

# BEING

NOVEMBER 2025

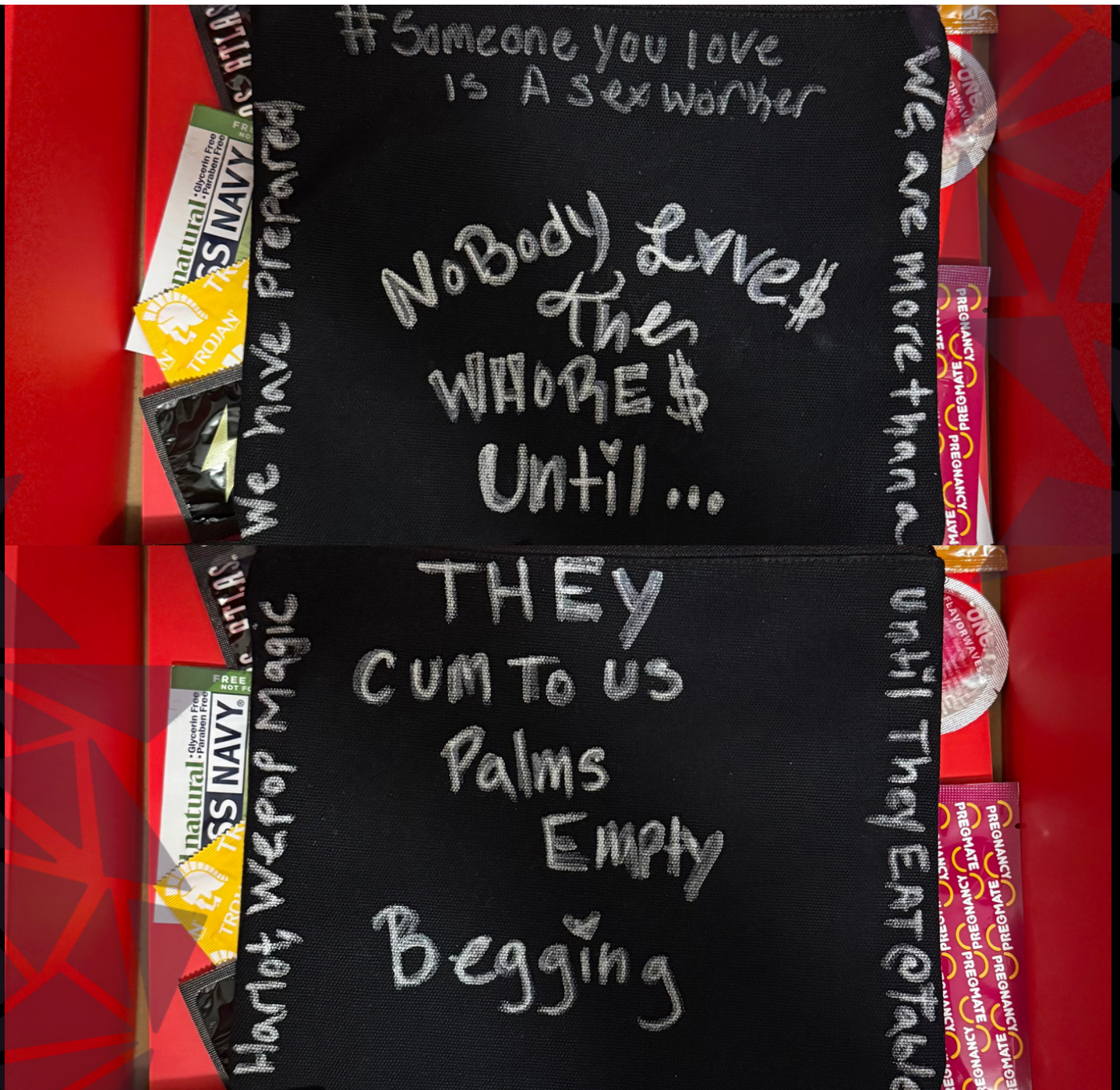
SEX WORKERS RIGHTS COALITION

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# HEARD



T E S T I M O N Y | A R T | R E S I S T A N C E



CREATED BY THE U.S. SEX WORKERS RIGHTS COALITION

Throughout 2025, sex workers rights advocates participated in the Universal Periodic Review of the U.S. by the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, demanding accountability for human rights violations our government continues to commit against our multi-faceted communities locally and globally. This magazine documents our resilience, survival, and continued advocacy in pursuit of justice and dignity for all.

COVER ARTIST AND CURATOR: JENNA TORRES  
DESIGNER AND EDITOR: NOOR Z.K.  
EXECUTIVE EDITORS: P.J. STARR AND ERIKA SMITH



# Nobody Loves the Whore

by Jenna Torres

**Nobody loves the whore  
Until they are eating at her table,  
coming to her palms empty and waiting.**

Then she is fairy godmother.  
Then she is more than a harlot.  
She is a divine feminine powerhouse,  
and her pussy pops magic and dips  
autonomy.

**Nobody loves the whore  
if she is broke,  
or broken.**

Only if she is sporting new cars  
and feeding the hood good—  
then she is to be admired.

