



**For Immediate Release**  
**Friday, January 27, 2022**

**LDF Media**  
212-965-2200 / [media@naacpldf.org](mailto:media@naacpldf.org)

## **LDF Responds to Release of Video Footage in the Killing of Tyre Nichols**

Today, the City of Memphis and the Memphis Police Department (MPD) released body-worn camera footage of the events that led to the death of Tyre Nichols, a 29-year-old Black man who died three days after being brutally attacked by five former MPD officers.

Each of the officers has been charged with one count of second-degree murder, one count of aggravated assault, two counts of aggravated kidnapping, two counts of official misconduct, and one count of official oppression. The officers had already been fired for excessive use of force, failing to intervene, and failing to render aid. Two Memphis Fire Department personnel were also relieved of duty following an internal investigation. The U.S. Department of Justice has opened a civil rights investigation through the U.S. Attorney's office and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation is also investigating this incident.

In response to today's release of the footage, [Legal Defense Fund](#) (LDF) President and Director-Counsel Janai S. Nelson issued the following statement:

"We extend our deepest condolences to the family of Mr. Nichols. There is no version of justice that can account for this loss.

"The depth of the depravity revealed in footage of the police attack on Tyre Nichols is immeasurable. Memphis Police Department officers hunted, tortured, and brutalized Tyre Nichols. Not a single officer present intervened to stop these criminal acts or render aid. The sustained and sadistic attack on Mr. Nichols puts a spotlight on a law enforcement culture of violence that cannot be divorced from the ways law enforcement routinely undermines the public safety of Black people. Even minutes away from his home, Mr. Nichols was not safe, and the excruciating, extended, and inhumane violence that led to his death reminds us of the urgent need to replace our current system of public safety with one founded on principles of humanity and justice.

"While it is important that these officers have been swiftly charged and their actions investigated, this is only the first step toward accountability. Ultimately, this process must not — cannot — end with these MPD officers. The department has received over \$18 million dollars in federal funding in the past decade, and we are calling on the Department of Justice to conduct an immediate and comprehensive investigation of the MPD to ensure that these funds have not gone towards creating the conditions that led to this heinous killing. We also call on the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation to ensure that every law enforcement bystander to this incident is identified and charged.

"To prevent another tragedy from occurring, our public safety system must be transformed, starting with the removal of law enforcement officers from routine traffic enforcement which

creates opportunities for violence during benign interactions. We echo the demands of the Memphis community for the MPD to disband the SCORPION unit that ended Mr. Nichols life, and we urge Congress to meet this moment by passing comprehensive federal legislation that addresses the scourge of police violence.”

Additionally, LDF Associate Director-Counsel Tona Boyd issued the following statement:

“Today, the world saw the truth of what happened to Tyre Nichols, and it is as terrifying as it is inhumane. The reprehensible conduct by these former Memphis Police Department officers has once again left a community and our nation in need of deep healing. The brutal attack on Mr. Nichols – which included officers taking turns using pepper spray, tasers, batons, kicks, hand strikes and dehumanizing language in a prolonged, harrowing sequence of violence - exemplifies the very worst of law enforcement and calls attention to the horrific ways that, all too often, Black people in this country are treated by police.

“It is not a coincidence that such violence stemmed from a simple traffic incident. Too many times we’ve seen routine stops result in fatal harm — that disproportionately impacts Black people. Simply put, there is no room for armed officers in traffic enforcement.

“To those that demand justice, we stand with you, and we urge officials to allow demonstrators to exercise their right to peacefully protest under the First Amendment and we further caution authorities not to meet those who peacefully protest police brutality with antagonism and more police violence.”

###

*Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund](#) (LDF) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. 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 Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF 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.*