

NASW-NYC denounces domestic terrorism, political and white supremacy inspired murders

May 18th, 2022

“White supremacy continues to kill us violently and slowly...do your work” — Sa’uda K. Dunlap, LCSW, NYC based social worker, 2022.

Dear NASW-NYC,

I am at a loss yet again, and struggling to comprehend the senseless, [racially motivated mass murder](#) of 10 innocent lives and the shooting of 13 people in total, that occurred in Buffalo, New York on May 14th, 2022. It is soul crushing to be reminded constantly that hate and racism are so interwoven into the fabric of American society, that people going about their daily lives can be gunned down in cold blood simply because they are Black. Additionally, we have seen on social media and other platforms that since the shooting in Buffalo NY, Black communities have allegedly been targeted with other violence, threats, and intimidation tactics such as racial slurs being written on Black homes and threats to Black businesses, schools, and neighborhoods, yet, mainstream media is simply not reporting on these issues.

The idea that white supremacy, hate, and false conspiracy theories such as replacement theory, contributed to the shooter’s plan to drive 200 miles from his home to directly target and murder Black people is unfathomable; yet, it is the reality. When hate, unchecked white supremacy, bigotry, silencing of racial-historical education and diverse voices, opposition to the legal framework Critical Race Theory, voter suppression, and accessibility to guns is so fixed into the core political and social climate of a society, race based and others forms of identity based violence and oppression will continue. Moreover, as we are seeing now and with other incidences of mass murders enacted by white supremacists, domestic terrorists, or those fueled by hate, reports of mental illness are emerging to justify this heinous crime. As social workers and as providers of mental health services, we must do more to combat the false narrative and [scapegoating of mental illness](#). ***These incidences are not individually isolated and are not a result of mental illness; they are pervasive, and a direct result of systemic hate and racism in America.***

Writing to you is extremely painful; I have also been loss for words to convey the sense of fear and terror gripping communities in NYC and around this country as we are still processing the [subway shootings in Brooklyn](#) a few weeks ago, the murders [and assaults on people of Asian descent in NY](#) and around the country, and the overall [rise in hate crimes](#). As I write to you, there are also reports of a politically and [racially motivated shooting that occurred at a Taiwanese church in California](#) on May 16th. We have been so inundated with the news and reports of racially or hate motivated crimes against communities of color and ethnic diversity in New York City and around the country in recent weeks that it has rendered us unable to accurately convey the level of trauma that we, like you, are experiencing. The rise of attacks against Asian and Pacific Islander communities, anti-Semitic attacks, and the ongoing attacks against Black individuals and communities is terrifying. When will it stop? When is enough, enough? When will we as a society be compelled to say no more?

The time is right, for social workers, regardless of political affiliation, race, gender identity, class, or any other identifiers that we *think* divides us, to rise up and address racism and all forms of hatred and oppression in America. To effect change, this must be done in our homes, in our schools, on our jobs, and in our families. We must stop being complacent and expecting institutions, or organizations to ‘fix’ this issue alone. We are part of society, we make up organizations and communities; hatred will not change unless each person demands and hold accountable, themselves and each other, for making our world more equitable and just. It is on each person to work to change the long history of structural violence, oppression, and racism in this country. How many more people need to die violently until we as a society care enough to effectually demand change? How many more children need to lose their caregivers? How many more families, communities, and generations torn apart and impacted by racial trauma, hate, bigotry, and structural violence will we treat and advocate for before we say enough?

We are out of time. We must act. The time is Right for Social Work. The time is NOW!

For more on NASW’s response, please read [HERE](#)

In solidarity and with profound pain,

NASW-NYC Chapter