



NYCD-16 Indivisible Statement on Structural Racism and Race-Based Violence

NYCD-16 Indivisible mourns the death of George Floyd, yet another black person killed by police brutality. We acknowledge our individual and communal pain, grief, fear and rage at the continued murders of black and brown people. The death of George Floyd is the most recent in a long list of those killed under the guise of protecting law and order and fueled by racism and white supremacy. We still remember others we have lost in the same manner including Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Trayvon Martin, Freddie Gray, Philandro Castile and many more whose names we know and do not know.

In the same spirit, we acknowledge that Amy Cooper's threatening behavior towards bird watcher Christian Cooper in Central Park over Memorial Day weekend was an act of racism and white supremacy in keeping with our history of terrorizing black and brown men. We also recognize the devastating impact of the coronavirus pandemic on communities of color, a consequence of persistent and systemic health care disparities.

We stand with our black and brown friends, neighbors and elected officials, in protesting against the ongoing racist manifestations of inequality within our society:

- the disproportionate deaths of people of color from the coronavirus pandemic, stemming from racist structures, policies and practices which create preventable disparities in diseases such as hypertension, heart disease and diabetes;
- the overrepresentation in high risk service jobs and the unequal wealth distribution resulting in poverty, its effects on living conditions and racist segregation of resources;
- the continued systemic racial bias that puts black and brown people in jail at twice the rate of white people for the same offenses;
- and the ongoing killing of black and brown people by police as well as the unwarranted attacks by militarized police forces at protests around our country.

We support the right to freely express our collective outrage and grief by taking our message and demands to the streets. We see this as a call for systemic structural change. We implore that our leaders acknowledge this call. We call for and will support a peaceful and meaningful dialogue between the local and city police departments and residents of color within those communities in order to effect changes in policing practices.

We ask for body cameras, implicit bias and anti-racism training, and a commitment to diversity in hiring for the police force. The policing practices must value human life above all and avoid unprovoked violence. Black lives matter.

We call upon our state legislators to repeal New York Civil Rights Law 50-a, which shields police personnel records.

We see this as a call for the white people involved in working for social justice to look inward and become aware of how our individual attitudes and actions perpetuate racism. We see this as an opportunity to come together and use our unearned privilege to begin to right the wrongs of our racist legacy and enduring practices.

In order for NYCD-16 Indivisible to honor our mission to restore democracy, we stand as allies with activists and people of color within our community who are calling for an end to systemic racism in our everyday lives. We will commit to listening to individuals of color within our community and to speaking up when we witness racist language, attitudes, or behavior. We pledge to amplify the voices of people of color, to stand together for a liberated future, and to hold ourselves accountable as we move forward. We must be anti-racist in the face of racism.

—NYCD16-Indivisible