



MSU  
Muslim Student Union at Stanford



## An Open Letter to the South Asian Community: *It is time to make a change.*

Sikh Students Association at Stanford, Stanford South Asian Society, Muslim Student Union at Stanford, Stanford Hindu Students Association, Pakistanis at Stanford

The South Asian community is plagued by racist and discriminatory attitudes towards other communities, particularly the African and African American community. We need to accept and understand our own shortcomings to create change within ourselves and become real allies. We need to educate ourselves AND our families and friends on the history and reality of violence and suffering in Black and Brown communities in America. We are able to live in this country **because** of the courageous leadership and efforts of the Civil Rights Movement.

The Civil Rights movement gained momentum in the 1960s and challenged the notion of America being a white nation. The United States passed the Immigration Act of 1965 only after the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights act of 1965, which were **spearheaded by Black Americans**. The Immigration Act removed all race-based quotas and allowed for refugees, skilled workers, and individuals with family in the US to enter the country. **This legislation and the leadership of Black Americans paved the path for more than two million South Asians to come to America and pursue their American dreams.**

The murders of our brothers and sisters, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and George Floyd, and **countless** Black men, women, trans people, and non-binary people are **not** singular moments of tragedy. They are part of the larger systems that dehumanize Black life **everyday and everywhere**. We play our part in maintaining and building those systems when we use and allow our friends and family to say the N-word, appropriate and commercialize Black culture, explicitly and implicitly glorify “fair” skin, follow Black customers through our stores, refuse them in our taxis, and participate in medical anti-Blackness as doctors. We should feel uncomfortable and guilty for allowing this to happen and you have to hold yourself and those around you accountable.

As a community, we must make an effort to not only call out the racism but make every effort to **actively be anti-racist**. We cannot feel comforted by the simple fact that we are engaged in overt racist acts, because without actively working to dismantle systems that perpetuate injustice, we are inherently engrossed in racism itself.

The killing and dehumanization of Black life isn't just an issue of the Black community. It is the issue of **every single community** that values freedom, liberty, and justice. This fight is against

behavior and systems that perpetuate and create divisions and hierarchies between people. You can **not** isolate yourself or ignore the issue. This is **not** someone else's problem. It is crucial to understand how you contribute to this disease of racism, inequity, and injustice and take action for **our united humanity**.

### ***Taking Action & Becoming an Ally***

While it is critical to unlearn behaviors and educate ourselves, we must also take and **sustain action**. In order to become an allied community, we must take **concrete** steps that are rooted in anti-racism. So take your next step by donating to worthy organizations, signing petitions, joining protests, AND being involved with local legislation. Every one of you can participate in this revolution and we urge you to stand on the right side of history. Here are some steps you can take *right now* to make a tangible difference:

- Venmo Stanford alum Ibrahim Bharmal to donate and **double your donations** through corporate matching programs.
  - **Venmo: @ibrahim18** and please list the organization in the description.
  - Email: ibubharmal@gmail.com.
  - Ibrahim has identified **\$15,000** of funds that can be matched through company donations. Let's utilize corporate resources to support organizations like the Equal Justice Initiative, ACLU, Black Lives Matter, or NAACP Legal Defense Fund!!!
  - If you are unsure if an organization is a 501c3 and can be matched, please list it, along with an alternate, and Ibrahim will try to find a match.
- Look up your city's police funding and **challenge** budget allocation.
- **Demand** your city council to defund the police department and redirect those funds for community investment
  - **Defund how?**
    - slashing police salaries
    - immediately firing officers with excessive force complaints
    - eradicating paid administrative leave for officers under investigations
  - **Redirect where?**
    - housing
    - healthcare
    - youth educational opportunities
  - What changes need to be made? Start from here: <https://www.8toabolition.com/>
- **Learn about police abolition and alternative forms of protection.**
  - [http://criticalresistance.org/resources/abolitionist-tools/?fbclid=IwAR2FgVO-AtIEJa-RzhwtlbGGVjcHgg579q10U2ej0XpETU2oLbm\\_66i-7I8](http://criticalresistance.org/resources/abolitionist-tools/?fbclid=IwAR2FgVO-AtIEJa-RzhwtlbGGVjcHgg579q10U2ej0XpETU2oLbm_66i-7I8)
- **Pay attention** to local politics, watch city council meetings, or read their notes, AND submit public comments.
  - In many cases, police departments finance local politicians who then lend enormous vocal and financial support to police departments. This is not okay! We need to hold our local leaders accountable.

- Call/email your congressperson to **support** the [End Qualified Immunity Act](#) which is currently in the works in Congress!
- Choose an education resource (book, film/show, podcast, etc) and start learning.
  - How can I begin? Use this [resource guide](#).
- **VOTE** on the local, state, and federal levels and make sure your family ALSO votes.

*But it doesn't stop there.* We have compiled an extensive document with resources for you to take action. Check out this [toolbox](#). Don't be complacent. Let's get to work.

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Sikh Students Association at Stanford

Stanford South Asian Society

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Stanford Hindu Student Association

Pakistanis at Stanford