



BUDGET VIOLENCE - “LET THE PEOPLE SUFFER”

Los Angeles’ so-called budget crisis isn’t a failure of governance—it’s the inevitable outcome of a system designed to uphold policing at all costs. The city has never prioritized improving people’s material conditions because it sees us as disposable. Instead, it has always hyper-invested in policing, not as a misguided policy choice, but as a fundamental requirement of the state to maintain the illusion of function and control.

Mayor Karen Bass’ administration is not deviating from this blueprint; she is reinforcing it. While the city claims to be struggling financially, Bass has guaranteed LAPD raises for the next five years, ensuring that police continue to be the most protected and resourced entity in Los Angeles. Meanwhile, residents are told that essential services must be cut, that there is no money for housing, that mutual aid efforts must compensate for the city’s neglect. The purpose of this budget is not to support communities but to disappear them—to banish, displace, and abandon the people the state deems undesirable.

Los Angeles’ \$1 billion deficit is not a crisis, it’s the logical outcome and manufactured condition of a city budget process designed to guarantee endless resources for police while waging economic and state warfare against our communities. For decades, the city has engineered cycles of “crisis” to justify the permanent expansion of policing and state violence, when this spending is the foundation of the deficit in the first place. Los Angeles operates under a budget framework where police spending is locked in as a permanent, unaccountable base—rolled over and expanded year after year. At every stage, public participation is obstructed, financial transparency is nonexistent, and city officials rubber-stamp police requests with no real deliberation. This is not a budgeting error; it is a deliberate political choice, an intent to cause harm.

The city has always invested in LAPD’s capacity to surveil, stalk, and harm people. Furthermore, over the last two decades, LAPD has dramatically expanded its technological and surveillance capabilities—funding ALPRs, predictive policing programs, and an entire ecosystem of data-driven criminalization—while starving public services. Under racial capitalism, policing also exists as a prime growth industry to ensure the hoarding of wealth. These investments clearly do nothing to prevent harm; they only extend the reach of policing into every facet of daily life, designating poverty, migration, and survival itself as crimes.

City officials now feign alarm, blaming external economic conditions, like the “parking ticket crisis”, while refusing to acknowledge their own role in manufacturing this crisis. The reality is that LAPD’s budget—bloated with pensions, legal payouts, and unchecked spending—was never sustainable.

Bass and LAPD promote "community policing" as a success in lessening "crime," investing millions of dollars. But, we know what it really is: Counterinsurgency. It is a tactic to normalize police presence, deepen surveillance, and recruit community members into upholding state violence. LAPD and city officials continue to manipulate data to manufacture the illusion of a "functioning" city. But we know that crime rates are not neutral statistics; they are political tools of control, designed to make entire communities into threats while disappearing the real violence of policing, sweeps, forced displacement, economic and crisis abandonment. The city's manufactured claims of declining crime do not reflect a safer Los Angeles— this data serves a distinct purpose of upholding carceral logic by pathologizing entire communities, thus obscuring the truth: the more resources we give to police, the more suffering they produce.

Settler colonialism has always relied on blaming the victim. The state criminalizes those it has dispossessed, then justifies its own violence as necessary containment. But we reject their framing. We refuse to let the city dictate who is violent when the state itself is the most violent force of all. LAPD knows that politicians will keep increasing their budget as the city's many crises – including a hollowing out of housing, education, youth development, and community health – keep worsening. LAPD's operational budget consumes over half the city budget, a reflection of the sick and cruel obsession with policing that the city's ruling class shares. This crisis was created by them, but our communities continue to pay for it.

Every crisis the state manufactures is an opportunity for us to sharpen our strategies, deepen our solidarities, and escalate our fight. They are counting on us to feel powerless—but we have never been powerless, and we will continue to build community capacity for resistance, until the total abolition of policing/genuine liberation of all peoples.