

THE MOST UNEQUAL COUNTY DIRECTING THE MOST UNEQUAL RESPONSE

AN UNNATURAL DISASTER

Miami is the most unequal place in the United States¹. Our neighborhoods were underwater long before Hurricane Irma made landfall. Existing unequal conditions before the storm in Black and Latino communities all but guarantee an unequal recovery, but it doesn't have to be this way. We can and should recover in a way that responds to the unnatural disasters that put our communities in a constant state of emergency.

In 2015, Governor Rick Scott reportedly banned the use of the terms "climate change" and "global warming" by government agencies in Florida, paving the way for Trump to do the same at the federal level². Scott, Trump and corporate executives continue to deny the impacts of climate change, while using climate disasters for corporate gain often under the guise of recovery. We know that poor communities and communities of color bear the most consequences of climate disaster. We also know that recovery efforts not only do not serve them, but further exploit them. This is a call for a recovery that serves ALL Floridians.

WHERE IS FEMA?

It's been almost a week since the storm hit and the closest FEMA Disaster Recovery Center listed on their website is 900 miles from Miami. Our communities are in desperate need of water, ice, food, and medical attention. Meanwhile, communities have banded together to provide what we can for children, the elderly, and the countless other food insecure working families in the absence of adequate government response. We can't begin to recover if we are still struggling to survive.

TURN THE LIGHTS ON

In Florida's oppressive heat, the lack of power is a life-threatening condition. The inability to connect to breathing machines, refrigerate insulin, or connect to basic information online, has already claimed lives. Florida Power & Light (FPL) and other utilities across the state rake in billions of dollars each year, yet fail to invest in our communities or green energy, and attempted to block efforts for community controlled energy independence. FPL should produce 100% of the electricity serving Miami-Dade County from clean and renewable sources in order to lower costs to residents and decrease the likelihood that they will lose electricity during a storm.

COMMUNITIES DEMAND THE...

RIGHT TO FOOD, WATER, AND SAFE HOUSING

Many low income families could not afford to evacuate or purchase supplies to prepare for the hurricane. The power outages have left many households in a crisis for their basic needs. People need food, water, ice and electricity immediately, regardless of their immigration status. People need relief on their rent come October 1st because many had to expend funds outside of their means to take care of their families.

RIGHT TO RETURN | MORATORIUM ON EVICTIONS

Every Floridian deserves the right to return to safe and affordable housing in their own neighborhoods. With missed paychecks and damage to buildings, Irma is creating the perfect storm for climate gentrification in low-income communities of color. The Governor and local officials should institute an immediate moratorium on unscrupulous rent increases and evictions for tenants and small businesses to give our communities time to return and rebuild. Miami-Dade County should create a rent relief fund to help families replenish what rent funds they were forced to use to prepare for the storm so that they are not evicted for their inability to pay their rent.

RIGHT TO STAY | MORATORIUM ON DEPORTATIONS & DETAINERS

This is not a time to target immigrant communities. Many immigrant families in Miami, including many Haitians, are fearful of asking for help despite their extreme need, putting their lives in danger. In addition we call for an extension of TPS for Haitian refugees.

RIGHT TO PROVIDE FOR OUR FAMILIES | PAID TIME OFF

No one should lose their job because they had to evacuate, care for elders and children, or secure their homes during the storm and its aftermath. Whether they are salaried or not, all workers should be paid for time missed because of Irma. Thousands of people are doing the backbreaking, dangerous work of clearing roads, caring for the sick, and restoring our power. We honor their work and sacrifices, and their employers should, too.

RIGHT TO A SAY | A SEAT AT THE TABLE

As we learned from our friends in Texas and Louisiana, when low-income communities of color don't have a seat at the table as post-disaster decisions are being made, our concerns are ignored and left out of the long-term plans for rebuilding and recovery. As government officials design programs and allocate funding to rebuilding and infrastructure projects, space must be created to listen to and act on the needs of those of us who disproportionately bear the brunt of the fall-out from Hurricane Irma because our housing, infrastructure and economic stability were already in an extreme state of disrepair and neglect even before the storm.

WE CALL FOR

LIGHTS, FOOD AND WATER EQUITY IN RELIEF AND RECOVERY A MORATORIUM ON EVICTIONS A MORATORIUM ON DEPORTATIONS
A MORATORIUM ON FIRINGS AND A SAY IN OUR FUTURES #WHEREISFEMA #TURNONTHELIGHTS

¹ http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-10-05/miami-is-the-newly-crowned-most-unequal-city-in-the-u-s?utm_content=business&utm_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social

² <http://www.politico.com/states/florida/story/2017/09/14/florida-governor-remains-unsure-about-climate-change-after-hurricane-irma-114498>