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FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

The Minnesota American Indian Bar Association ("MAIBA") condemns the actions of Minneapolis Police Department Officers Derek Chauvin, Thomas Lane, Tou Thao, and J. Alexander Kueng that led to the murder of George Floyd and calls for action to be taken against all of the officers by the Hennepin County Attorney’s Office.

Sadly, George Floyd’s family and the world have repeatedly witnessed the death of Mr. Floyd which was captured on multiple video recordings. After Mr. Floyd was restrained and handcuffed, Derek Chauvin kneeled on Mr. Floyd’s neck with his full weight. Mr. Floyd begged him to stop and struggled for air as he mustered out the words, “I can’t breathe!” over and over again. After his body was limp and he could not possibly pose a threat to any person, Chauvin continued to kneel with his full weight on Mr. Floyd’s neck for several more minutes which led to his death. The other three officers stood by while Chauvin mercilessly ended the life of George Floyd.

Police officers are not above the law. Although the officers involved were rightfully terminated, they should have been immediately arrested for their egregious and homicidal actions. Decades upon decades of systematic racism, violence, and unanswered pleas for justice have led to our citizens to take action. The City of Minneapolis and surrounding communities are smoldering literally with fire and metaphorically with the frustration and pain of the community that knows no person could kill a man by kneeling on his neck and walk away free, unless that person happens to be a Minneapolis Police Officer. The Hennepin County Attorney’s Office has taken the long overdue measure of charging Derek Chauvin with murder, and charges should be brought against Thomas Lane, Tou Thao, and J. Alexander Kueng.

Violent and criminal tactics, such as those employed by the officers responsible for the death of George Floyd, should never be used against any citizen. People should not live in fear of those sworn to protect the rights of all members of the community. We stand in solidarity with the Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers in their call to action:

The Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers (MABL) calls on the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to expedite the investigation, submit the case to Hennepin County Attorney’s Office, and for Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman...
to immediately charge the police officers involved in the senseless death of Mr. Floyd with homicide. Additionally, MABL demands that Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey and Police Chief Medaria Arradondo launch a thorough independent third-party assessment of all aspects of the training, policies, practices, and culture of the Minneapolis Police Department resulting in public recommendations to end the inhuman treatment of its Black and Brown citizens. Following the recommendations, there should be a transparent implementation plan with milestones and performance metrics to measure the effectiveness of the changes in the short and long term.

African Americans and Native Americans suffer the highest rates of police brutality in the United States and live in fear of death and violence at the hands of law enforcement. Our communities are subject to use of excessive force and homicidal measures by police officers, often without repercussions. We demand that officers who use brutal and criminal actions in the line of duty to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. We call upon our elected leaders in Minnesota to deliver on their promises to bring forth true reform of law enforcement ideologies, education, training, and relations with the all minority communities. *It is essential that all of our communities are consulted, heard, and invited to actively participate in these efforts to bring about reform.*

Finally, MAIBA offers its condolences to the family and friends of George Floyd. Mr. Floyd should be here today to live as a significant other, a friend, a brother, a father, a relative, and a protected member of the community. We will continue to demand necessary change so that other families do not have to go through the same experience.

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