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The National Native American Bar Association Declares Takomni Hasapa Wiconi Hecha (Black Lives Matter)

Indian Country – June 15, 2020. Mitakuyapi (Relatives). It is with a heavy heart that we make this statement. As native people, we understand our world through kinship. We are heartbroken and offer our deepest condolences to those that mourn George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Renee Davis (Muckleshoot), Cecil Lacy, Jr. (Tulalip), John T. Williams (Nuu-chah-nulth), Jason Pero (Bad River Band Of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians), Zachary Bearheels (Lakota, Kiowa, Apache) and the numerous others that have lost their lives at the hands of law enforcement.

The National Native American Bar Association (NNABA) stands in solidarity with the Black Community, the [National Bar Association](#), the [Minnesota American Indian Bar Association](#), the [Hispanic National Bar Association](#), the [National Asian Pacific American Bar Association](#), the [American Bar Association](#), the [Native American Bar Association of D.C.](#) and each and every human being that has condemned the actions of law enforcement.

[Study](#) after study confirms what we already know to be true, and in some cases, have experienced ourselves – the bias against black and brown people in the criminal justice system corrupts nearly every encounter. From the treatment of victims, handling of suspects, stops for “suspicious activity,” to any other type of encounter, racial biases are present. The constitutional and civil rights of black and brown people are violated on a daily basis. Law enforcement kill black and brown people at alarming rates. According to [data](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, law enforcement killed Native Americans at the highest rate from 1999 to 2015, just above the rate for Black Americans. In the Ninth Circuit alone, Native Americans have [18 times](#) as many fatal encounters per population as whites. Historic trauma and mental illness are pervasive factors in Native encounters with police, particularly those that result in death. The criminal justice system is out of balance and unjust, and the wounds run very deep.

We stand shoulder to shoulder with our relatives and demand justice for George Floyd and every other black and brown person that lost their lives at the hands of the unjust. NNABA joins our regional and sister bars in calling for true and meaningful reform. Reform that must include the elimination of federal qualified immunity defense and reallocation of governmental law enforcement resources towards mental health care. Let us all be moved to action to fix the plague of systematic racism, reject abuses of power, reject injustice, reject bias, and most of all reject even one more loss of life. We cannot postpone justice any longer. Takomni Hasapa Wiconi Hecha (Black Lives Matter).

The National Native American Bar Association was formed in 1973 with the mission of advancing justice for Native Americans. www.nativeamericanbar.org