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

***Legal Aid Statement on the NYPD Inspector General's Audit
of the NYPD's Gang Database***

***Advocates Urge the City Council to Immediately Pass
Legislation That Would Finally Abolish This Overtly Racially
Biased Policing Tool***

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society condemned the findings of a [report](#) on the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) controversial gang database, which was released by the New York City Department of Investigation's Office of the Inspector General for the NYPD ([OIG-NYPD](#)) earlier today.

Anthony Posada, supervising attorney in the Community Justice Unit at The Legal Aid Society, said:

“The Inspector General’s report makes clear that the NYPD’s gang database is overtly racist, procedurally indefensible, and makes little to no contribution to public safety. Further investment in this irredeemable project would be a step backward. Only one conclusion logically follows from these findings: the New York City Council must pass [Int 0360](#), critical legislation sponsored by Assemblyperson Carlina Rivera, that would abolish this poorly managed and misguided database and preclude the NYPD from creating a replacement that replicates the database’s racist underpinnings. We need investment in communities not investment in failed, racist, guilt-by-association policing.”

Background:

Advocates have long decried the NYPD gang database as discriminatory, over-inclusive, and full of erroneous data that results in surveillance and the [questionable](#) prosecution of Black and Latinx people. Inclusion in a gang database, which requires no proof of criminal activity and can be based merely on social media photos with other alleged gang members or wearing certain colors, can impact an individual's access to housing, education, employment, naturalization, and more.

The audit by the OIG-NYPD, which is overseen by The New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), was launched in 2018 into the problematic database, which is currently estimated to hold records on [17,500 to 42,000](#) New Yorkers, some as young as 11-years-old. [99 percent](#) of those in the database are Black and Latinx.

Cities across the country, including [Chicago](#), [Boston](#), and [Washington D.C.](#), have successfully challenged their local law enforcement's gang databases in court. The justices in the U.S. First Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston cited "flaws in that database, including its reliance on an erratic point system built on unsubstantiated inferences."

In 2017, the Portland Police Bureau ended its gang database, yet a city [audit](#) less than a year later discovered that the Bureau still kept an informal list of active gang members despite purging the formal directory of "designated" gang members. This underscores the need for legislation, such as [Int 0360](#), to not only abolish databases, but also prohibit local law enforcement from creating replacements.

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