



May 17, 2022

Statement on the White Supremacist Murders in Buffalo, New York

The American Sociological Association (ASA) is appalled at the vicious, premeditated, racist murders in Buffalo, New York this past Saturday. These cold-blooded murders of ten innocent Black people in Buffalo and the wounding of others, diverge from ASA's fundamental values.

Sociology studies societies and human behavior. Sociologists engage in research and produce sociological scholarship because they believe authentic knowledge can be utilized to improve the human condition. It is recognized that social inequality-- whether caused by racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, or other systems of oppression—generates foundational barriers to democracy itself.

Sociological research has repeatedly shown racism manifests itself as a historic pattern of ongoing oppression that penetrates the very fabric of U.S. society. This has been the case since the founding of the nation. While we condemn the murders in Buffalo and similar acts of violence and discrimination across the country, we wish to sound the alarm that this gunman is not the lone perpetrator who shot down these mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and residents in Buffalo. Rather, the causes are deeply rooted in U.S. institutions and culture. If the nation is not willing to confront racism at its deepest structural and cultural levels, barbaric racist acts like the one in Buffalo will continue to shake our country and unglue the pillars on which democracy can be sustained.

As sociologists, we understand that knowledge alone cannot eradicate the harmful and violent effects of anti-Blackness and all other forms of racism. Thus, we call on all leaders and citizens of our country to move beyond rhetoric and implement policies and measures that will eradicate the foundations of racism. We must admit that thus far the leaders of our nation, especially white leaders, have been unwilling to address racism directly and to commit the resources to fix this merciless problem that robs so many of life, limb, and safety required to make the pursuit of happiness possible.

As a scholarly Association, the ASA stands ready to assist meaningful efforts to eradicate anti-Blackness and other forms of racism through teaching, research, practice, and policy so democracy can be nurtured and even thrive. At this historic moment, our thoughts are with those in Buffalo and around the world reeling from the devastating effects of white supremacy and racism. The time for action is now.