



June 5, 2020

My dear family and friends:

It is unbelievable that in 2020 we still have to protest the killing of innocent black people. While most of us have been hunkered down, working from home, trying to survive the COVID-19 pandemic, our black sisters and brothers have been fighting for their lives as the recent news cycle continued to bring more and more stories of innocent black people being killed at the hands of police.

The words "**I can't breathe**" now literally and figuratively exemplify the struggles people of color people face on a daily basis. For centuries in our country, systemic racism and white supremacy have silenced these cries for help.

We will not let this continue. We hear your cries for help. We are listening and we stand in solidarity with our black brothers and sisters, and all individuals fighting injustice. Racism has no place in our country or world, and where we see or hear it, we must stomp it out. As members of the Middle Eastern Legal Association of Washington (MELAW), this is what we intend to do.

Taking Action

Not only are we condemning these racially motivated murders, **we are taking immediate action to address these issues.** Three of our MELAW board members work for the Department of Public Defense (DPD). DPD has been **actively representing peaceful protesters from the Black Lives Matter protest, who have been arrested by police.** If you or someone you know has been stopped by police for lawfully protesting, please contact me directly and I will ensure this person gets contacted by an attorney.

We have also volunteered to provide **free legal advice / know your rights workshops to minority student organizations** participating in protests. This will make sure our future leaders can safely take a stand for their rights. If you would like to **learn more about representing protesters you can watch this free CLE published by the Department of Public Advocacy:**
<https://vimeo.com/210490588/a9049bd98f>

Our most recent MELAW board member, Maha Jafarey works for a non-profit organization called **Communities Rise.** Communities Rise is hosting a **COVID-19 Small Business and Nonprofit Clinic** to provide small business, self-employed individuals, and non-profit organizations with a **free 60-minute legal consultation with a lawyer to discuss business legal questions** or issues that have arisen due to the Covid-19 pandemic. More information is in the attached flier. Please circulate this to anyone in need, especially businesses owned by black and minority individuals.

What You Can Do To Help

While we recognize there are many organizations and ways that you can donate your time and resources, MELAW would like to highlight two that our board is directly involved with:

Northwest Community Bail Fund (NCBF) is a nonprofit organization that posts bail for individuals who cannot afford to do so. **Without their help, many innocent people are forced to plead guilty just to get out of jail.** Right now, NCBF is in high demand as many peaceful protesters arrested by Seattle police are being held on bail. Our board members know first-hand the importance of the

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MELAW's MISSION

MELAW is a non-profit legal organization for attorneys and law students of Middle Eastern descent, along with their friends and supporters. MELAW seeks to advance the goals of its members, provide a legal voice for the Middle Eastern community in Washington, address and educate the public on legal and political issues facing Middle Easterners, and offer resources as well as networking and mentorship opportunities for its members and the public.

Check out our Website:
www.MELAW.org



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work they do, and without your donations, NCBF cannot continue their great work. Please check out their website for more information: <https://www.nwcombailfund.org/>

MELAW-MAPS-MCRC Legal Clinic: Since 2017, MELAW has diligently hosted legal clinics in association with the Muslim Community Resource Center (MCRC) at the Muslim Association of Puget Sound (MAPS) in Redmond, WA. The clinic has helped hundreds of clients on a variety of legal issues. Although we are open to ALL communities, we mostly serve brown and black communities. **The next clinic will be done virtually on Sunday June 14, 2020 and we need your help!** Without the advice we provide to the clinic clients, they become greatly disadvantaged in the legal system. This often leads to more difficulties and struggles within their homes and communities. Because of this, **it is important to donate your time and resources to helping those who cannot afford legal advice.** When communities of color cannot adequately protect themselves in the legal system, our society as a whole suffers. To learn more about the clinic or volunteer, please contact our Clinic Chair, Tanya Fekri tanya@fekrilaw.com.

Our work has only begun and we will continue to seek opportunities to support people of color within our community. If you are aware of an opportunity we should be involved in, please do not hesitate to reach out. Thank you for all your continued support. Stay strong!

Sincerely,

Omar Nur,
President, MELAW
president@melaw.org

Alice Noman

Alice Noman,
President-Elect