



For Immediate Release
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LDF Statement on the Police-Involved Shooting of Jacob Blake

Yesterday evening, 29-year-old Jacob Blake, a Black man, was shot in the back at least seven times at point blank range by one or more officers from the Kenosha Police Department (KPD) as he was entering a vehicle, reportedly to check on his children. From inside the vehicle, Mr. Blake's three sons witnessed their father being repeatedly shot at close range. Mr. Blake is now in critical condition at a Milwaukee hospital.

Janai Nelson, Associate Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), issued the following statement:

“Yesterday’s harrowing police shooting of Mr. Blake exemplifies the egregious and unconscionable violence that law enforcement officers inflict on people of color in countless communities across our country. Even as peaceful protests against police violence continue across the nation, police shootings of unarmed men and women of color are still occurring at an alarming rate.

“We are also deeply concerned about reports of excessive force by the KPD and other law enforcement agencies against protesters in Kenosha, including using tear gas to disperse crowds. It is unacceptable and unconstitutional for law enforcement agencies to engage in violence against peaceful protesters, and LDF calls on local and state officials to ensure that protestors can safely exercise their right to assemble without attack from law enforcement.

“Since George Floyd was killed by Minneapolis police officers on May 25, activists around the country have been demanding fundamental changes to public safety that invest in alternatives to policing to resolve disputes — and they are now taking to the streets in Kenosha for the same reason. LDF stands alongside these activists as they demand immediate accountability for the shooting of Mr. Blake. We also stand with the family of Mr. Blake as he fights for his life and hope for his full and swift recovery.

“The need to address the legal, social, and political barriers to holding officers accountable for their actions, to fundamentally reimagine public safety, and to put an end to senseless and brutal police violence against people of color could not be more urgent. LDF will continue to work aggressively to ensure that federal, state, and local officials hold officers accountable and that outsized police presence in communities of color is replaced with community-centered public safety models.”

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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. 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. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute (TMI) 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.

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