



**For Immediate Release
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**Legal Defense Fund Decries Racist Killings in Jacksonville, Florida and the State's
Anti-Black Policies; Calls on Federal Authorities to Intervene**

On Saturday, a white supremacist shot and killed three Black people in a targeted attack at a store in Jacksonville, Florida, before killing himself. Law enforcement officials said the assailant "hated Black people" and used a Glock gun and AR-15 rifle, one of which was painted with a swastika.

LDF President & Director-Counsel Janai S. Nelson issued the following statement in response to the horrific incident:

"We are a nation in crisis. We mourn with Jacksonville and with every community devastated by white supremacist hate and violence. The state of Florida has been cultivating ignorance, anti-Blackness, and bigotry that, along with lax gun laws, has now culminated in Black people there being hunted and fatally harmed. Florida legislators are actively working to erase the history of Black people through school curricula and have sanctioned lessons that diminish the evil of slavery and frame the inhumane institution as somehow beneficial to the enslaved. This propaganda infects young people's minds with bigotry, which is how hate blooms and violence takes root. Racism is a learned behavior.

"Every single person advancing this racist rhetoric has blood on their hands. And those who shamelessly capitulated to these efforts and backed away from truthful, inclusive educational goals are also culpable. At the same time, a lack of adequate gun control means deadly shootings remain a scourge on our communities. Black people, who lack protection from elected officials who also target them with racist rhetoric and dangerous policies, and all people who believe in justice and equality must respond by voting those elected officials out.

"The official response to this tragedy cannot be business as usual. We call on the White House and federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice, as well as state and local agencies, to be activated on this incident, be transparent and comprehensive in their investigation, and to take seriously the rise in hate crimes and the continuing threat of loosened gun control measures.

"We also send our deepest condolences to the family and loved ones of those whose lives were taken in this hate crime."

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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.