



October 26, 2021

Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke  
United States Department of Justice  
Civil Rights Division  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, DC 20530

Cc: Charles Hart; Acrivi Coromelas; Jorge Castillo, Steven Rosenbaum  
Cc: Dr. Angie Wolf; Joseph Brann  
Cc: Los Angeles County Counsel, Chief Executive Office, and Board of Supervisors  
Cc: California Attorney General, Rob Bonta

**Re: Request for Enforcement of the 2015 DOJ-LASD Settlement Agreement in the Antelope Valley**

Dear Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke,

[Cancel the Contract](#) is a coalition of community organizations and leaders from the Antelope Valley calling for the end of law enforcement violence and racism in our communities broadly, and specifically seeking to end all contracts between our institutions and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department ("LASD"). With this letter, we summarize the County of Los Angeles and LASD's shocking lack of compliance after nearly six years of monitoring and request that the DOJ initiate procedures to modify the AV Settlement Agreement and/or engage in enforcement proceedings to ensure that there are consequences for their noncompliance.

We appreciated that your local team met with us here in the Antelope Valley in July and that some of them attended one of our Summer Community Building events in August. It was an important opportunity to meet with U.S. Department of Justice ("DOJ") attorneys in person and share our many concerns about the lack of meaningful progress stemming from the 2015 settlement agreement between the United States, County of

Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department ("AV Settlement Agreement"). However, we are alarmed that after nearly 6 years of oversight by the independent Monitoring Team, LASD and Los Angeles County continue to be willfully out of compliance with the vast majority of provisions of the AV Settlement Agreement, which we outline in further detail below. Their noncompliance is particularly egregious given that racial profiling and excessive force against Black and Latino residents persists, with your own Monitoring Team reports finding that Black and Latinos people are stopped, searched, and detained at higher rates than white residents. This has to change.

Moreover, we have come to the conclusion that the Palmdale and Lancaster Community Advisory Councils ("CACs") cannot assist in implementing that change. Our coalition met with the CACs in May 2021 but no deliverables were discussed and nothing came to fruition. The CACs have been ineffective, are not working together, lack transparency, and do not adequately represent the concerns of the community.

Given that LASD and Los Angeles County have been out of compliance for every semi-annual report and your office has access to dozens of Monitoring Team reports, audits, and surveys that demonstrate the breadth and depth of the noncompliance, we provide only a brief summary below of some of the key areas of noncompliance<sup>1</sup>:

1. **Stops and Searches:** LASD continues to engage in stops in a racially discriminatory manner. LASD's two Antelope Valley stations conducted 39,232 discretionary stops (i.e., vehicle, bicycle, or pedestrian) in 2019, averaging over 100 stops a day. Despite being only 17% of the Antelope Valley population, Black individuals comprised 32% of all total stops at both stations. Specifically, LASD and the Los Angeles County are out of compliance on AV Settlement Agreement requirements related to Stops and Searches by failing to ensure that:
  - a. Stops and detentions are based on reasonable suspicion (Sec. 41 of AV Settlement Agreement);
  - b. Backseat detentions are instituted pursuant to reasonable suspicion and reasonable safety concerns (Sec. 48 of AV Settlement Agreement);
  - c. Supervisors and station commanders address all complaints regarding backseat detentions (Sec. 49 of AV Settlement Agreement);
  - d. Deputies are engaging in bias-free policing, which is reflected in the disparities regarding stops and searches (Sec. 64 of AV Settlement Agreement)

---

<sup>1</sup> We will continue to use the 10th Monitoring Team report as the benchmark because beginning with the 11th report the scoring system for compliance was changed to a range, as opposed to yes or no which makes it much harder to assess actual levels of compliance. However, regardless of the report used, LASD and Los Angeles County are woefully out of compliance with the agreement.

