



St. Paul Jewish Federation, Minneapolis Jewish Federation, and Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas Urge Minnesotans to Respect the Curfew

We Honor George Floyd's Memory by Pursuing Justice Safely

May 30, 2020

On this Shabbat evening, Minnesotans are reeling following the murder of George Floyd, a subdued and handcuffed African American man, by Minneapolis police officers. This should not have happened. We join others in the Jewish community in expressing our grief and demanding justice. We call for the strongest possible charges against all four officers.

Over the past week, our community has come together to mourn the loss of George Floyd and express their grief, pain, sorrow, and anger over generations of racial injustice. We are supportive of the thousands of Minnesotans gathering peacefully, and expressing themselves from home during this pandemic, to help dismantle the systemic racism embedded within American policing and society as a whole.

We are heartened to see our neighbors performing *gemilut hasadim* (acts of lovingkindness) by helping to bring food and clear debris off the streets of Minneapolis, including in several predominately immigrant, Native, and African American communities. NECHAMA will provide comfort and hope to communities by dispatching volunteers in disaster recovery work. This work represents the beginning of hope.

Respect the Curfew

Today, Governor Tim Walz addressed Minnesota and stated: "Minneapolis and St. Paul are under assault" and repeated his call for people in the Twin Cities to stay home after 8:00 p.m. We echo that request and note that additional cities have also imposed a curfew.

According to the Star Tribune, there are concerns that a growing number of rioters are coming from outside the metro area, and outside the state, in what Governor Walz called "an organized attempt to destabilize civil society." He distinguished the arson, wanton looting, and vandalism from the legitimate and mostly peaceful protests that began Tuesday, the day after George Floyd's murder.

Department of Public Safety Commissioner John Harrington added "We have seen things like white supremacist organizers posting on platforms about coming to Minnesota."



Earlier today, Rabbi Aaron Weininger, co-chair of the Minnesota Rabbinical Association, participated in a gathering of faith and political leaders to urge Minnesotans to observe the curfew. Rabbi Weininger taught “we read in Deuteronomy, ‘justice, justice you shall pursue’....

We repeat the word justice twice because we must name and call out the injustice in front of us, ... the horrible murder of George Floyd ... And that second use of the word justice is for us to reflect how we do that.... How we make sure to sideline those who are undermining that very first pursuit of justice, How we call out the injustice of those from outside of our state who are perverting that call for justice. So that when we say justice, justice you shall pursue in the Torah ... that we are clear and unambiguous about this current moment of justice that calls us to rise in peace that calls us to stay home tonight....”

At the same gathering, Rev. Dr. Charvez Russell, Executive Director of Friendship Academy of the Arts, pleaded that Minnesotans “go home at 8:00 o’clock and pray ... So, we can give room to our government that has been working so hard with us, partnering with us. Give them the room to separate the good from the bad. Separate those that are standing for justice versus those that are standing to tear down our government, and all of our institutions, and all of our neighborhoods, and all of our things that we do to take care of our community. We ask that you give them the room and pray.”

The JCRC continues to maintain close communication with our law enforcement partners to monitor the dynamic security and safety situation in our state. We are grateful to all the first responders, including the Minnesota National Guard, for their service during this crisis.

Again, we ask that the Jewish community observe the curfew today at 8:00 p.m. for your safety and that of our fellow community members.

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