



For Immediate Release
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LDF Statement on Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting

Sherrilyn Ifill, President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), issued the following statement in response to [reports](#) of multiple casualties Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA:

“The Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh has been victimized by the most terrible violence during Sabbath services. Our hearts go out to the entire congregation and community. We stand in solidarity with those in the Jewish faith as they mourn this unimaginable tragedy.

“This violent act of terror comes at a moment when the language of racism, anti-Semitism and dehumanizing rhetoric targeting political opponents has been promoted and condoned by elected leaders in our country, including President Trump. Just this week Democratic and progressive leaders around the country were victims of multiple attempted bombing attacks by a supporter of the President.

“We demand that our political leaders end their violent, racist and anti-Semitic rhetoric and strongly condemn those who stoke and fan the flames of violence and division. There are real consequences for vulnerable people across our country. Provoking violence cannot be accepted as a political tactic. It is contrary to the principles of democracy and humanity, and it must stop today. We need real leaders in our country who are ready to stand up for equality, justice and peace.”

“We cannot separate today’s terrible act of violence at the Tree of Life synagogue from other acts of terrorism that have targeted Americans based on race, religion or ethnicity. We well remember the pain of Charleston in 2015 and the massacre at the Sikh temple in 2012. Just a few days ago an armed gunman tried to enter an African American church in Kentucky, just before killing two separate, innocent Black grandparents in a Kroger parking lot. These shootings continue a legacy of racist violence against Black people, Jewish people, immigrants, and other racial and religious minorities. The country’s failure to acknowledge and confront that unbroken history and learn from it is literally killing our communities.”

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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.