

# THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Justice in Every Borough.

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## ***Statement in Response to NYC Office of the Inspector General for the NYPD Opening a Probe Into the NYPD's Unethical and Unprofessional Use of Departmental Social Media Accounts***

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Legal Aid Society** released the following statement in response to the New York City Office of the Inspector General for the New York City Police Department (OIG-NYPD) [opening a probe](#) into the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) unethical and unprofessional use of departmental social media accounts:

“We welcome the announcement that the OIG-NYPD will conduct an official investigation of the NYPD’s recent use of social media, which has served as a cudgel to spread misinformation, malign protesters, chill future protests, and more - a use completely inappropriate for a police department that purports to exude ‘courtesy, professionalism and respect.’

“However, we implore the OIG-NYPD to also review the NYPD’s disproportionate use of force during the crackdown, as well as to examine why New Yorkers charged with low-level crimes were illegally detained and processed through the system instead of receiving an appearance ticket, resulting in the prolonged detention of demonstrators in violation of New York’s long-standing 24-hour arrest to arraignment requirement.”

### **Background:**

Earlier this week, Legal Aid [called](#) on the OIG-NYPD to review the NYPD’s 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.

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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>*