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LDF Issues Statement in Response to Racially-Motivated Buffalo Mass Shooting

Today, an 18-year-old white supremacist shot and killed at least 10 individuals in a shooting at a Buffalo, New York, supermarket that law enforcement is treating as a hate crime. In response, **Janai S. Nelson, President and Director-Counsel** of the Legal Defense Fund (LDF), issued the following statement:

“We send our deepest condolences to the victims of the racially-motivated shooting targeting Black people in Buffalo, New York. This horrific rampage is another in the long line of distinctly American mass shootings that combine racism and gun violence. This is a deepening crisis for which we must be prepared to make all the necessary sacrifices to peacefully bring to an end the scourge of hate.

“Black Americans are the leading targets for hate crimes in our country, but we also continue to witness increases in anti-Semitic attacks, as well as violence against the Latino, Asian, Muslim, and LGBTQ+ communities. The frequency and intensity of this violence has been super charged in part by social media, which provides a virtually unchecked platform for hate speech and the encouragement of violent actions. And, as we have seen by the number of attacks that have been live streamed, a built-in audience for hate.

“Social media companies are not alone in having created this environment, however, as cable television has increasingly become a home for what were once seen as extremist views. Indeed, the Great Replacement Theory, which a shocking [one in three Americans](#) now believes to be true, has found a mainstream home on Tucker Carlson's Fox News program after being previously cited by four mass shooters – including those who committed the heinous crimes in Oslo, Norway; Christchurch, New Zealand; Dayton, Ohio; and El Paso, Texas.

“This is a time for action. Simply offering thoughts and prayers to the victims and their families will not prevent future attacks. It is imperative that elected officials take concrete steps to reduce online hate speech – including essential government regulation – and put forward serious legislation to put an end to gun violence in America. The public also has an important role to play in holding digital and media platforms accountable for the culture of hate and violence that they have coddled for too long.

“Unless we want to be a nation riven by increasing violence and terror, all of us – not just those of us who are the targets – must act now to end the propagation of hate speech and unchecked access to militaristic weapons that are trained on our communities.”

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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.