

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on the Judiciary
Washington, DC 20515-6216
One Hundred Sixteenth Congress

June 10, 2020

The Honorable William P. Barr
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Attorney General Barr:

The murder of George Floyd while in the custody of the Minneapolis Police Department is an injustice. His death has rightfully sparked protests throughout the country. While most Americans have exercised their constitutional right to protest peacefully, Antifa and other left-wing extremists have exploited these protests to commit acts of violence and death that have devastated local communities. As President Trump said, we must “stand with the family of George Floyd, with the peaceful protesters, and with every law-abiding citizen who wants decency, civility, safety, and security.”¹ I respectfully write to seek more information about the Justice Department’s efforts toward those ends.

On May 30, 2020, President Trump announced that he had directed the Justice Department to expedite its civil rights investigation into the death of George Floyd.² In making this announcement, the President said:

The death of George Floyd on the streets of Minneapolis was a grave tragedy. It should never have happened. It has filled Americans all over the country with horror, anger, and grief. Yesterday, I spoke to George’s family and expressed the sorrow of our entire nation for their loss. I stand before you as a friend and ally to every American seeking justice and peace.³

The same day, you announced that the legal system was already “moving at exceptional speed” and you promised that justice would be served.⁴ I appreciate the speed at which the Department is working to secure justice for Floyd and his family.

Antifa and other left-wing groups have misused lawful protests about Floyd’s death as cover to advance their goals of death and destruction. This anarchy is never acceptable. The

¹ The White House, Remarks by President Trump at Kennedy Space Center (May 30, 2020).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ U.S. Dep’t of Justice, Attorney General William P. Barr’s Statement on the Death of George Floyd and Riots (May 30, 2020).

President rightly responded by announcing that the United States would designate Antifa as a terrorist organization.⁵ I agree with the President's action and hope the designation occurs promptly. Our country must not tolerate left-wing violent extremists who seek to tear down communities through senseless violence, rioting, and looting.

This violence incited by Antifa and other left-wing extremists has sadly led to a number of deaths and serious injuries, including the death of David Dorn, a 77-year-old former police captain from St. Louis, Missouri, and the death of Dave Patrick Underwood, a federal law-enforcement officer in Oakland, California.⁶ In New York City, police officers have been hit with bricks and rocks,⁷ and one officer on an anti-looting patrol was ambushed and stabbed in the neck.⁸ Damage to property, especially in minority communities, has also been tragic.⁹ In Minnesota alone, an estimated 220 buildings have been damaged and nearly 500 businesses in the state had been vandalized, looted, or damaged.¹⁰

The Justice Department has taken steps to stop Antifa and its criminal acts. You announced that the "violence instigated and carried out by Antifa and other similar groups in connection with the rioting is domestic terrorism and will be treated accordingly."¹¹ You said that the Justice Department would use the existing network of regional Joint Terrorism Task Forces to bring criminal instigators to justice.¹² I applaud the Department's efforts to stop Antifa and other left-wing agitators from using Floyd's death to spread violence and destruction.

Federal, state, and local law-enforcement officers risk their lives daily to keep our communities safe. Law-enforcement officers who commit crimes—including the officers involved in Floyd's death—absolutely must be held accountable to the full extent of the law. We should not allow a small number of criminal officers to taint the reputation of the vast majority of men and women who honorably patrol our streets and neighborhoods. I commend President Trump's and your commitment to the rule of law and your support for America's heroic first responders.

As the Committee examines potential legislative reforms to policing practices in wake of George Floyd's death, I respectfully request that the Department update the Committee on the actions of the Justice Department and its component entities in response to the death of George

⁵ Donald J. Trump, Twitter.com (May 31, 2020, 12:23 p.m.), <https://mobile.twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1267129644228247552>.

⁶ Daisy Nguyen, *Federal officer killed guarding Oakland courthouse near protest*, Assoc. Press, May 30, 2020; Andrew Mark Miller, *Retired 77-year-old police captain killed by looters in shooting broadcast on Facebook Live*, Wash. Exam., June 2, 2020.

⁷ Sergeants Benevolent Association, Twitter.com (June 2, 2020, 4:54 p.m.), <https://mobile.twitter.com/SBANYPD/status/1267922509166493696>.

⁸ Michael R. Sisak & Jim Mustian, *Police: NYPD officer ambushed, man who stabbed him shot*, Assoc. Press, Jun. 4, 2020.

⁹ *Who the Looting Ruins*, Wall St. J., Jun. 4, 2020.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ U.S. Dep't of Justice, Attorney General William P. Barr's Statement on Riots and Domestic Terrorism (May 31, 2020).

¹² *Id.*

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Floyd. I also ask the Department to explain how designating Antifa as a terrorist organization would affect the Justice Department's authority to identify, prevent, and prosecute rioting, looting, and violence perpetrated by left-wing violent extremists. Finally, I request information about the likely consequences to public safety of any successful effort to defund or disband federal, state, or local law-enforcement agencies.

I appreciate your attention to these very serious issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Jordan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the signature, the name "Jim Jordan" and the title "Ranking Member" are printed in a standard black font.

Jim Jordan
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
Chairman