

For Immediate Release

Statement on the Department of Justice Report on LMPD

In the Buddhist Justice Collective we believe in the interconnectedness of all life. It's part of our work, our path, to investigate easy explanations (in Buddhism we call them "delusions"), noticing where our stories don't actually fit what seems to be happening.

The Department of Justice has issued a scathing report describing the ingrained systemic failures of LMPD, and a consent decree will follow. Sadly we've been here before in Ferguson, Baltimore, Cleveland, and elsewhere, and enormous problems with policing remain. Lesson learned: positive change comes not from outside but from people putting sustained pressure on elected representatives.

The DOJ report cannot enlighten and redirect our elected officials for us; the consent decree cannot fix LMPD. Only continued public attention—and uncomfortable levels of pressure—will reduce the harm LMPD causes. It will take more attention and pressure still, to accomplish transparency and re-imagine real public safety in our city. We can do all this only by centering the voices of the people who LMPD has most harmed.

We wonder how much damage has been suffered by Black Louisvillians since the Uprising of 2020, while we were "waiting on the DOJ." We wonder how much more damage will be done, if we allow elected officials to wait on the consent decree. We cannot be about waiting for someone or something else to fix our broken system of public safety. Only we can fix this.

Most immediately: demand an end to the violent over policing of Black neighborhoods and individuals in Louisville. Demand that our mayor and Metro council meet our needs for safe, affordable housing and health care. Demand an end to detention and incarceration of people in need, pain and crisis.