



**For Immediate Release**  
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### **LDF Condemns Violent Arrest of Le'Keian Woods**

On Monday, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) released body-worn camera footage of a brutal law enforcement attack on Le'Keian Woods, a 24-year-old Black man.

In response to this, [Legal Defense Fund](#) (LDF) President and Director-Counsel Janai Nelson issued the following statement:

“Our hearts go out to Le'Keian Woods and his family during this traumatic time, and we express our heartfelt wishes for his full and swift recovery. The photograph of Mr. Woods' swollen face after his encounter with law enforcement officers reflects the dangers of unfettered law enforcement violence. It is a sobering indictment of policing in this country.

“Gang unit officers from the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office repeatedly, and brutally, attacked Mr. Woods in a prolonged sequence of senseless violence. Without shame, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office then claimed it seemed 'appropriate' for officers to knee, punch, and elbow an unarmed man until he wheezed in pain with a swollen face full of blood. This disturbing confession raises serious alarm about the type of conduct and unchecked violence that the Sheriff's office considers to be 'appropriate.' This is part of a pattern of abusive conduct by members of the gang unit, including racist text messages by officers that came to light in 2022, and harassment of young Black men noted by former officers in the unit, and carries deeply concerning implications for the safety of Black Jacksonville residents.

“In the interests of accountability and to prevent further harm, we urge the Department of Justice to investigate whether officers from the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, who were involved in this gruesome act of violence, violated Mr. Woods' rights under 18 U.S.C. 242. The JSO's gang unit must be immediately disbanded given the unit's role in this incident, its history of abusive conduct in Jacksonville, and the very real harm these specialized units continue to inflict on Black communities across the country.”

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*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.*