WE SAY NO MORE!
A Call for a Month of Resistance to Mass Incarceration, Police Terror, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation!

For 2 generations, Black and Latina/Latino youth in the U.S. have been shipped off to prison in numbers never before seen anywhere in the world at any time. More than 2 million people, of all nationalities languish in prison—ten times the number 50 years ago. The U.S. has 5% of the world’s population but 25% of the world’s prison population! More than 60% of those in U.S. prisons are Black or Latina/o. 32% of Black men between the ages of 20 and 29 are in prison or on parole or probation on any given day. More than 80,000 people in prison are held in solitary confinement under conditions that fit the international definition of torture.

The incarceration of women has increased by 800% over the last 30 years. They, along with those whose sexual orientation is not “mainstream” or who are gender non-conforming—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex prisoners—face extremely harsh and abusive treatment in prison, including widespread rape. Alongside this has risen a massive program of criminally prosecuting undocumented immigrants, essentially hidden from public view. As a result of the devastation of their homelands, these immigrant women have been driven to this country to work for decades. These political prisoners must be freed.

In October, 2014, our resistance to mass incarceration must reverberate across the country and around the world. There must be powerful demonstrations nationwide on October 22, the National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation. Throughout October there must be panels and symposiums on campuses and in neighborhoods; major concerts and other cultural expressions; ferment in the faith communities, and more—all aimed at taking the movement to STOP mass incarceration to a much higher level. October, 2014, must be a month that makes clear that thousands and thousands of us are willing to stand up and speak out today and to awaken the eyes of millions of people to the need to end this new Jim Crow.

The malignancy of mass incarceration did not arise from a sudden epidemic of crime. Nor did it result from people making poor personal choices. Instead it arose from cold political calculations made in response to the massive and heroic struggle for the rights of Black and other minority peoples that took place in the 1960’s and 70’s, and in response to the enormous economic and social changes brought about by globalized production. This cancer of mass incarceration has been, from the beginning, nothing but a new Jim Crow in place of the old one. Like the old Jim Crow, it grew on, fed off and reinforced the deep-seated roots of the racism that grew up with slavery. Like the old Jim Crow, it has been, from the beginning, unjustifiable, utterly immoral and thoroughly illegitimate.

This must stop—NOW! Not the next generation, not in ten years, not any time off in some promised future that never seems to come. NOW!