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LDF Issues Statement on Trump Administration's Plans to Execute Five People Before End of Time in Office

On July 14, 2020, the federal government carried out the first federal execution in nearly 20 years when it put Daniel Lewis to death. It was the first of three executions by the U.S. government within four days. Since then, two more people were executed in August, two in September, and another, Orlando Cordia Hall, just last month. In the first 20 years of this century, three people were executed by the U.S. government. Eight have been executed by the Trump Administration in the last six months.

Today, Brandon Bernard is scheduled to be executed – one of five the Administration has scheduled between now and the end of President Trump's term in office. In response to this unconscionable rush to execute people over the next month, Sherrilyn Ifill, President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) released the following statement:

“This evening, as the world observes Human Rights Day, the Trump Administration is set to execute Brandon Bernard over the objections of the majority of jurors in his trial, and 23 prosecutors, and despite the fact that critical evidence was withheld that would have fundamentally undermined the prosecution's case for death. The Administration has, in fact, scheduled five executions before its time in office ends next month – including four Black men and the first woman to be executed by the U.S. government in almost 70 years.

“LDF has long opposed the death penalty. Our founder, Thurgood Marshall, defended many Black men who had been sentenced to death in the Jim Crow South, and since that time we have represented multiple people on death row. Numerous innocent people have been executed due to this nation's discriminatory and severely flawed criminal justice system, as well as because of human error. This must end.

“Since 1963, the U.S. government has executed a total of 11 people. The Trump Administration, after reinstating the federal death penalty this summer, has executed eight of those 11 in the last six months alone. Now, in an effort to advance a political agenda, the administration is rushing to take the lives of five additional people before President-elect Biden, who has expressed opposition to the death penalty, can be sworn into office.

“LDF calls on the courts to halt the execution of Mr. Bernard and on the federal government to put an end to this unconstitutional, discriminatory, and inhumane form of punishment once and for all. It is a practice that should have been abolished long ago.”

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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 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. Follow LDF on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).