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NAACP Legal Defense Fund Statement on the President's Reported Plan to End Ban on Transfer of Military Equipment to Local Law Enforcement

Tonight, media began reporting that the President plans to end the Obama Administration's ban on the transfer of certain military equipment to state and local police departments. The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund's (LDF) [Policing Reform Campaign](#) vehemently opposes lifting the ban. The campaign has repeatedly called for a moratorium on the Department of Defense program that allows for these transactions and long advocated against overly militarized police forces that disproportionately harm communities of color. [Janai Nelson](#), Associate Director-Counsel at the LDF issued the following statement:

"It is both exceptionally dangerous and irresponsible for the Administration to lift the ban on the transfer of certain surplus military equipment to state and local law enforcement organizations. Just a few summers ago, our nation watched as Ferguson raised the specter of increased police militarization. The law enforcement response there and in too many places across the country demonstrated how perilous, especially for Black and Brown communities, a militarized police force can be. The President's decision to make this change in the wake of the tragedy in Charlottesville and against a backdrop of frayed relations between police and communities of color further reflects this administration's now open effort to escalate racial tensions in our country. This action puts more fire power in the hands of police departments that remain largely untrained on matters of racial bias and endangers the public. Inviting the use of military weaponry against our domestic population is nothing short of recasting the public as an enemy.

"The current [ban](#) is only a partial restriction and sensibly prevents weapons like bayonets and grenade-launchers from being placed into the hands of local law enforcement. Given the protection provided by our armed forces, we should all ask why a local police force should be militarized in the first place. The current policy also requires training, data collection and reporting that, if eliminated, would give law enforcement unfettered access to equipment that has been used to intimidate communities of color, with little to no training or oversight.

"Congress could fix all of this with a bill placing restrictions on or eliminating the 1033 Program and we urge them to do so immediately to preempt this misguided act by the President."

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and

shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.