Then she is **iconic**.  
Then she is a **legend**.

**Nobody loves the whore  
when everybody knows  
she's a whore,**

Because it's so unbecoming of a woman  
to be accessed by anybody  
for a fee.

**But when it's free —  
that's how women should be.**

They love the silent whore,  
hidden in shadows,  
the ones who show up  
as anything

**except  
a whore.**

But my, my — **how people love  
profiting  
off the whore**  
because sex sells,  
right?

Nobody loves the whore  
when she has a voice.

When she says  
sex work  
is what she does,  
but not always  
**who she is.**

How it's a job  
like any other —  
**clock in,  
clock out.**

How just about everything  
these days

**is transactional —  
money, love, sex, safety —  
all  
forms of currency.**

**Nobody loves the whore.**

Even when she saves lives  
they call it public health  
and forget  
to say her name.

**Love Her,  
Acknowledge Her,  
Cherish Her,  
or not —**

She will outlast  
your shame  
and continue to be  
**our salvation.**

**“Nobody Loves the Whore” was born out of exhaustion, reverence, and truth.**

It speaks to the way society consumes sex workers' labor, style, and survival — and yet refuses to embrace us in our fullness. The accompanying cover photograph features the contents of care bags distributed during outreach to individuals who are oft under-served by most agencies, with supplies that are considered non-essential at best and evidence of criminal conduct at worst: condoms, lube, emergency contraception, Narcan, & a handwritten postcard carrying the poem's opening line.

**These critical and live-saving supplies are harm reduction tools, but they are also tokens of love, protection, power, and solidarity exchanged between sex workers.**

This work honors the resilience of peer support, the tenderness that keeps our communities alive, and the legacy of our community's strength, vulnerability, and deep capacity for care — **even when it is unreciprocated.**

**Jenna Torres (she/her)** is a multidisciplinary artist, published author, and sex worker organizer based in Atlanta, GA. Her work bridges visual storytelling, writing, and community health, centering the lived experiences of sex workers and other criminalized people. Jenna is a member of the Sex Worker Rights Coalition and has participated in national and international advocacy for sex workers' human rights, including through outreach, education, and creative documentation.

**Her art, writing, and organizing all reflect the same truth: that care is labor, and survival is an art form.**



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# Introduction

by Noor Z.K.

This magazine is part of a larger body of work including the Sex Workers Rights Coalition's submissions to the 50th Session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the United States, titled **"Being Heard."**

The UPR reports were created collectively by sex worker-led and allied organizations in the U.S. and abroad, documenting the realities of criminalization, policing, migration, digital surveillance, and the intersecting violence faced by our communities. They were submitted to the United Nations in 2025 as a formal intervention calling for the decriminalization and destigmatization of sex work, trans rights, and community-led care.

This magazine grew out of that same process: from Best Practices Policy Project's art and writing workshops, led by the writer, artist, and activist Jenna Torres — a creative extension of policy advocacy that begins with a care bag and ends with a poem. It holds grief, protest, survival, and pleasure. It holds the people who aren't here anymore, the ones who keep our community together, and the ones we haven't met yet.

Through shared prompts and collective editing, we asked: ***What does it mean to live the Universal Declaration of Human Rights when our work and survival are criminalized? And, how do we experience the right to privacy, health, safety, and assembly in the face of surveillance and policing?***

**This project was built by and for people with sex work experience to tell our stories on our own terms.**

The pages that follow are our answers. They hold the raw, beautiful, and necessary expressions of people too often excluded from human rights conversations. Our art and writing mirror the report's findings: that criminalization undermines every other right — from health to housing, bodily autonomy, and beyond.

These works also reflect our refusal to be reduced to statistics or stereotypes:

**"We reject the idea that all we can be is victims. We are committed to enjoying the full range of human rights, equity, and quality of life."**

**— Sex Workers Rights Coalition  
"Being Heard" Report**

We know that governments will keep withdrawing, silencing, and criminalizing. We've seen the United States step back from international accountability, even as people here continue to face the sharpest edges of stigma, racism, misogyny, transphobia, policing, and abandonment. **But we are still here. And we are not waiting for permission to tell our stories.**

In our UPR report and this magazine, we demand that sex workers be recognized as legitimate rights-holders under international law, ensuring that our expertise is included and our voices are heard.

Together, the report and this compilation of art and writing form dual sides of one collective commitment towards documentation, testimony, and creation.

**This work is a reminder that while governments debate, real people bleed, create, grieve, fight, and dream.**

It is an offering to our communities as a document of resistance and survival. This is our archive: **a reminder that we are not alone, even when we are made to feel that way.**

Each contribution comes from a lived reality: from equality to privacy, from dignity in work to freedom from harassment, we speak to the promises of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights — and to the ways sex workers continue to be denied them.

**Together, our voices build a chorus: we are not martyrs, we are workers; our communities are not expendable, they are essential; our stories are not marginal, they are central to all movements for justice.**

**We offer this collection as a reminder that belonging begins with the right to speak, to create, and to be heard.**

With love and solidarity,

*Noor Z.K.*



# HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST SEX WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES



Universal Periodic Review (UPR)  
of the United States  
50<sup>th</sup> Session Briefing – 2025

*Submitted by the Sex Workers Rights Coalition*

## SUMMARY

**Sex workers in the U.S. face ongoing human rights violations** — particularly those who are transgender, disabled, migrants, Black and Indigenous peoples and people of color.

