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

Legal Aid Calls on NYC Department of Investigation Inspector General for the NYPD to Review Abuses of Authority Related to NYPD's Violent and Reckless Crackdown of Recent Protests at Local Universities and Colleges

Attorneys Demand Answers on NYPD Unlawfully Detaining and Processing Protesters on Low-Level Offenses Who Should Have been Issued Appearance Tickets

Public Defenders Urge Probe of Decision Which Led to the Deployment of Armed Units, Discharge of an Officer's Firearm, and Initial Cover-Up

Lastly, Public Defenders Support and Echo Call from the City Council for an Investigation into NYPD's Unethical and Unprofessional Use of Departmental Social Media Accounts

(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society, in a recently issued [letter](#), [called](#) on the New York City Office of the Inspector General for the New York City Police Department (OIG-NYPD) to review the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) problematic crackdown of protests at local universities and colleges that led to [widespread violations of protesters' constitutional and statutory rights](#).

Legal Aid urged the OIG-NYPD to investigate reports of the NYPD [slamming protesters](#) to the ground, [pushing others](#), and [throwing](#) one protester down the stairs, along with reports that the NYPD indiscriminately [used pepper spray](#) on protesters, legal observers, and journalists.

Legal Aid also called for a probe into the NYPD's reckless decision to deploy paramilitary-style units into Hamilton Hall at Columbia University where an NYPD officer 'accidentally' [discharged his weapon](#), endangering the protesters, and the NYPD's initial decision to [withhold](#) this information from the general public.

Legal Aid urged the OIG-NYPD to investigate the NYPD's detention practices. This includes the NYPD arresting and processing demonstrators who were charged with low-level offenses and who should have received an appearance ticket, as [required](#) by [Criminal Procedure Law - Section 150.20](#).

After a review of cases, Legal Aid estimates that at least 46 demonstrators arrested at Columbia University and more at the City College of New York (CCNY) were detained and processed on charges that should have resulted in an appearance ticket. Additionally, Legal Aid urged the OIG-NYPD to investigate why dozens of protesters languished in custody for more than 24-hours, in violation of a long-standing court ruling Legal Aid secured in [Roundtree v. Brown](#), which set a 24-hour standard from arrest to arraignment.

Lastly, throughout these demonstrations, NYPD executives were using official departmental social media accounts unprofessionally and unethically to promote [knowingly false or misleading statements](#), and dangerous, gross misrepresentations of protesters. These include NYPD officials using a British historian's book on the history of terrorism that was found at Columbia University to make specious links between student protesters and terrorism. The NYPD's own disciplinary matrix prescribes penalties for false or misleading official statements.

Legal Aid announced support for City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams' recent [request](#) to the OIG-NYPD to conduct an official investigation and review of NYPD's policies, practices, and operations related to its use of social media.

“The NYPD's aggressive and militaristic response to student protests that led to rampant violations of protesters' constitutional and statutory rights deserves immediate scrutiny and accountability,” said **Chief Attorney of the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society Tina Luongo**. “From the NYPD illegally detaining protesters; holding students in custody for over 24-hours, despite New York's 24-hour arrest to arraignment standard; the discharge of a firearm in a building with unarmed students; and troubling use of social media to attack anyone - elected officials, journalists, advocates and others - who question the Department's methods; the OIG-NYPD must immediately launch a probe into these widespread abuses of authority.”

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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. <https://www.legalaidnyc.org>