- e. Deputies respond to complaints about backseat detentions (Sec. 49 of AV Settlement Agreement); and
  - f. Deputies do not conduct arbitrary searches (Sec. 51 of AV Settlement Agreement).
- 2. Use of Force “UOF”:** Despite clear parameters in the AV Settlement Agreement setting out permissible use of force, LASD has continued to use excessive force against Antelope Valley community members, especially Black residents. In fact, the he data also shows that LASD’s use of force is increasing, as opposed to decreasing.<sup>2</sup> Just this past year in May 2021, [LASD racially profiled and used excessive force against a young Black man](#), pinning him to the asphalt and placing their knee in his back while having a gun to his head. Our coalition [held a protest](#) and called for the LASD to stop profiling and harming our young Black and Brown children and adults. Shortly thereafter on August 28, 2021, while we were writing this letter, another major use of force incident occurred. This time, LASD used excessive force against a Latino man. The video of their egregious conduct speaks for itself, and you can see the community response [here](#). Specifically, LASD and the Los Angeles County are out of compliance with the AV Settlement Agreement requirements related to UOF by failing to:
- a. De-escalate their useforce and use force that is proportional to threat posed (Sec. 48 and 104 of AV Settlement Agreement);
  - b. Hold deputies accountable for uses of force that violate policy or law (Sec. 115 of AV Settlement Agreement);
  - c. Have LASD management review or oversee thorough UOF investigations (Sec. 111 of AV Settlement Agreement)
  - d. Update UOF protocols and have them approved by DOJ after 5 years
- 3. Complaints:** Despite receiving complaints from community members regarding LASD misconduct, LASD and Los Angeles County have failed to ensure that each complaint is investigated thoroughly and that issues complained about are redressed. Specifically, LASD and Los Angeles County are out of compliance with the Settlement Agreement requirements related to Complaints by failing to ensure:
- a. Public access to complaint forms (Sec. 124 of AV Settlement Agreement)
  - b. personnel complaints are not classified as service complaints (Sec. 128 of AV Settlement Agreement)

---

<sup>2</sup> From August 2016 to July 2017, the City of Lancaster had 131 UOF incidents. From August 2018 to July 2019, the City of Lancaster had 246, which is a 53% increase. Furthermore, from August 2016 to July 2017, the City of Palmdale had 79 UOF incidents. From August 2018 to 2019, the City of Palmdale had 139 UOF incidents, which is a 57% increase. <http://www.antelopevalleysettlementmonitoring.info/>

- c. Interview witnesses separately and document interviews (Sec. 137 of AV Settlement Agreement)
- d. Investigate every allegation of misconduct, even if not specifically articulated by complainant (Sec. 130 of AV Settlement Agreement)
- e. That persons that impede the filing of a complaint are disciplined (Sec. 126 of AV Settlement Agreement)

**Today, we are asking your office to initiate procedures to modify the AV Settlement Agreement and/or engage in enforcement proceedings to ensure there are real consequences for LASD and Los Angeles County's failure to comply.** In the meantime, and so that the community can survive the brutality and misconduct by LASD deputies in our communities, we are asking the DOJ to provide the following immediate relief:

- **Create a hotline** for community members to anonymously report law enforcement misconduct and abuse directly to the DOJ, which will create a mechanism for community members to submit complaints since LASD has failed to comply with the complaint requirements.
- **Provide Know Your Rights training** to the community, which will help teach them how to survive law enforcement intimidation and harassment.
- **Market to the community** the new complaint hotline and trainings using billboards, buses, and digital media.
- **Establish a recurring quarterly meeting** between DOJ and the community.

We respectfully request an opportunity to meet with your team to further discuss our concerns. Please reach us through our Coordinator, Christian D. Green at [c.green2386@gmail.com](mailto:c.green2386@gmail.com) or 661-714-0616.

Respectfully,

*CTCAV Steering Committee Members*

Christian D. Green, CTCAV Campaign Coordinator

Waunette Cullors, The WOW Flower Project, Palmdale (CTCAV Co-Chair)

Beth Cayetano, District teacher, Alliance for Black Student Equity (CTCAV Co-Chair)

Cortez Chandler, Timelist Group, Inc., Lancaster

Janie Hodge, Paving the Way Foundation, Lancaster

Ruth Sanchez, Dolores Huerta Foundation, ACLU AV Chapter Member

Pastor Brian Johnson, The Nehemiah Project

Raquel Derfler, CHIRLA, Activist

Arthur Calloway, Executive Director and Founder of Vote Your Power Back, President of Democratic Club of High Desert (DCHD)