



December 22, 2023

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

***Legal Aid Statement in Response to the New York City Board of Correction's Special Investigation Report on the April 6, 2023 Fire that Occurred at the North Infirmery Command on Rikers Island***

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** issued the following statement in response to the New York City Board of Correction's (BOC) special investigation [report](#) on the April 6, 2023 fire that occurred at the North Infirmery Command on Rikers Island:

“The Board of Correction’s special investigation report released today describes such egregious mismanagement by multiple entities within the Department of Correction (DOC) that the Department should no longer be trusted to hold people in custody.

“The Report describes layers upon layers of avoidable failures: sprinklers that DOC had inexplicably turned off for unknown lengths of time; a year without required weekly and monthly fire safety audits; a captain ordering officers to stop conducting tours required at 30-minute intervals for 3.5 hours; a fire safety team so understaffed that DOC could not even find its own fire safety inspectors when the fire broke out; supervisors who shockingly ordered officers to lock incarcerated people into burning cells instead of evacuate; and DOC’s flagrant misuse of isolated confinement cells in violation of BOC rules.

“It is hard to imagine any institution in our city where such compounding and colossal failures to prevent and contain a catastrophic fire would not result in immediate accountability by leadership, and we demand answers from City Hall about how Assistant Deputy Mayor Louis Molina can be trusted to maintain public safety and what the new leadership in DOC has done to prevent further catastrophe.”

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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 140 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](http://www.legalaidnyc.org)*