**Despite accepting UPR Recommendation 86 in 2010**, which called for stigma reduction and access to public services, **the U.S. has intensified criminalization, surveillance, and discriminatory policy against sex workers across the country.**

In **2024**, the **Sex Worker Rights Coalition** conducted a **global community survey with over 200 responses**. These findings document **widespread harm driven by U.S. policy at home and abroad.**

## KEY FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

### Criminalization & Policing:

18% were detained by police, 25% were incarcerated for sex work or self-defense. Many were forced onto registries before trial; 12% faced coerced sex by law enforcement.

### Surveillance & Registries:

37% were deplatformed, losing access to financial tools and safety systems. AI and facial recognition policing disproportionately target Black, trans, and street-based sex workers.

### Trans & Migrant Exclusion:

120+ anti-trans laws were filed in 2025. 45% of trans respondents and 27% of non-citizens reported harm from arrests, raids, denial of care, and threats to HIV treatment access.

### Digital & Economic Harm:

Post-FOSTA-SESTA, 26% lost income and 37% lost access to banking, housing, or platforms.

### Economic & Climate Injustice:

Sex workers were excluded from pandemic relief; 36% lost work due to extreme weather.

### Global Harm:

U.S. aid policies like APLO undermine global harm reduction. Future funding must align with human rights.

**We consider every arrest for sex work to be a human rights violation.**

## COMMUNITY-LED DEMANDS

**We urge the U.S. to:**

- **Decriminalize sex work:** repeal all laws that criminalize our lives, including FOSTA/SESTA and the Anti-Prostitution Loyalty Oath (APLO).
- **Recognize sex workers as rights-holders:** include us in policymaking, data collection, and UN processes.
- **Protect economic & digital rights:** ensure access to banking, online platforms, and social protections.
- **End harmful anti-trafficking policies:** stop conflating sex work with trafficking.
- **Abolish carceral systems:** institute a moratorium on laws that criminalize poverty and survival.
- **Fund care, not punishment:** invest in peer-led, non-carceral services — harm reduction, HIV care, housing, and health — that honor bodily autonomy and economic justice.
- **Guarantee trans rights:** repeal anti-trans laws and ensure access to gender-affirming care. Trans rights cannot be upheld while sex work is criminalized.
- **Reform global aid:** align U.S. funding with human rights — not moralistic restrictions.
- **End surveillance & AI policing:** dismantle forced registries and technologies used to target sex workers and marginalized communities.

**Sex workers are not victims —  
we are global human rights defenders.**

**The U.S. must be held accountable.**

## CONTACTS

Despite the U.S.'s withdrawal, we will continue participating in the Universal Periodic Review process in Geneva in 2025 by meeting with global representatives in September and hosting side sessions in November to advocate for human rights-based recommendations.

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Read the full reports submitted by the Sex Workers Rights Coalition:  
<https://tinyurl.com/upr50reports>

# BEYONCÉ KARUNGI

## QUEEN PUTA OF THE REPORT



The art and writing throughout this magazine reference the two 2025 reports to the United Nations that our coalition of sex worker organizers prepared for the Universal Periodic Review of the United States — a process our current administration has chosen to withdraw from, rejecting global accountability for the human rights abuses committed by our government.

During her powerful and charismatic leadership in organizing the collective writing process, Karungi proudly labelled herself “Queen Puta of the Report.”

“The idea came to me after we went to the Marcha de las Putas in Queens,” she said. “I realized the word means a fighter,” Karungi explained.

“I got involved in these reports because the U.S. does not acknowledge sex workers and trans people. In the new political climate, people cannot speak, and civic space is shrinking. Together we resist.”

Numerous writers and activists across the country contributed to our report, *Being Heard*, each authoring a section. Karungi identified criminalization as the overarching issue shaping every aspect of sex workers’ human rights throughout these contributions — including our rights to work and to assemble.

Accordingly, *Being Heard* explores not only the impacts of policing on sex workers’ lives, but also the interconnections between anti-trans laws, migration, economic injustice, digital surveillance and deplatforming, the rights of substance users, COVID-19, climate change injustice, and the global consequences of U.S. policies.

This reflects the approach at the heart of the U.S. sex worker rights movement: nothing about us without us — and none of us are free until we all are free.

Interview and Photographs by PJ Starr





# Deep Breath

by Jenna Torres

"What have I gotten myself into, taking a trip almost 10 hours away from home?" I think to myself as I step off the plane in Geneva, Switzerland.

Naturally, I did very little research before jumping onto this Delta flight. I trust the team I traveled with. We have been in community for years, and this isn't their first time at the United Nations for the Human Rights Council.

I make my way through the massive international airport to the Uber stand. Thanking God for service and Google Translate. Thanking God that Best Practices keep immaculate notes. I followed the instructions and managed my travel to my Airbnb.

