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**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

***New York City Public Defenders' Joint Statement on Lawsuits Filed Against the  
Department of Correction Alleging Sexual Abuse on Rikers Island***

**(New York) - The Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defender Services, The Legal Aid Society, the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, New York County Defender Services, and Queens Defenders** released the following joint statement in response to [reporting in Gothamist](#) concerning 719 lawsuits alleging sexual abuse in New York City jails under the Adult Survivors Act:

“The harms detailed in these hundreds of lawsuits are appalling and unfortunately consistent with a pattern of abuse experienced by thousands of people incarcerated at Rikers who we have represented over the past several decades. The people who have come forward have taken a courageous step to demand accountability from the Department of Correction. Sadly, people incarcerated at Rikers continue to experience sexual abuse and other horrifying abuses and conditions. We reaffirm our call for a receivership that addresses the deep-seated culture of corruption and disregard for the health and safety of people in DOC custody, and we believe that ultimately decarceration and closing Rikers is imperative to stopping the harm and violence.”

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