

July 22, 2020

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**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

***Legal Aid Statement in Response to Mayor Bill de Blasio's Continued Comments Faulting Courts For Modest Uptick In Shootings***

**(NEW YORK, NY) – Tina Luongo, Attorney-in-Charge of the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society**, issued the below statement in response to recent comments made by Mayor Bill de Blasio faulting the courts for the modest uptick in recent shootings:

"Mayor Bill de Blasio's claim that the recent uptick in shootings is somehow the fault of our court system is entirely unsupported by any evidence and utterly devoid of logic. It also ignores the far more likely explanation that in New York, as elsewhere, any increase is attributable to the current crises caused by the pandemic and economic collapse.

New York's court system has been functioning virtually now for months, including arraignments for those arrested, bail hearings, pleas and conferences. The necessary switch to virtual proceedings does not and has not prevented prosecutors from seeking bail, the courts from setting bail or remanding individuals charged with certain crimes, or law enforcement from conducting investigations.

The Mayor and NYPD Commissioner Dermot Shea are clearly taking aim at the courts now because they can offer no support for their baseless claim that bail reform and the release of incarcerated people vulnerable to COVID-19 have somehow led to an increases in crime.

The Mayor should stop making these reckless comments and instead educate himself on the fundamentals of our criminal legal system."

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*The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 140 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. [www.legalaidnyc.org](http://www.legalaidnyc.org)*