



National Task Force to End
Sexual & Domestic Violence

For Immediate Release

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National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence condemns the white supremacist violence in Charlottesville and calls for unified efforts to end racism, abuse, and oppression

Washington, D.C. — The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence (NTF) denounces the acts of hatred, violence, terrorism and bigotry carried out by white supremacy and neo-Nazi organizations and sympathizers who assembled in Charlottesville, Virginia this past weekend. The NTF is comprised of national, state, tribal, territorial and local leadership organizations and advocates working to end domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.

The actions of these hate groups make clear that their vision for the United States includes enshrining white male dominance over people of color and women, contempt and hatred for non-Christian religions, mass intimidation through the brandishing of weapons, and the invoking of symbols associated with racial terror. Having a permit did nothing to change that reality or to legitimize their dangerous ideology. Furthermore, when James Fields, a neo-Nazi who stood alongside other white supremacists extolling hatred earlier in the day, later rammed his car into a crowd of peaceful protesters, injuring many and killing Heather Heyer, the response from leaders of the white supremacist movement illustrated their rank misogyny and echoed the victim blaming that survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault encounter every day.

From our decades of work to end gender-based violence and oppression, we recognize that the recent visible demonstrations of racism, bigotry, and white supremacist organizing are just the latest manifestations of our country's long and complex history of individual and institutional racism. Additionally, we recognize that the impact of racism and oppression is not limited to conduct carried out by extremists.

We are appalled by the moral failure of the President in responding to these events and are deeply concerned that the rhetoric and actions of this Administration have further emboldened the conduct of white supremacists in a way that puts many individuals and communities in danger, and risks undermining the core values to which our nation must aspire. We call on Congress, political leaders at the state level, and the President of the United States to exert the moral leadership necessary at this critical juncture in our nation's history to clearly denounce the actions of the KKK, neo-Nazi organizations, and white supremacist groups.

It is extremely dangerous when our political leaders use rationalizations to excuse the conduct of neo-Nazis and white supremacists who espouse dominance, hatred and violence toward Black communities, Jewish communities, immigrant communities, and other specific groups of people whom they consider to be inferior. Inevitably, this kind of hateful rhetoric is an incitement to violence.

The work of ending domestic violence and sexual assault is, at its core, an effort to end the harm caused when one person exerts dominance over someone else through tactics of abuse and control. However, with the passage of time it has become more evident that incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault do not occur in a vacuum, and that efforts to prevent and end gender-based violence require a larger societal commitment to end abuse and oppression in all its forms, and particularly at the intersections. Additionally, studies show that mass killers and those who commit acts of terrorism are often terrorists in their own homes and relationships long before unleashing their terror on the outside world.

The quest to end domestic violence and sexual assault is inextricably linked with the quest to end racism, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, xenophobia, religious bigotry toward Jewish and Muslim communities, and other forms of oppression toward marginalized communities, including immigrant and Native American communities. It also requires acknowledging and addressing the historical trauma experienced by these communities, as well as the detrimental impact and trauma caused by current experiences of racism and other forms of oppression. Finally, it requires both state and federal governments to thoroughly examine their role in the oppression of these marginalized communities, and to commit to meaningful and enduring reforms.

Moreover, as a society we must recognize that to support Confederate statues as memorials in important shared public spaces is to literally choose to “put on a pedestal” those who decided to go to war against the United States in their efforts to maintain the right to subjugate, abuse and enslave Black communities for their own gain and to benefit the economic foundation upon which this country was built. As a society, it is time to acknowledge that those are not the individuals we need to continue to glorify, especially if we want to move our nation towards its aspirational goals of equality and justice. We are not saying that this history should be erased or ignored, quite the contrary—it is through continuing to learn the lessons from history that we can support the values and the principles that we must build on.

Inevitably, ending racism and other forms of dominance and oppression toward marginalized communities will come when everyone, particularly those in dominant groups, commit to doing the hard work of addressing implicit and explicit bias at the individual and organizational level, as well as commit to dismantling systemic racism and oppression at the local, state, and national level.

We acknowledge that the movement to end domestic and sexual violence has much more work to do to live up to these ideals. We call on all people involved in the movement to actively engage in anti-racism efforts, to show up and have the difficult and necessary conversations, to acknowledge the historical trauma and present-day impact of white supremacy and other forms of bigotry, and to unify in our efforts to end all forms of abuse and oppression. In so doing, we stand together with other activists and organizations to continue to work passionately for gender, racial, economic, and social justice for ALL.

It is the obligation of every person who wishes to live in a free, pluralistic, and civil society to condemn neo-Nazis’ reprehensible speech and actions. More than this, we must engage our neighbors, families, friends, political representatives, and community members in dialogue about how we as a society can:

- Build healthy, safe, and respectful relationships across differences in our families and communities and interrupt racism and oppression as active bystanders in our daily lives;
- Acknowledge the United States’ devastating history of oppression, which has accrued significant economic benefits for some off of the labor and pain of others, while also striving to fulfill the aspirations of our nation to extend equal rights to each person, uphold human rights, and make peaceful democracy vital and real;
- Continue working for equity and economic and social justice so that all people have access to what they need, not only to survive but to thrive in their lives;
- Create spaces in which people of varied religions, races, ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, ages, and abilities, can come together in our common humanity and strive together for the common good and universal human dignity; and
- Find additional ways to stand up for civil and human rights, such as utilizing these [action steps](#) from The Leadership Conference.