**When I travel domestically, my first identity is for Woman and Black. Internationally, I am just American, maybe second is Black American. The energy is different, the context also different.**

I get to my Airbnb and throw my stuff on the bed and change quickly. I already experienced delays in my travel that cost me the day before. I am anxious to see the work cut out for me. We have been working on crafting this letter of recommendations to hand out at the UN, in an attempt to try and get meetings with countries and their missions to explain why signing onto the decriminalization of Sex Work is vital to the well-being of our community and our outcomes.

I get on the tram that takes me to this plaza; it is hot outside. I quickly remembered the lesson I learned in Germany. Air conditioning is hard to come by. I shuffle through this little travel bag to pull out the fan I grabbed last minute. As I pop off the tram, I have a few long blocks to walk slightly uphill.

Suddenly, the tree line breaks; I am standing beside the gates of the UN. PJ is there to make sure I get all my documentation done with ease. **That is what community care looks like.**

Pass in hand, it is time to shine. I walk over the hall where the meetings and sessions are held.

**My identity of Black and American is loud and lonely. Echoing is what privilege could look like if I were someone different in America.**

I learned America ain't even at the table. They made a choice to pull out of the HRC, and I guess that is a privilege too.

Our team spent days carrying our ailing bodies around, pleading our cases that America has a multilayered story. That those who are deemed undesirable experience the white picket fences a lot differently than some of our counterparts.

**We deserve protection, dignity, and autonomy. Sex work is work, no different than any other work.**

What I learned in Geneva is that we are the minority. In numbers, we are undeniable. My job as a leader is to move forward and reach back. Passports, IDs, and safety plans to travel with the least amount of harm are versions of reaching back, **because our voices deserve to be heard.**

**We have to own our space in both domestic and global conversations because our lives and livelihoods depend on it.**

# TO EVERY MIGRANT & EVERY WORKER

To every migrant in this country who came here with hope in your heart, and to every sex worker who stands tall in the face of stigma — **this is for you.**

I see you. I hear you. I stand with you.

**You are not disposable.** You are human beings worthy of respect, dignity, and love.

Immigrants — you left behind homes, families, and languages in search of a better future.

That journey took courage many will never understand. You did not come here for handouts.

**You came here for life, for safety, for opportunity** — for the same things this nation prides itself on.

And yet, too often, you are met with walls, hate, and suspicion. **But hear me: you are not a burden.**

**You are the backbone of this country.** You are the workers in the fields, the builders on construction sites, the cooks, the caregivers, **the dreamers.**

Sex workers — you are criminalized for surviving.

Judged for doing with your body what countless others profit off of in silence. People will pay to see sex on a screen, in magazines, in the dark corners of the internet, but they turn around and shame the very people who make it possible.

**That hypocrisy is violence.** Your work is labor. Your body is your own. Your humanity is not up for debate. Like every worker, you deserve safety, fair treatment, and the right to exist without fear of violence or arrest.

**You are WORTHY, no matter the work you choose to do.**

Let's be clear: migrants and sex workers are no different than any 9–5 employees punching a clock.

Everyone is working to put food on the table, to pay rent, to send kids to school, to carve out a piece of peace in a world that asks too much. The difference lies only in how society labels some work “respectable” and other work “shameful.” **That labeling is rooted in control, not truth.**

**You — Me — We all deserve the same rights as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:**

- Equality before the law.
- Freedom from discrimination, no matter where we were born or how we live.
- Recognition as human beings first, before any title, status, or stigma.
- Privacy — because our choices are ours. Not the government's. Not society's. Not anyone else's.

Too often, freedom and justice outweigh equality and basic human rights.

To those who read this with judgment in their hearts: remember this —

**Freedom means nothing if it does not extend to all of us.**

**Justice means nothing if it is only for some.**

**To every migrant and sex worker: we love you.**

We appreciate you. We need you.

This country is stronger, braver, and more alive because of you.

**You belong here. You are not alone.**

With unwavering solidarity,  
**Molly**



# We Remember

## Artist Statement:

### Lyrics:

#### Verse 1:

We remember the fallen, the ones we've lost  
To a battle that's still raging, at such a cost  
We honor the heroes, the fighters so brave  
Who've dedicated their lives, so many to save

#### Chorus:

HIV and AIDS, a war we're still in  
But we won't give up, we'll never give in  
To the heroes and organizations, we raise our voice  
For the lives lost, we'll never forget, we'll always rejoice

#### Verse 2:

From the ashes of sorrow, hope will arise  
With each passing day, we'll reach for the skies  
We'll stand together, united as one  
Until the battle is over, and the war is won

#### Chorus:

HIV and AIDS, a war we're still in  
But we won't give up, we'll never give in  
To the heroes and organizations, we raise our voice  
For the lives lost, we'll never forget, we'll always rejoice

#### Outro:

So here's to the heroes, the ones who fight on  
Your courage and strength, will never be gone  
We'll keep on fighting, until the end  
For the lives lost, we'll always defend

We Remember is a heartfelt tribute to those we've lost to HIV and AIDS, and a powerful call to remember the ongoing fight for justice, visibility, and care. Through poetic lyrics honoring the fallen and uplifting the courage of frontline activists and organizations, the piece amplifies voices too often silenced, especially those of trans people, sex workers, migrants, and people living with HIV.

