

# Open Letter to Community:

## A call for unity and solidarity in the face of violence

May 29, 2020

Dear Community,

Earlier this week, George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man, was murdered by the Minneapolis police. George Floyd's death is a continuation of the long history of criminalization, dehumanization, and oppression of Black lives in this country since its founding. As immigrants and refugees to the U.S., our families may not always understand this history, but we inherited its legacy. Our communities have also benefited from Black freedom struggles that paved the way for our own fights for freedom and equal treatment in America. So, in this moment, it matters that we commit to Black liberation and raise our voices to say that #BlackLivesMatter. We emphatically call on our Asian communities to center George Floyd's life and continue to amplify the demands from his family and community for justice.

Already, Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities (BIPOC) in Minnesota were disproportionately suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Our families and small businesses are struggling, the health impacts on communities of color have been disproportionately high, our family members are disproportionately on the front lines in essential jobs, and racist and xenophobic stigmatization early on resulted in the increase of anti-Asian violence. So, we write this knowing that BIPOC communities are hurting badly from the pandemic. Now, as Asian community members are targeted and businesses are damaged, our communities are in pain. We recognize that pain will continue to be there for Asian communities. Yet as we care for each other, we cannot let our pain distract us from George Floyd's life and the community's demands for justice.

We also cannot ignore the role of Officer Tou Thao who stood watch as George Floyd was dying. To see someone who looks like us behave as a bystander to Black death is devastating and painful. This is yet another reason that we must recognize our silence in the face of anti-Black racism, and commit to the ongoing work to dismantle anti-Blackness.

Throughout history, there have been attempts to pit Asian and Black communities against each other, a tactic that encourages us to turn on each other rather than tackle our common oppression: the systems of white supremacy. These efforts distract us from the real solution of building cross-racial solidarity to root out racist oppression. And while Asian communities have been rewarded for our assimilation into whiteness with the lie of the "model minority" myth, it is at times like this crisis that we should remember that our status is always conditional and subject to being taken away by xenophobia.

That is why in this painful moment, we ask our Asian communities to choose our shared liberation. Let us remain focused on the systems responsible for the loss of George Floyd's life and too many other Black lives, most recently including Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. Let

us support and uplift Black-led organizing happening through NAACP Mpls, Black Visions Collective, Black Immigrant Collective, Black Lives Matter MN, Reclaim the Block and MN Freedom Fund. We amplify their demands to Minneapolis City Council Members, Mayor Frey, County Attorney Freeman, and other authorities to charge all of the officers involved and to divest from the MPD and other systems of oppression.

Let us stand united for Black lives not only when lives are lost, but in everyday recognition that our liberation is tied together. Let us also commit to the ongoing work of addressing the anti-Blackness in our own communities and choose to fight for Black lives the way we would our own. Our struggles must be linked to truly achieve our vision of a Minnesota and a country where all our communities can thrive.

In solidarity,

**Asian Minnesotan Organizations**

Asian American Organizing Project (AAOP)

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance-MN (APALA-MN)

CAPI USA

Coalition of Asian American Leaders (CAAL)

Cultural Society of Filipino Americans (CSFA)

Filipinx for Immigrant rights and Racial justice MN (FIRM)

Hmong American Partnership (HAP)

Japanese American Citizens League, Twin Cities Chapter (TC JACL)

ManForward

Minnesota Asian Pacific American Bar Association (MNAPABA)

National Association of Asian American Professionals - Minnesota (NAAAP MN)

Pan Asian Voice for Equity-MN (PAVE-MN)

Philippine Study Group of Minnesota (PSGM)

India Association of Minnesota (IAM)

Release MN8

Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment (RISE)

Sewa-Aifw

SEIU Asian Pacific Islander Caucus

Siengkane Lao MN

Theater Mu

The Southeast Asian Diaspora (SEAD) Project

Transforming Generations

United Senior Lao-American

UMN Asian American Studies Program

Vietnamese Social Services of Minnesota

*For more information about the Asian Minnesotans Against Racism & Xenophobia Collaborative, please email [info@caalmn.org](mailto:info@caalmn.org).*