Over the past three months, anti-police brutality protests in New York City have forced the issue of police violence into the open, and taken control of the streets at a level unseen since the Occupy movement. No one can deny that a new movement has been born.

The response of the city and the NYPD to the protests can best be characterized as a kind of counterinsurgency strategy. While officials claimed to give the protests “breathing room,” their violence remained hidden: the NYPD arrested hundreds of people over several weeks, but avoided mass arrests; they beat and pepper-sprayed protesters, but avoided the cameras. And while some politicians expressed sympathy with the protests, they also sought to criminalize militancy. Officials offered select groups a seat at the bargaining table, and in exchange, asked them to denounce militant tactics and help police identify troublemakers.

The maneuvers of the politicians and police take advantage of real differences within our ranks. The anti-police brutality movement is made up of a wide range of groups, with different understandings of the causes of police violence, different strategies, and different goals. We are bound to debate and disagree. But if we make common cause with the state in the process, then our movement will become divided, grow vulnerable to repression, and will ultimately defeat itself.

Can’t Touch This NYC (CTT-NYC) believes it’s possible for groups in the anti-police brutality movement to pursue different courses of action, without falling victim to the “divide and conquer” strategy. By adopting a common set of principles to operate with in the streets, we can maximize our collective impact, and minimize the state’s counterinsurgency efforts. These principles should allow us to pursue different strategies and openly disagree, while refusing to sabotage each other in the corporate media, or in league with the state.

Can’t Touch This NYC (CTT-NYC) calls on groups in the anti-police brutality movement to consider and adhere to the following common principles moving forward:

1. **We will respect a diversity of tactics in the streets**, as they reflect a diversity of political perspectives within our movement. We will not physically prevent fellow demonstrators from taking actions they deem necessary.

2. **While we may debate and disagree, we will not denounce fellow protesters** in public statements in a manner that exposes them to state repression. We will not denounce protesters for engaging in self-defense or property damage.

3. **We refuse to help police repress our movement**. We will not help police identify and prosecute protesters, nor hand protesters into police custody, nor provide general intelligence on our movement.

4. **We refuse to cooperate with politicians in legitimizing the repression** of other parts of our movement. We will not accept this as a condition for dialogue with city officials.

5. **We will avoid posting and circulating sensitive visual information** on social media, as police use social media to collect incriminating evidence against protesters. We will not collaborate with the media to make such information publicly available.

TO SIGN ON TO THIS STATEMENT, PLEASE EMAIL canttouchthisnyc@gmail.com OR VISIT http://canttouchthisnyc.wordpress.com

Current signatories include: Florence Johnston Collective, Trayvon Martin Organizing Committee–NYC, Take Back the Bronx, Unity and Struggle, Black Autonomy Federation, Freedom Road Socialist Organization, Queer Detainee Empowerment Project, War Resister’s League, Texans United for Families, NYC Anarchist Black Cross, Blame Capitalism Collective, WNY Resistance, Action Against Black Genocide, Bay Area Anti-Repression Committee, Black Rose Anarchist Federation / Federación Anarquista Rosa Negra

CAN’T TOUCH THIS NYC is an anti police repression committee. We believe role of the police is to maintain a society based on oppression and exploitation, and we aim to combat police repression in support of the fight for justice. While we will focus on recent arrests from the anti-police brutality protests for the next few months, we understand that all arrests, imprisonment, and abuse are part of the repression of our people by state violence.