The song connects deeply to the theme of HIV/AIDS and migration, highlighting how marginalized communities are made more vulnerable through systems of criminalization, anti-trans legislation, and hostile immigration policies. For many trans and migrant sex workers, HIV is not just a health issue, but a marker of exclusion from safe housing, healthcare, legal protections, and economic opportunity.

By centering the lived realities of those on the frontlines, including street-based sex workers and those navigating both borders and stigma, the song calls attention to the structural violence that fuels the epidemic, and the urgent need to resist it. It also reflects on the global impact of U.S. policy, particularly how funding restrictions and moralistic agendas continue to shape HIV responses abroad, often at the expense of sex worker and trans-led organizations.

Ultimately, We Remember is not only a remembrance, it is a resistance. A reminder that as long as people are still fighting, surviving, organizing, and refusing to be erased, the war against injustice is not over. We honor the lives lost, celebrate those still fighting, and demand a world where no one is criminalized for how they live, work, or love.

by Angel Maxine

# What Grows From Erasure

SEX WORKER

PROVIDER

GENEROUS

MASSAGE

#NOTYOURRESCUEPROJECT

#lingerie

mutually beneficial

#PUSSY

GENEROUS

roses

PROVIDER

SEX WORKER

#WHORE

by PJ Starr

PJ Starr is a multidisciplinary artist who has worked in informal economies since age 11.

They are also a founding member of Best Practices Policy Project (BPPP).

## Can we create art about censorship?

How can we show the process by which something is made into nothing by the powers that be?



PJ Starr explores these questions through an analog paper-based animation about the shadow banning and excision of words pertaining to the lives & rights of sex workers on the internet.

Their piece engages with the section of the 2025 UPR report written by N'Jalla Rhee about Economic Injustices, Digital Surveillance, And Deplatforming:

"Sex workers are being disappeared from digital spaces, putting lives in danger.... 37% of folks surveyed for the report said they have been deplatformed, causing them to lose access to financial services, social media accounts and other points of digital access."

PJ's animation gestures towards the planting of seeds from the words that those in power tried to obliterate -- which, far from being destroyed, are instead blooming into an abundant garden of beautiful emojis, united in their resistance.

## The kingdom of plants will not be denied.



# TRANSGRESS!

by Zee Xaymaca



## Transgress!

Life depends on it

The napalm air sticky and combusting in your lungs is the fuel of rebellion

And if not expelled in expression it settles into quiet rage.

If they throw us again on planes and ships we shall soar and swim to our liberation

Finding our way once more to each other

If they throw us in prisons  
we will will dance naked atop the cages  
and celebrate those we refuse to forget.

If our feet should falter  
under fascist lashes across our backs,  
our forebears wisdom will find us our way  
Together, under the red umbrella.

So transgress against constraint that diminishes your havens  
Transgress until the consequence is peace as yet undiscovered  
Transgress against the prying and pulling  
that tries to 'correct' your path  
Transgress against theories of brokenness  
To transgress is not death  
but to live the fullness of existence  
Autonomously  
So transgress,  
for to comply is to deny  
the most meaningful parts of you.

This digitally illustrated poem highlights the mundane things that have become acts of resistance for Queer and Trans sex workers. As restrictions on our freedoms make clear that our erasure around the world is the state's goal. Housing, healthy food and safe spaces to be are under threat. In this case, to exist and to thrive is to transgress. And that is beautiful resistance. This is my vision for my community.



# How Dare You Organize?

## by Ava Kane

### **“HOW DARE YOU? HOW DARE YOU ORGANIZE?!”**

Words screeched into the crowd inside the chambers of Philadelphia City Hall by Councilwoman Quetcy Lozada.

Earlier this year, she proposed a ban on all forms of supportive service in the Kensington area of Philadelphia for unhoused people — with punishment set at a \$1,000 fine.

### **A thousand dollars for providing kindness in the City of Brotherly Love.**

The language of the bill is so vague that there is literally nothing you can do for anyone, anywhere, in that section of the city. You are not allowed on residential streets. Not allowed near places of education — a daycare center or a school. Not allowed near a library or a senior center.

On these streets are people who hustle day in and day out to survive — sex workers with bills to pay, food to buy, people to feed. Now they're not allowed to be warned about a bad date cruising a few streets over. Not allowed to be offered safety in the form of condoms or pepper spray. Not allowed access to a women's group in a park for ninety minutes once a week — because sharing stories, cigarettes, and a list of where to get a pap smear or the names of men reported for violence in the last thirty days is now considered a crime.

Editorial Note: Ava's writing reminds us that criminalization doesn't just target our work — it punishes care itself. This contribution emerged from Best Practices Policy Project's 2025 UPR writing group led by Jenna Torres, where participants reflected on what the Universal Declaration of Human Rights means when survival itself is criminalized.

This is what they mean by “cleaning up” the streets: they outlaw compassion, not because it harms anyone, but because it proves that our communities safer when police are not involved.

Ava's piece echoes the Being Heard coalition's call to:

“Redirect resources away from carceral systems and toward non-punitive, community-based approaches to safety, housing, healthcare, and economic support—centering sex workers, especially transgender and gender expansive, BIPOC, migrant, substance-using, street-based, and disabled sex workers.”

