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

Defenders Call On President Biden to Visit Rikers Island During Next Week's Visit to New York City

(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society, The Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defender Services, New York County Defender Services, the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem and Queens Defenders released the following statement [urging](#) President Joseph R. Biden Jr. to visit Rikers Island when he comes to New York City next week to meet with Mayor Eric Adams:

“President Joseph Biden’s visit to New York City is an opportunity for this nation’s leader to witness firsthand the horrendous conditions New Yorkers endure each day on Rikers Island – conditions that should serve as a reminder of why incarceration is not a panacea for public safety concerns. New York City jails remain in an unprecedented and unmitigated humanitarian crisis that has no end in sight.

At a time when people are consistently denied basic medical and mental health care and are enduring inhumane and dangerous conditions, including an alarming increase in COVID-19 cases, we should be moving towards immediate decarceration. Focusing instead on discredited punitive and surveillance-based approaches that feed mass incarceration and send even more people into facilities that cannot keep them safe demeans democracy and endangers everyone. This should alarm all elected officials.

We call on President Biden to visit Rikers Island and bear witness to the ongoing human rights violations against incarcerated New Yorkers.”

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