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LDF Media
212-965-2200 / media@naacpldf.org

LDF Commends Department of Justice for Investigative Findings on the Minneapolis Police Department

Today, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) concluded its investigation of the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD), and found that there is reasonable cause to believe that the MPD has engaged in a pattern or practice of excessive force; unlawful discrimination against Black and Native American people; First Amendment violations of protestors' rights, including by retaliating against journalists and others; and discrimination against those experiencing behavioral health crises, in violation of the American Disabilities Act.

The City of Minneapolis has entered a preliminary agreement with the DOJ and is in the process of negotiating a consent decree.

Following the horrific murder of George Floyd by an MPD officer on May 25, 2020, that was captured on video and circulated widely a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and multi-generational movement for racial justice unfolded across the nation and globally, to demand accountability for police violence and transformative change to reshape our public safety systems.

In response to the Department's findings, Legal Defense Fund (LDF) President and Director Counsel Janai S. Nelson issued the following statement:

“We commend DOJ’s thorough investigation into the MPD, which starkly illustrates what those in Minneapolis have long known: though it has been three years since the tragic murder of George Floyd, the culture of violence and racial discrimination that led to his death continue to be deeply entrenched in the Department’s enforcement practices. As these findings indicate, the circumstances preceding George Floyd’s death were not an outlier. These incidents of egregious police violence are rarely isolated instances. MPD officers have attacked other vulnerable Minneapolis residents who voiced they could not breathe or otherwise suffered violence at the hand of police while other officers failed to

intervene. This callous disregard for humanity highlights how the MPD not only failed to protect George Floyd, but has failed the city of Minneapolis.

“While bringing this conduct to light is critically important, the remedies developed must be transformational to meet the gravity of these findings. To honor George Floyd, and ensure the safety of Minneapolis residents, the path forward must prioritize remedies that will prevent such egregious conduct from occurring in the first place, such as violence interrupters and community-based responses to behavioral health calls to reduce police contact overall. About 44% of Minneapolis voters previously sought to eliminate the Minneapolis Police Department and replace it with a public-health oriented Department of Public Safety. These investigative findings should push officials to devote resources to initiatives that are proven to create and sustain safety, as illustrated in our [Framework for Public Safety](#), rather than further investment in a Department that has been shown to do immense harm to the residents they are pledged to protect.”

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

“Today’s findings bring to light an array of unconstitutional conduct by the MPD that highlights the depth of danger the Department has posed to Minneapolis residents. The report illustrates the ways in which MPD’s discriminatory conduct puts the most vulnerable members of the community at increased risk for police violence and abuse, including those in behavioral distress. The pervasive targeting of journalists and protestors, meanwhile, echoes a national trend where law enforcement officials are violating fundamental constitutional rights and placing those who critique law enforcement in peril. This conduct is antithetical to a functioning democracy.

“For Minneapolis residents to be safe, the rights of protestors, journalists, and all community members must be preserved and protected. As the City of Minneapolis charts a path to account for its role in the death of George Floyd and the pervasive police abuses documented by DOJ, it is critical that any resulting remedies reflect the input of the communities that have been impacted by the MPD’s unconstitutional conduct, and that any recommendations are structured to ensure enduring solutions that are proven to enhance the public safety of all members of the community.”

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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.