Through their words, we see that abolition isn't abstract — it's what happens when we keep showing up for one another, even when they try to stop us, because our communities are stronger when we fight back together.

### **We take care of each other better than they ever will.**



# Save Our Souls

by Margaret Jean Plews and Kini Seawright

Margaret Jean Plews and Kini Seawright are prison abolitionists, sex worker rights advocates and artists living in Arizona.

**25% of those who filled in the survey for the United Nations report said they had been incarcerated for reasons relating to sex work, but also for being involved in protests, defending themselves, or protecting other sex workers.** Some were detained for hours or days, and some arrests led to years in prison. We received reports of inhumane treatment and denial of medical care including medications.

Margaret Jean Plews writes: I took these photos of my activist partner, Kini Seawright, after we chalked the names of Arizona State prisoners, including her son, who had died from suicide, neglect, and homicide in custody.

One of the names is of Marcia Powell, who died after being left out in the sun in a cage while serving a 27 month sentence for prostitution.

We used the sidewalk in front of Herberger Theater in Phoenix. It was a message to the Arizona Republic (offices across the street) to investigate my findings that **the rates of prison violence had doubled**

under the Jan Brewer (2009-2012) administration, and follow up on activist/family reports of conditions deteriorating inside. Due to a barrage of activism from all sides, the ACLU and Prison Law office filed a class action suit on behalf of prisoners, due to the medical neglect - especially the mental health care issues, including using solitary confinement for behavior management of mentally ill prisoners. The Republic finally reported on the prisons (Bob Ortega, Arizona Republic June 2012\*); but not much changed - the AZ Department of Corrections health service is still under court supervision.

Kini was also fighting for **attention to her son's homicide**. He was beaten into a coma by the West Side City Crips, with collusion from guards, for loving a Mexican man. As a Black man, that was especially taboo - he violated both sexual and racial "prohibitions" among prisoners.

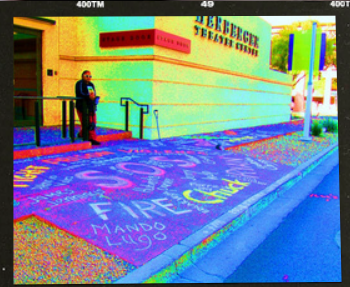
**He was murdered for who he loved, not for who he hated or hurt.**

The evidence about who the perpetrators were was clear, but no one outside the prison system would prosecute because DOC criminal investigations would not pass the case on. Her civil suit was lost due to an attorney missing deadlines. The only justice found for Dana was the more just world Kini helped shape by fighting in his honor, working with other families who had suffered as she had.

\*Margaret's blog post on the subject can be found at: <https://www.arizonaprisonwatch.org/2012/06/prisons-of-chuck-ryan-and-arizonas.html>



Above: a portrait Margaret took of Kini around the year anniversary of Dana's murder - grieving her son while embracing her little dog Joseph.





# *I Didn't Mean to Turn You On*

*by The Incredible, Edible, Akynos*

*I Didn't Mean to Turn You On* is a four-part photo series by Akynos, leader of the Black Sex Worker Collective, exploring how sex workers' bodies and labor are intertwined with the planet's own systems of extraction, renewal, and survival. Each element — Electricity, Textiles, Water, and Oil — reveals how criminalization, racism, and environmental harm operate through the same logics of control, and how sex workers' creativity and care mirror the earth's capacity to regenerate.

From the Being Heard UPR Report:

**"Thirty-six percent of respondents experienced direct impacts on their ability to work due to extreme weather events. Street-based sex workers were among the most affected—facing severe heat, cold, storms, and flooding that directly harmed their health and income."**

Akynos's work brings these realities into focus, insisting that environmental justice is inseparable from body justice, and that sex workers' survival is itself an act of ecological resistance.

## *Oil*



Toxic dumping, oil extraction, and pollution overwhelmingly happen in Black, brown, Indigenous, and poor areas. These are the same communities criminalized for sex work.

The state controls bodies and land in similar ways: through regulation, restriction, and violence.

So Sex Workers understand that environmental justice is body justice.

*Environmental harm  
is racialized  
and gendered —  
just like the policing  
of sex work.*



# Electricity

*Policing sex work and Sex Workers is about power. Who has the power?*

*Many Sex Worker-led orgs are already creating mutual aid systems, housing networks, food sharing, and informal economies—all practices that mirror climate resilience models.*

*There's a deep sensitivity to what collapse looks like, because Sex Workers have already been surviving through collapsed systems; healthcare, housing, justice, you name it*

***Sex Workers  
are envisioning  
survival beyond  
collapse.***







*"Clean-up" campaigns often target both "polluted" areas and Sex Workers.*

*Urban development and gentrification often frame both environmental degradation and the presence of Sex Workers as things to "clean up."*

*This conflation marks Sex Workers as pollutants instead of humans with needs.*



*Organizing for environmental justice is also about reclaiming space and resisting erasure.*

