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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**We Must Not Be Overwhelmed by Grief or Fear
A statement by Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.**



We must never become numb to the slaughter in the streets of Chicago. We must never stop demanding the resources necessary for safety and peace. We must work even harder to stop the violence – to save the children and our souls.

Still, I'm feeling overwhelmed, heartbroken and speechless, reeling from the news that another young child, another piece of Chicago's future and America's hope was murdered today in an explosion of reckless violence and madness.

This time the stolen life belonged to a 2-year-old boy, riding in the back of a car on a sun splashed; spring-like Valentine's Day.

A 26-year-old man was also killed and a pregnant woman wounded in the ambush attack on the city's West Side, part of a besieged, isolated and anguished archipelago of nine "endangered communities" where unemployment, poverty and violence are sky high.

The toddler, Lavontay White, Jr., was gunned down on the same day 11-year-old Takiya Holmes

was declared dead after being shot in the head Saturday night, apparently by a stray bullet, as she sat in her family's van on the South Side. Not far away, Kanari Bowers, 12, was also shot in the head Saturday. Somehow, she still clings to life.

Overwhelmed. Heartbroken. Speechless.

But we cannot give in to our grief and our fear. We cannot be silent. We must continue to demand as loudly as we can that President Donald Trump send in an army of Feds, an army dedicated to defeating the root causes of the violence, an army dispatched from the U.S. Department of Labor, from the Department of Health, the Department the Labor, the Department of Education and, if it can be fair, equal and honest, the Department of Justice.

We owe it to Lavontay and Takiya and Kanari and to all of our children to keep demanding and to keep fighting for a better, safer Chicago, a city where the only thing a child on a beautiful day has to worry about is sunburn, not a barrage of bullets.

Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.
Founder and President
Rainbow PUSH Coalition

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Rainbow PUSH Coalition is a multi-racial, multi-issue, progressive, international organization that was formed in December 1996 by the Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr. through merging of two organizations he founded Operation PUSH People United to Serve Humanity (estab. 1971) and the Rainbow Coalition (estab. 1984). With headquarters in Chicago and offices in Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, New York and Oakland, the organization works to make the American Dream a reality for all citizens while advocating for peace and justice around the world. RPC is dedicated to improving the lives of all people by serving as a voice for the voiceless. Its mission is to protect, defend and gain civil rights by leveling the economic and educational playing fields while promoting peace and justice around the world.

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Keep up with Rev. Jackson and the work of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition at www.rainbowpush.org.