



Stand Up, Fight Back - Black Lives Matter Through the Lens of an HIV Positive Activist

July 9, 2016 By [Ashton P. Woods](#)

As we closed out a holiday that I and many other activists deem a reminder of oppression, Alton Sterling took his final breath as his life was wrongfully taken by crooked cops. We took to the streets, parks, and other landmarks of our cities and lifted him up. All of this comes on the heels of the upcoming one year anniversary of the wrongful death of our sister Sandra Bland. We lifted them up, we honored them with our words and held hands. But tragically, while we held our fists up the news came that Philando Castile was murdered in front of his child and fiancée on a Facebook live broadcast. As I write this, The time is 9:50 p.m. and we are still out in the streets saying their names. We say Black Lives Matter in their honor and we do the work to create change we want to see. This change does not come easy when this movement for Black lives is about deconstructing and dismantling a system of racism and White supremacy.

"To our friends in Dallas, we are glad you made it to safety in light of the shooting event that took place last night. Many of you were placed into harm's way as you peacefully exercised your right to protest and lift up the names of those we lost to police violence. We have and always will be a peaceful movement. But please know that while we have a strained relationship with the police state, there is still no justice in bloodshed. There is no justice in taking a life." - Black Lives Matter:

Houston

The most obvious starting point is the physical police violence against our Black bodies, and our work leads us into other less visible forms of systemic oppression that have been very problematic in terms of the criminalization of Blackness, including, but not limited to misogyny, limited access to quality education, financial instability, and access to proper healthcare. As we Activists attempt to address these issue using our valuable time, we take risks and get all kinds of flack to stand for what we believe in. To stand up against White supremacy, institutional, structural and systemic racism through continual acts of CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE across the country. We know that IT IS NOT ENOUGH to just protest and hold vigil. The truth is that we have to keep the fight alive until law enforcement on every level in every jurisdiction is dismantled along with all the other systems of oppression.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

<http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/stand-fight-back-black-lives-matter-lens-hiv-positive-activist>