*Textiles*



# Water



*Sex Workers are like water.*

*You don't know you need us until it's too late.*

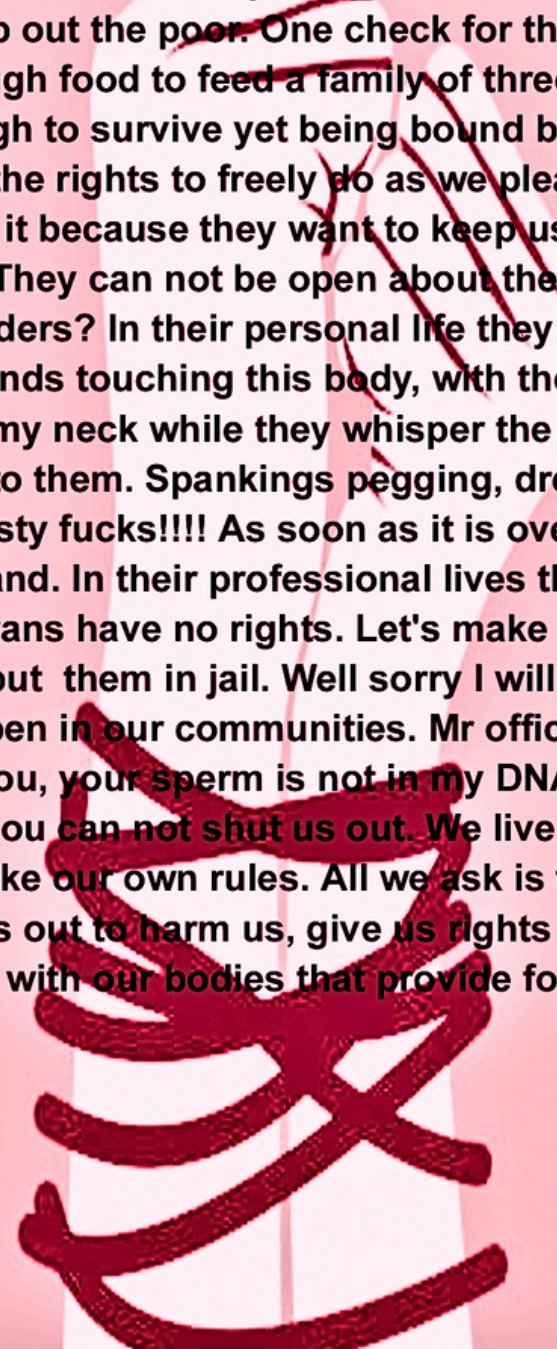
Sex Workers are on the frontlines of climate and environmental collapse.

Many Sex Workers, especially in the Global South, in marginalized communities, or in extractive economies live and work in environments already devastated by climate change, pollution, or resource theft.

When governments fail to provide basic resources like water, electricity, or food, it's Sex Workers (often women, migrants, trans folks) who carry the weight of survival first and hardest.







In this world we were born to be free, It sounds so sweet.  
 But I was forced to use my body because the government doesn't  
 want to help out the poor. One check for the whole month and  
 barely enough food to feed a family of three. Using my body to  
 make enough to survive yet being bound by the laws that say we  
 don't have the rights to freely do as we please. Is this to keep us  
 poor? Or is it because they want to keep us quiet by taking away  
 our rights! They can not be open about the fact that they are our  
 biggest funders? In their personal life they want their greasy  
 claiming hands touching this body, with their not so fresh breath  
 kissing on my neck while they whisper the dirty things that they  
 want done to them. Spankings pegging, dressing them up in my  
 lingerie. Nasty fucks!!!! As soon as it is over the money is left on  
 the nightstand. In their professional lives they say criminalize  
 sex work, trans have no rights. Let's make these communities  
 suffer and put them in jail. Well sorry I will not sit back and allow  
 this to happen in our communities. Mr official our bodies do not  
 belong to you, your sperm is not in my DNA. So you can not shut  
 us up and you can not shut us out. We live in this world just like  
 you. We make our own rules. All we ask is that you protect us  
 from what is out to harm us, give us rights and let us enjoy the  
 work we do with our bodies that provide for our families.

# nasty fucks

by Takia Cash

Takia Cash is a writer and activist whose work confronts the intersections of **poverty, survival, and resistance.**

She is also a founding member of the Best Practices Policy Project (BPPP).

Drawing from lived experience, Takia uses poetry and prose to **expose the hypocrisy of systems that criminalize the same bodies they exploit.**

**Her writing channels both anger and care—a demand for rights, dignity, and the freedom to exist without apology.**



# YOU ESPECIALLY

BY PLUMA SUMAQ

This is not a poem about migration,  
the validity of the horizon line,  
the questions asked at security  
checkpoints, how poor women  
who cross borders have always  
been treated with suspicion,  
the last time you were  
denied at customs.

This is not a poem about the  
(un)certainty found in  
maps and atlases,  
the formations made in the sky by  
our own invisible flight patterns,  
the way geese stop  
to wait for each other,  
how the north star  
is always found  
on the way to mecca.

This is not a poem about the  
mistletoe, how it slowly  
takes over a white oak,  
and does not let up,  
the way the yellow swallowtail is  
imprinted to cross great distances.

