

Legal Aid, NYCLU Joint Statement on Attorney General Lawsuit Condemning NYPD Protest Violence

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(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society and the New York Civil Liberties Union released the following statement responding to a lawsuit filed today from New York State Attorney General Letitia James - which joins existing litigation brought this past October by Legal Aid and NYCLU - addressing the New York Police Department's conduct during protests this summer:

"The Attorney General has a defining role to play in setting the statewide standard for police oversight, and we're glad to see her use that authority to hold the Mayor and police leadership accountable for the egregious behavior of NYPD officers at Black Lives Matter protests this summer. The repeated and excessive violence of officers against peaceful protesters who marched for racial justice after the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor was appalling and inexcusable, and revealed serious, systemic issues in the department, including an ongoing failure to acknowledge wrongdoing or discipline illegal behavior from the top down. We hope this will be the beginning of a serious reckoning over police violence and militarized use of force against protesters, especially people of color, and a check on the impunity many officers have come to see as their right."

Background:

This past October, Legal Aid and NYCLU filed a [lawsuit](#) on behalf of 11 plaintiffs against Mayor Bill de Blasio, Police Commissioner Dermot Shea, Chief of Department Terence Monahan, the City of New York, and several individual police officers for their roles in the indiscriminate brutalizing of peaceful protesters during the protests following the police killing of George Floyd.

The suit addresses the first month of protests between May 28 and June 28, where swarming officers used batons, pepper spray, and other aggressive techniques to retaliate against New Yorkers for showing their support of Black lives and demanding an end to police violence. Such uses of excessive force against these demonstrators violated their First and Fourth Amendment rights. The Lawsuit highlights the widespread and widely-publicized instances of indiscriminate force by police officers during the protests in late May and June following the police killing of George Floyd, and claims the mayor and city instituted a de facto policy allowing individual officers to violently target protesters by repeatedly approving forceful deployments and refusing discipline or repercussions for blatant officer violence.

This matter is currently pending before United States District Court for the Southern District of New York.

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