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

LDF Statement on One Year Anniversary of White Supremacist Violence in Charlottesville

Last August, white supremacist violence erupted at the “Unite the Right Rally” in Charlottesville, Virginia, taking the life of counter-protester Heather Heyer and leaving many others wounded. One year later, white supremacists are again gathering, this time in Washington, D.C., for a “White Civil Rights Rally.” [Sherrilyn Ifill](#), President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), issued the following statement:

“One year ago, white supremacist violence terrorized Charlottesville and the entire nation. White men spewing vile, racist chants, giving Nazi salutes, and wearing the insignia of white supremacist organizations openly marched through the streets without even the shame of their hooded forebears in the Ku Klux Klan. The result was the killing of a peaceful protester, Heather Heyer, by a white supremacist and the beating of African American and other protesters who came out to stand against racism. The violence of the march was compounded by the response of the President of the United States, who praised what he deemed the “very fine people on both sides” of the protest. We hoped that our country’s leaders – without regard to political party – would join in rejecting not only the President’s appalling defense of ‘both sides,’ but in rejecting white supremacy in all of its forms. Instead, while this Administration has increased its own white supremacist rhetoric and racially discriminatory immigration and education policies, Congressional leaders have advanced anti-civil rights judicial nominees and failed to hold members of the executive branch accountable for attacks on equal justice under the law.

“This year, the organizers of the ‘Unite the Right Rally’ have prepared a new event aimed at provoking aggression and furthering a white nationalist agenda, the ‘White Civil Rights Rally.’ Throughout our history the civil rights of white Americans have never been in jeopardy, and this gathering is a transparent attempt to spread hate and instill fear. We call on law enforcement to protect counter-protestors and take steps to prevent this event from devolving into violence. Our leaders – at the federal, state, and local level – owe Americans the response we should have received last year. No matter one’s partisan affiliation, there can be no place for white supremacy in policy, government, or anywhere else in this country.”

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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.