I'm Mariame Kaba, Director of Project Nia and Prison Abolitionist.

Is prison abolition a hard thing to explain to people? I get the same questions.

Who's left: Prison Abolition

"What about bad people? What about rapists?"

I don't answer those questions anymore.
These are posed as questions about safety but are mostly based in fear of the other.

Safety for whom? And from what?

It doesn't make sense to answer because there are bad people who have not been incarcerated.

Dog murderer net worth $1.5 million cleared on all charges.
I don't know what a world without prisons will look like.

I'd rather talk about having justice without police or surveillance.

Why abolition? Why not reform?
The prison system is harmful.

But it will fundamentally transform our relationship with other people.

There is rampant violence, rape, and deaths in custody.
The prison system is a recent development and not as permanent as people think.

When prisons first came into use in the late 1700s, Quakers pushed for reform. Why continue centuries of rounds of unsuccessful reforms?
Some people ask how feasible abolition is.

Security is about putting up gates and walls and weapons between you and other people.

How feasible is it to continue a violent system? For people to live in fear?

So we have to create the conditions that decrease the demand for police and surveillance. You need jobs, healthcare, housing. People need to be able to live their lives.

You need to create structures to address harm and hold people accountable. People think abolitionists minimize harm but we take it very seriously.

Safety is a collective action.
A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK ABDUCTIONISTS WANT TO CLOSE PRISONS TOMORROW WHEN WE DIDN'T GET THERE YESTERDAY.

RUTHIE GILMORE SAYS, "ABOLITION IS ABOUT PRESENCE, NOT ABSENCE. IT'S ABOUT BUILDING LIFE-AFFIRMING INSTITUTIONS."

I AM THE DIRECTOR OF PROJECT NIA, AN ORGANIZATION FOCUSED ON ENDING YOUTH INCARCERATION.

I ALSO WORK WITH SURVIVED + PUNISHED, A PROJECT DEDICATED TO THE RELEASE OF SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC + GENDERED VIOLENCE IMPRISONED FOR SURVIVAL ACTIONS.

SURVIVED AND PUNISHED'S FREE BRESHA CAMPAIGN SUCCESSFULLY MANAGED TO KEEP BRESHA MEADOWS IN THE JUVENILE SYSTEM RATHER THAN BEING TRIED AND SENTENCED AS AN ADULT, AND TRANSFERRED TO A MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY BEFORE FINALLY BEING RELEASED, AVOIDING A 25 TO LIFE SENTENCE.

BRESHA MEADOWS WAS ARRESTED AT 14 FOR FATALLY SHOOTING HER ABUSIVE FATHER IN SELF-DEFENSE.