



For Immediate Release
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LDF Statement on NYPD Shooting of Saheed Vassell

New York City police officers shot Saheed Vassell yesterday afternoon, firing 10 shots at the unarmed, bi-polar 34-year-old after officers claimed he had a gun. [Sherrilyn Ifill](#), President and Director-Counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, provided the following statement:

“Almost two years after Mayor Bill de Blasio and NYPD Commissioner James O’Neill condemned the police shooting of Deborah Danner, we’re left wondering what’s changed as NYPD officers have once again killed an innocent New Yorker struggling with mental health issues. Mr. Vassell and his mental health issues were reportedly well-known to the Crown Heights community and NYPD officers. We demand the NYPD release all surveillance footage they have of the incident, including any pictures or film beyond the still image that has already been made public.

“This killing comes on the heels of a [Supreme Court decision](#) that sends a false message of impunity to police officers. That decision was rightly and harshly criticized by Justice Sonia Sotomayor, who is herself a former New York City prosecutor. We refuse to allow this to continue. Every New Yorker – and especially our elected officials - must demand more from the NYPD. We sued the NYPD over their stop-and-frisk practices in public housing in [Davis v. City of New York](#), and are committed to continuing to work to reform the department so that no more New Yorkers are forced to meet the same fate as Mr. Vassell.

“At this time, we extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to Mr. Vassell’s friends and family.”

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.