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BCRI Responds to Race Terrorism

The Institute Examines the Flawed Societal Structure of Our Nation

BIRMINGHAM (May 16, 2022) – The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute mission of truth seeking sustains our objective of educating each generation about human rights by bringing the lessons of the past into contemporary focus to realize a more just future. This pursuit is realized through our work of defending civil rights for nearly three decades. We will broadcast a virtual conversation on Thursday, May 19th at noon. The program will be available on the Institute’s Facebook and YouTube platforms, @bhamcivilrights.

On May 14, 2022, a mass shooting occurred at a supermarket in Kingsley, an eastern neighborhood of Buffalo, New York. Ten people were killed, and three others were injured. Eleven of the victims were African American. Less than 24 hours later, a mass shooting occurred at Geneva Presbyterian Church in Laguna Woods, California. One person was killed, and five others were injured, four of them critically. Most of the attendees at the church were Taiwanese American.

Comparable to the times of Jim Crow, our society requires reformation. In the early stages of this investigation news has already surfaced that this young-adult shooter reportedly threatened to open fire at his high school and was under "medical surveillance" related to another incident at the same high school. The repeated behavioral patterns beg the question why the suspect was allowed to purchase a semi-automatic rifle in December. The terrorist studied previous attacks and authored a 180-page diatribe after being radicalized on the internet during the early days of the pandemic by individuals that he never met personally. He unapologetically livestreamed the massacre on social media and even inscribed writings paying homage to Mother Emanuel AME Church shooter Dylan Roof and others on his weapon - proving that he wasn't acting under the impression that his monstrous behavior would be condemned, rather that it was to be captured and celebrated.

The struggle for American minorities to overcome racism is imposed by dint of five key circumstances. As a result of economical injustices, a biased legal system, health disparities, and the consequences of housing and educational inequalities, they continue to suffer at the hand of extremists. Investigating and comprehending how centuries of racism has manifest itself in the past and has affected politics, our nation’s institutions, and society is a crucial task necessary for ending such domestic terrorism.

According to the latest census report, the community of Kingsley is 78% African American. It is therefore not difficult to devise the attacker’s designation of the Tops Supermarket that he targeted. Because the site is now a crime scene, community patrons are forced into yet another food desert, being temporarily bused outside of their neighborhood to access produce and healthy foods. The mental health of, not just the Buffalo community, but the nation will be forever distressed by the effects of this heinous act.

In a Nation where BIPOC and internet-radicalized white supremacists are supposedly protected by the same constitution, Black, Indigenous, People of Color are far too often on the wrong side of the right to bare arms. Therefore, our commitment to social justice endures as well as our ongoing efforts to be truth bearers and standard keepers. We persist in imploring authorities to aggressively investigate the causes of hate crimes and make earnest efforts to prevent them. We also press for the world to join us as we engage in the crucial discussions necessary to examine racial intolerance and realize a more just society.

About BCRI: The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute is a cultural and educational research center that promotes a comprehensive understanding for the significance of The Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham. For more than 28 years, we have enlightened each generation about civil and human rights. A part of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument and an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, we stand strong as the cornerstone of the civil rights story, a living memorial with an ongoing mission.