreement.
- We will leverage the access that some of us have to various resources to help advance the goals of this Black-led movement, including from allied organizations who may not be central to this fight but can lend critical skills and capacity.
- We will leverage our white privilege in direct actions in explicit ways aligned with Black strategies.

### ***Long Haul Relationships***

- We understand that taking accountable action in this movement requires long-term political relationships (organizationally and personally) and building trust through long-term commitment and shared struggle. We know that in movement work and “movement moments” like this, it is the alignment that comes from long-term relationships that helps us navigate complexity and challenges.

### ***Centering Blackness***

- We aspire to show up in clear integrity and action logic in our role as a non-Black solidarity group, be clear about why white people are taking action as white people, and represent ourselves authentically so we can lift up Black voices in tone, content, media, and demands. We will engage in political education with each other and other white people to center Blackness in solidarity actions. We will articulate our own role, so that white people do not adopt Black messages and

approaches that do not apply to white folks, and thus erase the racial context (i.e. “I am Mike Brown”, “I Can’t Breathe”, etc.).

### ***Don’t Let Whiteness Get in the Way***

- We are being directly asked to turn it up and go big. We will collaborate through complex, emergent and “imperfect” situations. We will not let the white culture of perfectionism get in the way of us taking bold action. Many of us are accustomed to accountability protocol that assumes lots of time and capacity for consultation. In this moment, where we need to move quickly, we will continue to attempt to apply our accountability protocol to learn how to show up well in fast-paced situations. Specifically, we will not allow the white culture of “frantic-checking-in” to lead us to asking more time and capacity from Black groups than they have agreed to give, and not let our own self-consciousness turn into the white culture of deference that freezes us. We are willing to navigate contradiction, and willing to make mistakes.

### ***Stay Human, Stay Grounded***

- We commit to staying grounded in our reasons for joining this fight. Our own liberation is bound to the liberation of Black people. We will stay present with our own humanity, honor the humanity of those with whom we collaborate, be humble, listen, connect, and feel. We will stay emotionally connected to the gravity of the war on black people, and not get lost in the logistics of action planning.

### ***Visionary and Confrontational Action***

- We commit to taking action that holds space for community vision, aligns with national demands from FergusonAction, and places our bodies in the path of injustice.

### ***Tactical Discipline***

- We will be bold and militant when confronting injustice. We do not take a stance on tactics that other groups choose to use in their circumstance. For our actions, we will do no violence against other living beings, and we will not engage in intentional property destruction, as it can distract from the political goals we are being asked to amplify and uphold.

### ***Reflection ↔ Action cycle***

- We will constantly evaluate and learn from our mistakes and strengths, and

share learning with others.

### ***Sustainability***

- Many of us are sprinting and in rapid-response mode. We will rotate roles so we can care for ourselves and each other to keep actions going. We will ask for what we need from each other to stay healthy and committed to the long-term fight, in this moment where we are pushing ourselves to continue acting in a consistent and strong way to harness the exponential potential of this moment. We know that in order to achieve the national FergusonAction demands, continued work over the long haul is required. We will find ways to embed this work in our day-to-day lives even when the media stops highlighting it.

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