

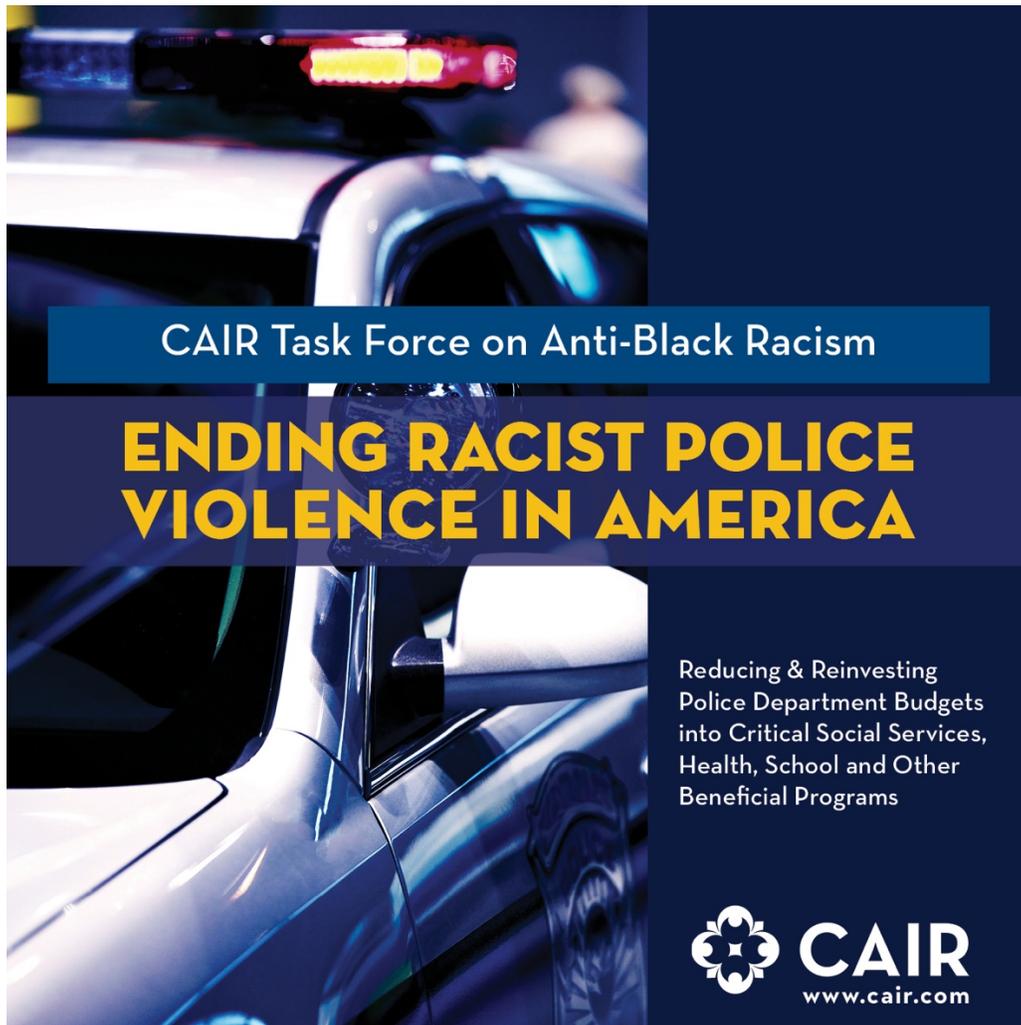


CAIR Task Force on Anti-Black Racism

ENDING RACIST POLICE VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

Reducing & Reinvesting
Police Department
Budgets into Critical
Social Services, Health,
School and Other
Beneficial Programs

Ending Police Violence: Reducing & Reinvesting Police Department Budgets into Critical Social Services, Health, School and Other Beneficial Programs



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*In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
All praise and thanks belong to God, the Lord of the Worlds
May peace and prayers be upon Prophet Muhammad and his family*

The Path Forward: CAIR Task Force on Combating Anti-Black Racism

Statement of Purpose & Principles

As a diverse Muslim civil rights organization dedicated to pursuing justice for all, the Council on American-Islamic Relations recognizes our unique responsibility to help combat the moral disease of anti-Black racism, which permeates our society.

From education to healthcare to policing, we have repeatedly witnessed the deadly impact of systemic racism. We also know that anti-Black racism, exists in far too many families, communities, workplaces, and even houses of worship—sometimes as conscious expressions or acts of racism, and sometimes as subtle and insidious manifestations of implicit bias that can be equally dangerous.

We believe that Islamic faith and principles demand justice for all people, which cannot be achieved in our nation without an unwavering and unapologetic commitment to protecting Black lives and countering anti-Black racism wherever it arises. As our faith teaches, we should confront injustice in all its forms, including the moral disease of racism and unjust systems that perpetuate racial hierarchies.

To that end, CAIR has established a special task force, **“The Path Forward: Combating Anti-Black Racism.”** This task force, which includes a diverse collection of CAIR staffers from across our country, will, *insha Allah*, work together to:

- Strengthen our own commitment to uphold racial justice, equality and diversity within our own civil rights organization.
- Combat systemic racism by identifying, amplifying and supporting critical policy reforms advocated by Black community leaders, activists, and organizations at the local, state and national levels.
- Strengthen existing and building new coalitions with Black community leaders, activists, and organizations inside and outside the Muslim community.
- Help provide guidance to the Muslim community, including mosques, schools and individuals, about how they can help advance the struggle against anti-Black racism in our society.