This is not a poem about having  
lost something, turning the world  
over with regret,  
wishing I had stopped to say how  
much you mean to me.

This is not a poem about  
echolocation, the sonar that  
dolphins and whales use to find  
each other, the way their calls  
permeate the density of water  
and how the honey bee can still  
communicate despite smoke  
and everyday obstacles.

This is a poem about me and  
you, and you especially who I  
have not yet met. The sisterhood  
behind closed doors, beneath  
mood lighting, how your work is  
miscalculated, the quiet  
eruption of underground  
volcanoes, the way we were  
never meant to be seen.  
This is a poem about how my  
own two hands could never  
forget the labor of my body or  
yours.

This is a poem about reaching  
past a locked gate, a secured  
fence, our own closed hearts,  
and knowing, *we cannot stop  
the songs of migratory birds, or  
keep a Monarch caterpillar from  
reaching for the milkweed,  
we cannot wrestle bones away  
from wolves, or stop the earth  
from being eclipsed.*



# A Labor of Labors

by Huck Reyes



Huck Reyes is a queer + trans Filipino-American sex worker, photographer, and writer. He works with the BIPOC Sex Worker Writers' Collective and the Spokes Hub. Currently Huck is working on curating a multimedia art show "Sex Work + Surrealism".

**My work does not seek to resolve the tensions between transness and sex work; instead, it lingers inside them, asking what becomes visible when inseparability itself is the subject.**

**Sex work and transness do not exist in tidy categories; they press into one another, overlap, and sometimes become indistinguishable.**

This is not always by choice, nor always by force, but often some intricate braid of the two. As the UN report reflects, trans life and sex work are not parallel stories but entwined realities—socially, politically, and intimately bound. To live within this entanglement is to understand both the material reasons trans people often find their way into sex work and the heavy hand of the state, which collapses our multiplicity into a single, flattened stereotype.

**I carry these contradictions in my body as much as in my practice.** They are my experiences, my companions, my histories. They are also the very grounds of my art.

The series I present here uses multiple-exposure photography on 35mm film as both method and metaphor. With each roll, I layer image upon image—sometimes two, sometimes three exposures across in a single frame.

This process is unpredictable: sometimes the layers align with uncanny precision; other times they blur, crowd, or even obliterate one another. This refusal of clean separation is essential. The photographs do not illustrate a concept; they enact it. They are built through overlap, through the impossibility of pulling one strand away from the others.

Color effects infuse the work with additional instability. Light leaks, chemical flares, and tonal shifts remind us that identity itself is volatile, flickering, and never fully within our control. These ruptures in the film mirror the ruptures in lived experience: the ways our stories are fractured by stigma, yet also illuminated by resilience and intimacy.

In these photographs, inseparability appears in multiple registers. At times it is voluntary, chosen, an act of self-making in which being trans and being a sex worker are woven together as part of a full, embodied life.

**At other times, inseparability is imposed—by police, by policy, by the gaze of a public eager to conflate gender with sex work and reduce both to deviance. These works hold that tension without smoothing it away.**

Rather than produce answers, I invite viewers to dwell in the layered surfaces, to feel the density of lived experience that cannot be reduced to singular narratives. To be trans, to be a sex worker, to be read by the world as both—this is not one story but many, colliding and folding.

**My hope is that these photographs do not simply depict that reality, but perform it: fragile, overexposed, luminous, and at times—inseparable.**



# Being Heard

by Noor Z.K.

**Our voices were never quiet —**  
you just locked them away  
behind borders, policies, and prison walls.

We've been shouting  
from the margins  
for so long  
that the echoes became music—  
and while you dance,  
**w e m o u r n -**

and then rebuild the world from scratch  
again and again and again  
and we never hear a "thank you"  
but we keep singing anyway.  
**( Y o u ' r e w e l c o m e ) .**

You may find us hard to hear,  
but it's only because  
**you haven't learned how to listen**  
**past your own breath.**

We are the hum beneath your headlines,  
the rhythm charging every liberated step,  
the pulse behind every movement  
you may falsely claim you started.

We are voluminous —  
in whispers, in waves,  
in thunderous roars,  
**in the sound of coins**  
**clinking into each other's palms.**

We are deafening —  
in languages you've erased,  
in glances that mean "safe,"  
**in every act of survival**  
**you mistook for compliance.**

**W e a r e i n f i n i t e -**  
and we have never stayed silent,  
but we refuse to wait for permission  
**t o b e h e a r d .**

Noor Z.K. (they/them) is a Texas-based sex worker, researcher, and community harm reduction organizer rooted in East African and Indo-Persian heritage. Their passion lies in building liberatory spaces for trans sex workers, survivors of state and interpersonal violence, and diasporic queer communities in the U.S. South.

As a founding member of SWEET (Sex Workers Educating & Empowering Texans), Noor blends art, advocacy, and community with trauma-informed organizing rooted in pleasure and collective survival. Their work reclaims visibility and storytelling as acts of resistance, healing, and belonging.



**SEX  
workers  
rights  
are  
human  
rights**



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**SEX WORKERS RIGHTS COALITION**

**RIGHTSNOTRESCUE@PROTONMAIL.COM**

