

LASA statement against systemic racism in the Americas

June 2020

The murder of George Floyd at the hands of a police officer in Minneapolis, United States, last May 25 is not an isolated event but the expression of a systemic social fact that affects all societies of the Americas. That death, of an African-descendant at the hands of a white agent, has become a global event because it evokes the persistence and violence of racism in contemporary society and repeats a sequence of clearly identifiable violent acts against Afro, Latino and Indigenous people and collectivities in the United States and across the continent. This has sparked a wave of protest and indignation not only in the country where it occurred but throughout the world. It has been expressed in mass mobilizations, in communiqués of civil society organizations, universities, international organizations, among others.

Racism is a social construction that rises in the Western hemisphere on historical foundations that legitimize inequality abjectly. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants lack the same level of access to basic opportunities and are discriminated against in economic, cultural and social terms. In the United States, the discrimination, poverty and exclusion that especially affect Afro-descendant and Latino communities are realities abundantly proven by data. That is why the murder of George Floyd is a shocking and outrageous incident felt across the continent.

The Latin American Studies Association (LASA) expresses its sorrow at the loss of a life and its indignation at the circumstances in which it occurred and calls upon the academic communities of the continent to express their rejection of all forms of racism. For LASA, this implies the need to encourage intellectual discussion and research to understand and dismantle the ways in which discrimination and injustice are structurally perpetuated in our societies. We also stress the importance of this knowledge encouraging us to promote policies and practices that allow us to have more justice, equality, equity and democracy.

With over half a century of history, LASA is the largest professional association in the world for individuals and institutions engaged in the study of Latin America from a multidisciplinary perspective, from the arts and literature to the social sciences. Today, LASA has 14,000 members in 90 countries and has a section specializing in Ethnicity, Race and Indigenous Peoples.

About LASA

The Latin American Studies Association (LASA) is the largest professional association in the world for individuals and institutions engaged in the study of Latin America. With over 13,000 members, over 60% of whom reside outside the United States, LASA is the one association that brings together experts on Latin America from all disciplines and diverse occupational endeavors, across the globe. LASA's mission is to foster intellectual discussion, research, and teaching on Latin America, the Caribbean, and its people throughout the Americas, promote the interests of its diverse membership, and encourage civic engagement through network building and public debate.

If you wish to interview a LASA Executive Council member, you can contact the LASA communications office at (412) 648-7929 or send an email to lasa@lasaweb.org.

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