



A Statement of Solidarity with the Black Community

We, the members of the above organizations, stand in solidarity with the Black community in the wake of recent incidents of brutality and senseless murders perpetrated by police officers against Black individuals. Like so many members of their respective communities, we are outraged and horrified by “the latest spate of deaths of African-Americans caused by the police, including George Floyd, who was apparently suffocated in Minneapolis, Breonna Taylor, who was killed in March during a “no-knock” raid of her apartment in Louisville”¹ and Ahmaud Arbery “pursued by armed white residents of a coastal South Georgia neighborhood” who were subsequently “charged with aggravated assault and killing”² of Mr. Arbery only after video footage surfaced and a public outcry ensued.

We want to add our voices to those of Black leaders across the United States of America who seek answers, justice and demand positive structural changes as those involved and those complicit in these incidents must be held accountable. This abject failure to keep citizens safe engenders deep distrust in the notion that the police department prioritizes the safety of all human beings equally.

Furthermore, we recognize this latest display of anti-Black racism in Minneapolis, Louisville and in our country at large is systemic and institutional. We acknowledge that too often, to be Black in America is to suffer from the constant emotional, mental, spiritual and physical toll of racism. It is not only visible through law enforcement but other levels of our government and even in our religious institutions. The inaction of many of our own mosques and other faith based communities have also failed our black brothers and sisters in humanity. Simply stated, remaining silent as we witness injustice runs contrary to Islamic values and our civic duty as Americans.

The responsibility to ensure the safety of Black members of our country falls not only on the shoulders of every police department but on all of us. For this reason, we demand that all religious leaders, elected officials and others of authority listen to, hear, and act upon the concerns of the Black community leaders immediately, including “a federal review of the Minneapolis Police Department, which has been the subject of frequent complaints about excessive force.”³

Finally, given the urgency and gravity of these matters, we commit to more immediate responses should the need arise again. We know that as Muslims, it is our job to respond to oppression and advocate for the oppressed in real time. We are committing now to stand in solidarity with the Black community, our brothers and sisters in humanity. We commit to collaborating with Black leadership and communities to seek justice for all and demand accountability from those responsible for these inhumane events. We pray, hope and promise to advocate for structural change to ensure events like this never happen again, starting with our own religious institutions and our Muslim communities.

¹ Leonhardt, David. “Protests against police escalate” *The Morning, The New York Times* [New York], 29 May 2020

² Fausset, Richar. “What We Know About the Shooting Death of Ahmaud Arbery” *The New York Times* [New York], 22 May 2020

³ Leonhardt, David. “Outrage grows over Minneapolis death” *The Morning, The New York Times* [New York], 28 May 2020