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

Statement On Agreement To Address City's Ongoing Non-Compliance Issues with Rikers Island Consent Judgment

(NEW YORK, NY) – Mary Lynne Werlwas, Director of the Prisoners' Rights Project at The Legal Aid Society, issued the following statement after The Legal Aid Society reached agreement with the City, subject to court approval, to address the City's non-compliance with the Consent Judgment in *Nunez v. City of New York et. al.*, litigation filed to remedy excessive force in New York City jails:

"In 2011, we brought a class action on behalf of people in New York City jails because of the unconscionable brutality inflicted on our clients in DOC custody, leading to a Consent Judgment in 2015 that required the City to enact sweeping reforms under the eye of a court-appointed Monitor. Five years later, the Monitor's reports have made clear that the City has not lived up to its obligations under that agreement. The pervasive violence and dehumanization persists, and let's be clear: that burden has once again fallen most heavily on communities of color. These failures have a human cost, and they cannot continue.

This Remedial Order represents the next stage in our fight for our clients, who face the same law enforcement culture of impunity behind jail walls that has brought so many to the streets in the wake of the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and too many others. We are glad to have reached this agreement with the City, subject to the approval of the court. Should the court enter it, we will vigilantly enforce it."

Background: Steve J. Martin, independent Federal Monitor in *Nunez v. City of New York et. al.*, was appointed by the Court after Legal Aid, private firms and the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York settled a lawsuit against the City demanding that the New York City Department of Correction (DOC) meaningfully address the rampant excessive force that has long been entrenched at Rikers Island and other City jails. The Remedial Order seeks to address persistent non-compliance with the Consent Judgment in the case, and requires the Department to make systemic changes in supervisory structure and accountability, investigating misconduct, and disciplinary proceedings. The Order also targets areas of particular failure by the Department, including immediate corrective action for misconduct, management of 18-year-olds, deployment of emergency response teams, and de-escalation protocols.

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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. <https://www.legalaidnyc.org/>