

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO PRIDE LONDON FESTIVAL

July 24, 2020 5:00 PM

We are incredibly disappointed by the harmful choices, languages and misrepresentation of the facts within the statement recently released by Pride London Festival. In the interests of transparency, we would like to clarify that BQN received three communications from a Kevin Evans who revealed himself to be also known as Stephen D'Amelio, a Pride London Board member on Monday 20th and Tuesday 21st July who wanted only to speak to a single individual via phone and would not communicate in any other form with us. Our last message to him requested clarification if he was contacting us as himself or as a pride board member and we did not receive a response. Other than that conversation we have had no official communications from Pride London Festival. We did not decline requests to hold communicative talks as we received no requests for communicative talks.

At this time we would also like to reiterate that the Black Queer Network has acted independent of all and other organizations and our media releases are our words and while we are grateful to other folks in our community who have shared and supported us, and to those who are elders in our community that we have consulted with in the broader LGBT2Q+ BIPOC community, we have taken the initiative to do this and written our own thoughts and observations.

If you read the PLF statement and shrugged to yourself thinking that you didn't expect any better. We ask you to sit for a moment and examine how you got to the point of not expecting any better and how a dismissal of behaviors and silence affect those who are under attack for simply speaking out and calling for a community to do better. If you found yourself supporting the PLF statement we challenge you to examine what community means to you and your participation in the silencing of voices within your own community.

We would like to once again point out the continued aggressions, silencing and abuses of power and privilege that are ongoing. We would like to remind everyone of the impact that dismissive, silencing, and attacking behaviors all have on those from marginalized communities who try to have their voices heard and assert their right to be part of community. We would like to remind everyone of the emotional burden and toll that happens when BIPOC voices are repeatedly dismissed, gas-lit and attacked. There is a much larger perspective and conversation to be had regarding this statement but we are going to take the time to breathe and have a moment to recover and heal before we comment further.

Black Queer Network - London Ontario