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New Monitor Report Confirms Years of Unconstitutional Policing by NYPD Specialized Units

Attorneys Call on Mamdani Administration to End Unconstitutional Policing by NYPD Specialized Units

(NEW YORK, NY) — The Legal Aid Society and the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) condemn the New York City Police Department (NYPD) following the release of the Independent Monitor’s latest [report](#), which found that the Department’s so-called “specialized” units continue to engage in unconstitutional stops, frisks, and searches that overwhelmingly target Black and Hispanic men and failed to meet nearly every court-ordered constitutional compliance benchmark for 2025, based on a random audit sample.

The report details persistent constitutional violations by the NYPD’s Neighborhood Safety Teams (NSTs), Community Response Teams (CRTs), and former Public Safety Teams (PSTs). These plainclothes units focus on “self-initiated” stops, searches, and frisks. Rather than responding to radio runs or civilian complaints, NSTs and CRTs continue in the footsteps of the notorious “broken windows” street crime units, emerging from unmarked cars to grab, stop, and search people with boilerplate accusations like “rectangular bulge[s]” in pockets or “nervous” behavior. The report found that these specialized units continue to perform significantly worse than regular patrol officers and failed to meet nearly every constitutional compliance benchmark established by the Independent Monitor.

Among the report’s key findings:

- 91 percent of people stopped by specialized units were Black or Hispanic, and 88 percent were Black or Hispanic men.
- Specialized units failed to meet nearly every court-ordered constitutional compliance benchmark for stops, frisks, and searches in 2025, including every single fourth-quarter benchmark.
- The most intrusive police encounters had the most problems with constitutional compliance, with specialized units achieving just 69 percent compliance for frisks and 62 percent compliance for searches over the course of 2025.
- Specialized units performed substantially worse than regular patrol officers, whose compliance rates reached 94 percent for stops, 83 percent for frisks, and 79 percent for searches, compared with 83

percent, 69 percent, and 62 percent, respectively, for specialized units.

- The NYPD failed to audit CRT stops for approximately three years despite court-ordered auditing requirements, exposing a significant breakdown in internal accountability. Even when the NYPD conducted the mandatory audits and supervision, supervisors and internal NYPD audits consistently rubber-stamped stops, frisks, and searches later found to be unconstitutional by the Monitor.
- The Monitor identified recurring boilerplate language in stop reports, raising concerns that officers continue to recycle general narratives and vague descriptions to justify unconstitutional stops, frisks, and searches.

“This report confirms what the people we serve have experienced for years: despite repeated warnings, court oversight, and promises of reform, the NYPD’s specialized units continue to violate the constitutional rights of New Yorkers of color at an alarming rate,” said **Karina Tefft, Staff Attorney in the Special Litigation Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. “The Monitor’s findings make clear these are not isolated mistakes. The NYPD’s specialized units continue to illegally stop, frisk, and invasively search New Yorkers at unacceptable rates substantially higher than those of regular patrol officers. The Department also failed to audit an entire specialized unit for years despite clear court orders. New Yorkers deserve a police department that respects the Constitution, and the Mamdani Administration must take immediate action to end unconstitutional policing by the NYPD’s specialized enforcement units.”

“For years, the Independent Monitor has raised the alarm on the NYPD’s continued deployment of specialized units that harm and harass Black communities. It is time to put an immediate end to their deployment,” said **Charles McLaurin, Senior Counsel at the Legal Defense Fund**. “The City has an important obligation to protect New Yorkers and dedicate resources towards programs and initiatives that invest in the long-term wellbeing of New Yorkers, rather than harming them with these specialized units.”

The Legal Aid Society, the Legal Defense Fund, and the law firm Selendy Gay PLLC represent the plaintiff class in *Davis v. City of New York*.

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Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) is the nation’s first civil rights legal organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957, though it was founded under the leadership of Thurgood Marshall while he was at the NAACP. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute (TMI) is a division of LDF that undertakes innovative research and houses LDF’s archive. In all media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF (do not include NAACP) and refer to the Institute as LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute or TMI.