



## National Juvenile Defender Center Statement on Recent Deaths of Black Americans & Need to Dismantle Systemic Racism

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The National Juvenile Defender Center (NJDC) is committed to promoting justice for all youth in juvenile delinquency courts. Calling out, confronting, disrupting, and dismantling the institutional racism that permeates every aspect of American society, including the juvenile legal system, is integral to our work.

In just the past few weeks, the lives of **Ahmaud Arbery** and **George Floyd** and **Cornelius Frederick** and **Breonna Taylor** have been stolen by the violence of structural racism. Their devastating, unnecessary deaths have occurred within the context of a global pandemic that continues to disproportionately take the lives of our Black and Brown neighbors, friends, and loved ones.

Our work and lives as advocates for youth place us on the front lines, where we can and must seek justice, increase liberation, and demand an end to the entrenched racism that puts our young clients' lives at risk. We must make clear that we stand for a better time than now.

This work of justice has always felt urgent. It is, indeed, a matter of life and death.