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

***Legal Aid and Make the Road New York Condemn Deplorable Conditions
Endured by Oscar Belgal at MDC***

***Mr. Belgal Languishes in Solitary Confinement at MDC With Bullet Lodged in
His Neck, Has Not Eaten Since Thursday and Awaits Urgently Needed Surgery***

(NEW YORK, NY) — The Legal Aid Society and Make the Road New York, counsel for Oscar Belgal, issued the following joint statement in response to the deplorable conditions Mr. Belgal has endured while detained at the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) in Brooklyn, including solitary confinement, lack of access to food, and inadequate medical care despite a bullet remaining lodged in his neck and his urgent need for surgery:

“Since Mr. Belgal was shot in the neck by ICE agents on Thursday, with his five-year-old child in the car, he has endured horrific conditions at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, a facility federal judges have described as ‘barbaric’ and ‘inhumane,’ where officers have been characterized as ‘contemptuous of human life and dignity’. All the while, a bullet remains lodged in his neck.

“Mr. Belgal is living through an unimaginable nightmare. While he is currently in solitary confinement, a bullet remains lodged in his neck, the left side of his face is numb, and he can barely hear out of his left ear. Doctors have told him he urgently needs surgery, but that the procedure was too dangerous to perform Thursday evening without a specialized surgeon present. Although he was instructed to return to the hospital this week, he has been left in the dark about whether that surgery will even happen. He is also suffering from a shoulder wound caused by shattered glass during the incident.

“Rather than receiving the urgent medical attention, care, and compassion he desperately needs, Mr. Belgal reports being confined to a solitary cell, where he is forced to relive the terrifying moments of being shot. He says he has not eaten a single meal since Thursday and has been told that the only water available to him comes from a bathroom sink.

“The deliberate indifference Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents showed toward Mr. Belgal when he was shot on Thursday, and the treatment he has endured in detention since, are further examples of the cruelty and disregard for basic human dignity that have long defined this agency. We will continue to fight for Mr. Belgal’s immediate release from detention and to ensure that he receives the medical care, due process, and basic human dignity to which he is entitled under the law.”

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The Legal Aid Society is a nonprofit law firm that exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For 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 the people we serve and helps improve our communities. www.legalaidnyc.org

Make the Road New York (MRNY) builds the power of immigrant and working class communities to achieve dignity and justice through organizing, policy innovation, transformative education, and survival services. We have 30,000+ members and operate five community centers in Bushwick, Brooklyn; Jackson Heights, Queens; Port Richmond, Staten Island; Brentwood, Long Island; and White Plains, Westchester County. www.maketheroadny.org