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**\*\*\*MEDIA ADVISORY\*\*\***

***In Response to the Continued Humanitarian Crisis at Rikers Island, Defenders, Impacted New Yorkers, Elected Officials and Others to Hold Vigil in Honor of Those Who Have Died in Department of Correction Custody Since 2021***

(NEW YORK, NY) – **Public defenders, community advocates and family members will hold a vigil and silent march and light candles** to honor the twenty people who have died in NYC Department of Correction custody since 2021. The crisis on Rikers Island has only worsened over the past year and a half, and the deaths continue to mount. The mourners will call on public officials to take sweeping and immediate action to halt the violent and inhumane conditions on Rikers Island and protect incarcerated people from preventable death and injury.

**What:** Vigil in Honor of Those Who Have Died on Rikers Island

**Who:** Elected officials, Freedom Agenda, NYC Jails Action Coalition, New York County Defender Services, The Legal Aid Society, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, Brooklyn Defender Services and Queens Defenders.

**When:** Tuesday, May 17 at 1 pm

**Where:** Vigil will begin at the City Hall steps, followed by a silent march to 1 St. Andrew's Plaza.

**Background:**

- The latest man to die, [Dashawn Carter](#), passed away last week at Rikers Island at the age of 25.
- Also last week, the NYC Board of Correction issued a scathing [report](#) finding that correction guards failed to prevent the deaths of three men who died earlier this year. The board found seven “key findings” in their investigation, including: unstaffed posts, lack of floor officers, insufficient rounds, lack of emergency medical response and missed medical appointments. The 2022 deaths of Tarz Youngblood, George Pagan and Herman Diaz were mentioned specifically in these findings.

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