Our guiding principle is to “be the change we want to see” by ensuring that the task force reflects the diversity of the American Muslim community, and by relying on the guidance and leadership of experts in anti-Black racism.

The following document is the first policy adopted by our Policy & Advocacy Subcommittee.

Ending Police Violence: Reducing & Reinvesting Police Department Budgets into Critical Social Services, Health, School and Other Beneficial Programs

June 15, 2020

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, strongly supports efforts to combat police violence against the Black community by **reducing and reinvesting police department budgets into addressing the needs of underfunded and overpoliced communities of color.**

Over the past several weeks, protesters across our nation have marched to demand an end to the systemic and institutional racism that manifests itself in policing, as well as employment, education, health care, and other aspects of American society.

The recent police killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks and other Black men and women serve as painful reminders that law enforcement, in particular, needs urgent and radical reform. Police violence is now a leading cause of death for Black men. [One recent study](#) found that 1 in 1,000 Black men can expect to die at the hands of a police officer. Public health experts have also [described police violence](#) as a serious public health issue.

To address this systemic threat of racist police violence, CAIR calls upon cities to reevaluate the scope and purpose of their police departments, identify ways to decriminalize non-violent offenses, and otherwise radically transform the way cities serve and protect their communities.

Too often, cities depend upon police officers to address non-law enforcement related matters such as mental health crises, homelessness, youth development, substance abuse, regulatory violations, and housing issues. The role of police officers in these and other situations must be curtailed, and investment in local communities must be prioritized.

Cities also rely upon armed police officers to address non-violent offenses. In the case of George Floyd, police officers were called because he allegedly possessed a counterfeit \$20 bill. No one should ever die under the knee of a police officer, much less because of a dispute over twenty dollars.

In response to these and other injustices, a nationwide campaign entitled #DefundthePolice has rapidly gained momentum. However, confusion exists among the general public and some activists regarding the meaning of #DefundthePolice.

When some activists use the phrase #DefundthePolice, they are calling for the reduction of police budgets and reallocation of those funds to neglected areas such as education, mental health, housing, and youth services. Other activists use the term "Defund the Police" to mean ending all funding for police departments, and thereby abolishing the police altogether.

CAIR recognizes the wisdom of both perspectives. We believe the best way forward right now is for cities to radically redefine the role of police departments in their communities while drastically reducing and reinvesting police department budgets. To avoid confusion, and to respect the police abolitionist movement, CAIR is advocating for #BudgetJustice.

Elected officials and candidates in several cities across the country have already pledged to decrease city spending on police and reallocate funds towards community health, employment, schools, housing, and other social services programs.

In New York City, candidates for next year's city council races are calling for a \$1 billion cut across four years to the New York Police Department's \$6 billion operating budget. The NYPD also receives an additional \$5 billion for pension and capital projects. A veto-proof majority of Minneapolis City Council members have also declared their intention to defund, break-up and transform the city's police department. Moreover, the mayor of Los Angeles has pledged to cut at least \$150 million from the previously planned increase to the city's police department budget.

In reevaluating how to create a more just city budget, CAIR encourages elected officials to explore every option for reform that scales down and demilitarizes police forces. That includes addressing the interconnected issues of criminal justice and sentencing reform, and ending the use of private prisons.

CAIR also recognizes that states and cities are the laboratories of democracy. A just budget in New York may look very different from a just budget in Minneapolis because the cities have different needs. Communities impacted by police violence must be empowered to take the lead in developing budgets and solutions that address their own safety, public health and development needs.

To that end, CAIR urges city governments to immediately decrease their police department budgets by taking the following steps:

- Place a moratorium on further increasing police budgets and capital projects.
- Place a moratorium on hiring of additional police officers and staff.
- Reduce overtime spending.
- Place a moratorium on purchasing of new military surplus gear obtained through the 1033 program and other unnecessary tactical and riot gear. Place a moratorium on purchasing new surveillance, artificial intelligence (AI) and facial recognition equipment and software.
- Review and stop any program found to racially profile and target Black, minority and student communities.
- Cancel unnecessary contracts with governmental and non-governmental organizations.
- End police exchange and training programs with Israel and other foreign governments that engage in human rights violations, including violence against protesters, choke holds and other forms of police brutality.

- Eliminate police-in-school programs, and reinvest budgets into school counselors, as well as before-and-after school programs. Only use police officers in school settings to respond to violent incidents and external threats.
- Reduce the number of armed police officers that are on patrol.
- End police traffic stops except for dangerous suspected violations such as driving while under the influence and aggressive driving. Transfer ticketing authority for other offenses to unarmed traffic enforcement agents who would only seek police assistance in the event of noncompliance.

When cities invest in social services, they address many of the root causes that contribute to situations in which the police are called. Therefore, CAIR encourages city governments to increase spending in the following community services sectors that address those needs:

- Community based public safety programs
- Public health
- Social services
- Homeless services
- Public schools
- Employment services
- Affordable housing
- Rental relief
- Public transit
- Parks and recreation
- Street violence interruption and prevention
- Public libraries
- Arts and crafts
- Public gardens
- Property tax relief
- Pedestrian infrastructure

CAIR expresses its strong support for, solidarity with, and commitment to our Black brothers and sisters, and especially to families who have lost loved ones to police violence. CAIR Chapters nationwide pledge to continue working to end police violence against communities of color by working with activists and elected officials willing to embrace and bring about systemic change to policing in America.

CAIR's mission is to protect civil rights, enhance understanding of Islam, promote justice, and empower American Muslims.

La misión de CAIR es proteger las libertades civiles, mejorar la comprensión del Islam, promover la justicia, y empoderar a los musulmanes en los Estados Unidos.