



## **Black Lives Matter Grassroots Responds to Kanye West and Candace Owens Trending for Wearing 'White Lives Matter' Shirts by Offering to Educate Them**

**Los Angeles, CA** – On Monday, Kanye West and Candace Owens wore shirts emblazoned with the words 'White Lives Matter' at the YZY Season 9 Presentation in Paris. The stunt was a clear affront to Black Lives Matter, which has been measured as the largest racial justice movement in history. Black models walked the runway wearing the same slogan. 'All Lives Matter' and 'White Lives Matter' have long served as violent retorts to the Black Lives Matter movement, used by white supremacists and hate groups, including the Ku Klux Klan.

In a follow-up statement, Kanye was clear that he intended to kill the Black Lives Matter movement. Black Lives Matter Grassroots sees this as a teachable moment. Political education is core to what we do. While some may see Kanye and Candace's stunt as a distraction, we recognize that it harms thousands of families fighting for justice for their loved ones killed by state-sanctioned violence. It can spread toxic confusion and be used to legitimize violent assaults on Black people. Battling misinformation while continuing to do the hard that liberation requires is nothing new for us.

Black Lives Matter was birthed in 2013 in response to George Zimmerman's acquittal for the murder of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. The boots-on-the-ground have always been everyday people committed to ending state-sanctioned violence against Black people. We took to the streets, demanded policy change, shifted narratives, and built a mass movement - then and now - to build a world where all of our people can live and walk freely.

Kanye West and Candace Owens sent a performative dog whistle to millions. Kanye knows very well that 'white lives' have never been targeted for oppression. Black folks, in contrast, are at the bottom of virtually every economic, social, and political measure because of centuries of individual and institutional racism. Building a world of Black freedom means upending systems that harm and building new systems of care. Ultimately this benefits everyone. When Black people get free, everybody gets free.

Dr. Melina Abdullah, Director of Black Lives Matter Grassroots, is also a professor of Pan-African Studies at California State University, Los Angeles. She teaches a free, open, online Black Power class and invited Kanye and Candace to join to deepen their understanding. "We invite them into courageous conversation on race, racism, and why we say 'Black Lives Matter.'"

###

**Black Lives Matter Grassroots**

The mission of Black Lives Matter Grassroots (BLMGR) is to support, sustain, and uplift the necessary agitations, mobilizations, community organizing, and initiatives of Black Lives Matter chapters to fulfill our sacred duty to advance Black liberation. #BlackLivesMatter was birthed to end state-sanctioned violence against Black people. Black Lives Matter Grassroots is a collective of 26 chartered chapters globally working on the ground since 2013.

For More Information: Email: [press@blmgrassroots.org](mailto:press@blmgrassroots.org) or [rockel@canddtheagency.com](mailto:rockel@canddtheagency.com)