



Justice in Every Borough.

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

Legal Aid Statement on the Death of Erick Tavira, the 17th New Yorker to Die in DOC Custody in 2022 Alone

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** released the following statement on the [death of Erick Tavira](#), the 17th New Yorker to die in New York City Department of Correction (DOC) custody in 2022 alone, by an apparent suicide:

“We are both heartbroken and outraged to learn that Erick Tavira, who had no prior convictions and was just 28-years-old, had his life cut short by an apparent suicide early this morning on Rikers Island. The local jail system has claimed the life of yet another New Yorker - the 17th human being to die in DOC custody this year alone.

Mr. Tavira’s case underscores the inevitable outcome when incarceration is used in lieu of treatment. Had Mr. Tavira had access to programming, today’s tragedy could have been completely avoided. Carceral settings are no place for people struggling with mental or substance abuse issues, and all criminal legal system stakeholders must pursue alternatives that prioritize community-based resources over the confines of a cage.

Lastly, we call on DOC to conduct an immediate investigation with full transparency on the circumstances surrounding Mr. Tavira’s death, and provide timely and accurate information to his family and defense team.”

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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 145 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