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Contact:

[Press@legal-aid.org](mailto:Press@legal-aid.org)

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

***Statement from The Legal Aid Society on the Death of Client James Maldonado,  
Who Died in DOC Custody This Past Friday***

**(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society** released the following statement on James Maldonado, a former client, who passed away in New York City Department of Correction (DOC) custody this past Friday:

“We mourn the tragic deaths of two New Yorkers who died in the custody of the New York City Department of Correction this past Friday, including James Maldonado, who we represented. We extend our deepest condolences to their families, friends, and loved ones during this incredibly difficult time.

“Currently, we have received little information from DOC regarding the circumstances surrounding Mr. Maldonado’s death, which occurred shortly after his arraignment. Often, DOC fails to provide even the most basic details to counsel, the client’s family, or the public. This ongoing lack of transparency is unacceptable. We call for an immediate and independent investigation by the New York City Department of Investigation to ensure that both DOC and the New York City Police Department — where Mr. Maldonado spent the majority of his detention — are held accountable and provide answers to his loved ones and the public.

“Closing Rikers Island and reducing the local jail population are essential steps toward preventing the tragic deaths and daily suffering regularly reported to us by the incarcerated people we serve. Every person in City custody — regardless of the charges they face — deserves dignity, care, and protection. Yet time and again, DOC has proven incapable of safeguarding the lives in its care.”

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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 almost 150 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)*