



Tel: +31 305 4496 Fax: Tel: +31 305 4499
Email: national@saymca.org.za
Website: www.saymca.org.za
Anchor House, 82 Diakonia Avenue, Durban, 4001
P.O. Box 2181, Durban, 4000, South Africa
092-567 NPO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
12 June 2020

“Lives will not matter until someone pays for them” Rev. Al Parson.

This week marks almost two weeks of global protests following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, USA. A murder caused by police brutality and motivated by racism.

The riots and protests in the USA, have ignited a fervour among people of all races around the world, to unite and fight towards a more just society and momentum is shifting in this direction.

In South Africa, black people continue to be faced with this chilling reality of death at the hands of law enforcement agencies. Collins Khosa is a recent example of a black man who lost his life through injustice at the hands of the police.

The month of June in South Africa represents youth month, to commemorate the struggles and victories won by the youth of 1976 in their fight against apartheid.

Ironically 27 years later post- apartheid era, in the month of June we still read about ongoing acts of racism in private schools across the country. Black learners are voicing their anger regarding racism and injustice they continue to experience in South African schools.

Black students continue to feel undervalued, unheard, and undermined. This is compounded by the continued silence from the school's hierarchy. The blood, sweat and tears sacrificed by young people during the struggle against apartheid system seem in vain.

Rev Al Parson rightly puts it “Lives will not matter until someone pays for taking them”. Black lives matter! As a youth organization with a mission to empower young people towards active citizenship, we cannot sit back and watch as this systemic injustice continues to destroy individual lives, families, and whole communities. The values and mission of the YMCA reinforces the notion of equality among all people. If Black Lives do not matter; if we as the YMCA fail to fight against systemic injustice against Black people, then we fail.

In the midst of the shocking death of George Floyd, SA YMCA has released a statement in solidarity with USA YMCA while urging the members of the sister organisation to speak up and voice their frustrations as the country against racism.



-more-

“We, as SAYMCA, encourage young people globally, that in the midst of ‘breathlessness’, to remember the story of Jesus when he appeared to his disciples (John 20: 19-23). They had locked themselves up because they feared their leaders. Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you...and breathed on them’. Let us also breathe hope to those experiencing hopelessness, advocate for justice to the oppressed, speak up, refuse to be silenced and make it known that BLACK LIVES MATTER!

It is within this context that the SA YMCA condemns the brutality and racist actions of white policemen against George Floyd and other black men who have suffered and died. We support, affirm and stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters at the YMCAs in the USA who are struggling to bring about change in their country and ultimately are seeking to bring hope to an increasingly divided nation. In the recent words of the YMCA USA President and CEO, Kevin Washington, “We must go forward with a fire in our souls and hope in our hearts. We must work together to create the future we all want and deserve.” Andy Stanley said this week that George Floyd has possibly ‘accomplished MORE in his death than while living.’ He continued in a tribute to George Floyd, saying ‘Your death destroyed our excuses. Your final breath was an invitation.’

We, as SA YMCA, as a movement of young people in this current generation, extend this invitation to make this time in history count. To stop making excuses. To stop justifications. To stop accepting the status quo. And to take a different path! As leaders of the YMCA in South Africa, we commit ourselves to developing a generation of leaders who are compassionate, spiritually grounded, who show respect to all people, are resilient to the pitfalls of life, who understand the root cause of injustice and are passionate about their ability to bring about change and hope to this world.

Ruby Mathang
President
YMCA South Africa

For further information:
Philani Mabaso on behalf of the SAYMCA
083 694 5263