



Komikina Kūlana Olakino o Nā Wāhine  
**Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women**

**Statement for Black Lives**

June 2, 2020

The Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women condemns the recent murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and Ahmaud Arbery as well as centuries of Black death tolerated, sanctioned, and performed by state actors. These were not isolated manifestations of personal bias but consistent with anti-Black racial ideology – a norm – pervasive throughout Hawai‘i, the United States and the globe. The Commission stands with Black communities against racism and fascism in the quest for collective justice.

The State must do better to respond to anti-Black racism and police violence in Hawai‘i, a society recently organized by a “master race” that sowed racial divisions and disparities which continue to operate in our systems. The Commission witnesses daily the devastating impact of racial hierarchy in the lives of women in Hawai‘i. The Commission is also cognizant of a culture of violence throughout the Honolulu Police Department which includes rape.

Hawai‘i is not exempt from systemic racism. It is invasive in our institutions. When Black people make up less than two percent of the population but preterm birth rates in Hawai‘i, i.e., births of babies with the highest mortality rate, are twenty-seven percent higher than the rate among all other women in Hawai‘i, we have a problem. We cannot pretend racism does not threaten Black lives from their beginning. We must invest in the health, wellbeing, safety and survival of Black people in Hawai‘i from birth to adulthood.

Anti-Blackness was central in the colonization of the Pacific by white people. This devaluing of Black lives has obscured the long record of Black leaders in Hawai‘i such as Anthony Allen and Alice Ball. Racism also assumes other shapes here. These include exclusion, silencing, stereotyping, racial profiling, violent encounters, police violence, mass incarceration and sexual terror. Together they comprise a total system of oppression that privileges white people and those who align with them. State-sanctioned violence that is rooted in anti-blackness has ripple effects across the islands. This system must be radically transformed.

We cannot be neutral. We must ensure that we are doing our part not to perpetuate inequality, white supremacy and anti-Blackness, especially on Native Hawaiian land. We must commit to feminist justice reform. We must respond because racism, sexism and classism are bound together and must be changed simultaneously. Accordingly, the Commission calls on all of government to affirm the value of Black lives in action and policy. Black lives matter.