

# BLACK MAMAS BAIL OUT ACTION

H A G G A D A H I N S E R T

בְּכָל־דּוֹר וָדּוֹר חַיֵּב אָדָם לְרֹאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם.

Bekhol dor vador khayav adam liros es atzmo keilu hu yatzah miMitzrayim.

“In every generation, we are obligated to see ourselves as though we personally came out of Mitzrayim.”

## What does coming out of Mitzrayim mean for us today?

As justice-loving people across race, class, culture, and faith, we all have a stake in building a world where safety does not equal policing, targeting, or caging Black, Muslim, Latinx, or immigrant people. Coming out of Mitzrayim today means standing on the side of all oppressed peoples and opposing white supremacy and systemic racism in all its forms, including Zionism. Coming out of Mitzrayim today means supporting the Palestinian people's right to return to their homeland after generations of expulsion and exile and restricted movement just as we work to dismantle -- brick by brick -- the police state, jails, and prisons which make up the contemporary plague of mass incarceration to Black communities. We are at a critical political moment of extreme state, interpersonal, and institutional violence that calls all of us to reflect on what we will do and what we will give. **We must ask: what are we willing to do to fight for freedom?**

This year, the week before Mother's Day, a coalition of local and national organizations will join public defenders, impacted communities, and faith and spiritual institutions to bail as many Black mamas as we can out of jail. The **National Black Mamas Bail Out Action** will give incarcerated mothers an opportunity to spend Mother's Day with their families, highlight the human costs of inhumane and destructive bail

practices, and support local base-building on the frontlines of mass incarceration.

**Why?** The U.S. has the world's largest prison population, and the prison population of a single U.S. state, Virginia, is equal to the prison population of modern Egypt -- even though Egypt's population is 10 times larger than Virginia's. The U.S.'s punitive criminal legal system disproportionately traps Black people in its cages: nearly a third of incarcerated women are Black, even though Black women make up less than 15 percent of all women in the U.S. Moreover, it is estimated that everyday an average of 700,000 people in the U.S. are separated from their families and condemned to cages simply because they can not afford to pay bail. In addition to the over \$9 billion wasted to incarcerate folks who have been convicted of no crime, pre-trial incarceration has catastrophic impacts on families and communities.

## What does coming out of Mitzrayim mean for us today?

It's going to take our collective efforts to get as many Black mamas as possible out of cages this Mother's Day. While this action alone will not eliminate the ongoing damage of money bail on families across the country, it allows us to put our values into practice to dismantle this system that destroys our humanity and breaks up Black families.

## MAKAT BEKHOROT

When we celebrate Pesach, we rejoice in the freedom of the Israelites. But we also feel the suffering of the mamas who lost their children in the tenth plague, makat bechorot, the killing of the firstborn. While we celebrate that the Angel of Death passed over Jewish homes, we mourn those whose homes it did not spare.

Those of us who are white or non-Black may derive a false sense of security from locking Black people away in cages, out of our sight. Mass incarceration, done in the name of our safety, is a war on Black people. Similarly, Israel's occupation and colonization of Palestinian land, discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel, and denial of Palestinian refugees right to return to their homes, done in the name of our freedom as Jews, is a form of modern-day apartheid against the Palestinian people. None of us can be truly safe or free in the presence of jails, prisons, and police-state structures that enforce violence, detention, expulsion, and imprisonment. **We must ask: What is the cost of our freedom and security? Who suffers so that we may feel safe? Who has been bound so that we may feel free?**

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G-d said, "There will be loud wailing throughout Mitzrayim—worse than there has ever been or ever will be again."

**We must ask: Where do we hear this wailing today? And how can we make sure that it is never heard again?**

## MIRIAM'S CUP

As we fill a cup of wine for the prophet Elijah, we fill another cup with water for the prophet Miriam. The water represents Miriam's well, which followed the Jews as they fled Mitzrayim for freedom. Without this life-giving source of water, freedom from Pharaoh's bondage would have meant a different kind of bondage -- forty years of constant, punishing thirst in the desert.

Tonight we fill Miriam's cup to the very top to represent the brimming life-giving energy of Black mothers. And we remember that getting out of jail does not equal freedom. While waiting for bail, countless Black mamas have lost their jobs, their homes, and even their children. They have been denied access to crucial medications and even had their right to mother taken away. Getting bailed out does not right these injustices.

**We must ask: how will we put our vision of freedom into practice?** How will we provide a Miriam's Well to all those bailed out of jail, so that they may walk out of bondage not into a barren desert, but into true freedom? The **National Black Mamas Bail Out Action** is part of the growing movement to end mass criminalization and modern bondage. It is rooted in the history of Black Liberation, inspired by the enslaved Africans and Black people who used their collective resources to purchase each other's freedom. Through this action, we will support birth mothers, trans mothers, and other women who mother and are entangled in the criminal legal system.



## WE INVITE YOU TO FILL MIRIAM'S CUP FOR BLACK MAMAS

In advance of the National Black Mamas Bail Out Day, we are fundraising nationally and locally to raise not only bail funds, but also awareness of the impact of money bail on mothers and caregivers.

To donate to Southerners On New Ground's actions to bail out Black Mamas throughout the South, please go to: [bit.ly/freeblackmamasfund-19](https://bit.ly/freeblackmamasfund-19) (donations will be tax deductible)

For more information about the Day of Action and to donate to the national fundraising efforts, visit:

<https://nationalbailout.org/>

If you're interested in hosting a house party in support of the Black Mamas Day Bail Out Actions, please write to [jade@southernersonnewground.org](mailto:jade@southernersonnewground.org) to get SONG's house party tool kit!

The National Black Mamas Bail Out Action was dreamed up by Southerners on New Ground (S.O.N.G.) and is coordinated nationally by Law 4 Black Lives and other organizations in the Movement For Black Lives cosmos. Southerners On New Ground (S.O.N.G.) is a regional Queer Liberation organization made up of people of color, immigrants, undocumented people, people with disabilities, working class and rural and small town, LGBTQ people in the South.

Learn more at: <http://southernersonnewground.org>