Press Office

Statement 20-038

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**Statement of District Attorney Rachael Rollins Regarding Protest of June 16, 2020**

BOSTON, June 16, 2020 — “During my campaign to become District Attorney, I made a commitment to review allegations of excessive use of force as well as discharges and incidents resulting in death during or from encounters with law enforcement. I took office on January 2, 2019, and created our nation’s first Discharge Integrity Team. This four-person team meets at least monthly with me to review these specific types of cases. Our DIT currently includes a member of the community, a member of law enforcement, a criminal defense attorney and a retired Superior Court Judge. Half of the DIT members are people of color (Black), one is a survivor of homicide, and one is a veteran. All DIT meetings are conducted outside of my offices.

“Even prior to the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade and David McAtee - all at the hands of law enforcement or their proxy - poor, Black and Brown communities were rightfully skeptical of a DA’s Office investigating the very police officers they partner with every day. As a newly elected DA and an outsider to my office and our local law enforcement partners, I have personally taken over the function of supervising and reviewing officer involved cases of this nature. Since taking office we have reviewed several matters.

“One of the earliest cases presented to the DIT involved Massachusetts State Police Trooper Matthew Sheehan. Trooper Sheehan was ultimately the subject of a Grand Jury investigation resulting in indictments returned on September 18, 2019 charging him with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon and assault with a dangerous weapon, for firing a semi-automatic rifle at an all-terrain vehicle and injuring the operator on February 24, 2018.

“Although the specific investigations that have been raised by the protesters today appear to involve deaths all occurring under prior administrations, I am committed to discussing these cases with DIT. If any new information or evidence is available, I ask that it be directed to my office. We remain committed to making sure that every decision made by the Suffolk County DA’s Office - irrespective of when or under whose administration - are based solidly in law, thoroughly investigated and are reasonable and just.’’

Suffolk County District Attorney Rachael Rollins’ office serves the communities of Boston, Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop, Mass. The office handles over 25,000 cases a year. More than 160 attorneys in the office practice in nine district and municipal courts, Suffolk Superior Court, the Massachusetts Appeals Court, the Supreme Judicial Court, and the Boston Juvenile Courts. The office employs some 300 people and offers a wide range of services and programs to serve anyone who comes in contact with the criminal justice system. This office is committed to educating the public about the services we provide, our commitment to crime prevention, and our dedication to keeping the residents of Suffolk County safe.