

MILLION WOMEN RISE

We are a UK-wide Black women led collective of women resisting all forms of male violence against women and girls

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE VICTIMISATION OF 'CHILD Q'

This Sunday, women from Million Women Rise will join with other protesters in Hackney to denounce the persistent racist, misogyny that fueled the mistreatment of Black Girl Child Q.

We will be meeting at 12 noon outside Stoke Newington police station, before joining the rally at Hackney Town Hall.

Our love, strength and healing energy goes to Black Girl Child Q and her loved ones at this time. We extend our care and solidarity to all the women and girls that have been hurt and traumatised by racism, state victimisation, sexual and other forms of violence.

We at Million Women Rise are outraged and disgusted by the brutal mistreatment of a 15 year old Black girl in a Hackney school. This was a racist, sexist assault of a child by adults from two institutions which are duty-bound to protect and safeguard her.

The police officers who assaulted 'Child Q' dehumanised and humiliated her. The school facilitated this victimisation. Staff at the school are complicit in this violence. This is yet another example of state sanctioned abuse of Black girls and women.

This is the contemporary manifestation of the plantation. The adultification of Black girls does not take place in isolation. It is one of the tools of colonisation, serving to remind us that it is always "open season" on the Black female body. This is misogynoir. This is a form of collective punishment. This is the painful grooming of Black Girls to believe they aren't worthy of respect, or humanity. This grooming is designed to force Black girls to gradually accept the racist,

sexist, and violent structural oppression that the police help to implement and maintain.

The victimisation of Black Girl Child Q is not about how “the system is failing”; this is an indication of the system doing what it was designed to do, which is to victimise Black girls and women. This is about intentional harm by the school and by those police officers. This is child abuse.

This assault, along with the many ways that we are violated, from verbal abuse to physical and sexual violence, acts as a reminder to us as Black girls and Black women, that the threat of violence is always there and very often carried out.

To the Home Secretary, Priti Patel:

You have presided over multiple cases of state violence against Black girls and women. You have said, “Enough is Enough” in your most recent violence against women campaign, yet it is clear that the lives of Black girls and women do not matter to you. We demand that you take immediate action to dismiss all those involved in abusing Child Q including those who may have refused to cooperate with the review, and the Borough Commander who has ultimate responsibility for the police service in Hackney.

We also say, “Nothing About Us Without Us!” Black girls and women in solidarity with others who are marginalised in this society, must be at the centre of the appointment process for a new police commissioner, and our communities must be consulted throughout. Without true community accountability, the police force that we are paying for continues to serve itself and not us.

To Hackney and Tower Hamlets Borough Commander, Marcus Barnett:

We note that you have made a range of public commitments to address women’s safety, through an “invigorated plan of work”. [1] We also note your commitment to take action in the case of a serving police officer who made “wholly inappropriate” contact with two teenage girls.[2] Yet the wholly inappropriate treatment of ‘Child Q’, also a teenage girl, happened

on your watch, and it is clear that your response as a leader has been unsatisfactory.[3] We demand that every police officer that was involved in abusing 'Child Q' is held to account for their actions.

To the Governors of the unnamed school:

You are responsible for the abuse of a child who was in your care. We know that a teacher has been dismissed, but this was clearly not the responsibility of one individual. We demand that every person that was involved is held to account for their actions and for their failure to protect 'Child Q'. This includes yourselves as Governors, and the Head Teacher who holds operational responsibility for the school.

To Black Girl Child Q and every Black girl and woman, including those who may not have been able to share your truths, who have been subjected to multiple forms of violence in state institutions:

We are thinking of you in solidarity and revolutionary love. We hold you in our hearts and in our spirits.

We will rise and we will continue to do so until all forms of violence against us and our loved ones ends.

'...they whispered to her, you can't withstand the storm - she whispered back, I am the storm...'

[1]

<https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2021/04/07/hackney-police-commander-com-munit-responsibility/>

[2]<https://news.met.police.uk/news/officer-convicted-as-result-of-internal-met-in-vestigation-442519>

[3]<https://www.bigissue.com/news/child-q-priti-patel-urged-to-take-urgent-action-after-police-accused-of-stonewalling-report/>