

**Statement on the Release of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Assassination Files
– Martin Luther King III and Dr. Bernice A. King**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“We recognize that the release of documents concerning the assassination of our father, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., has long been a subject of interest, captivating public curiosity for decades. As the children of Dr. King and Mrs. Coretta Scott King, his tragic death has been an intensely personal grief – a devastating loss for his wife, children, and the granddaughter he never met – an absence our family has endured for over 57 years. We ask those who engage with the release of these files to do so with empathy, restraint, and respect for our family's continuing grief.

The release of these files must be viewed within their full historical context. During our father's lifetime, he was relentlessly targeted by an invasive, predatory, and deeply disturbing disinformation and surveillance campaign orchestrated by J. Edgar Hoover through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The intent of the government's COINTELPRO campaign was not only to monitor, but to discredit, dismantle and destroy Dr. King's reputation and the broader American Civil Rights Movement. These actions were not only invasions of privacy, but intentional assaults on the truth – undermining the dignity and freedoms of private citizens who fought for justice, designed to neutralize those who dared to challenge the status quo.

In 1999, our family filed a wrongful death civil lawsuit in Shelby County, Tennessee. The jury unanimously concluded that our father was the victim of a conspiracy involving Loyd Jowers and unnamed co-conspirators, including government agencies as a part of a wider scheme. The verdict also affirmed that someone other than James Earl Ray was the shooter, and that Mr. Ray was set up to take the blame. Our family views that verdict as an affirmation of our long-held beliefs. As we review these newly released files, we will assess whether they offer additional insights beyond the findings our family has already accepted.

While we support transparency and historical accountability, we object to any attacks on our father's legacy or attempts to weaponize it to spread falsehoods. We strongly condemn any attempts to misuse these documents in ways intended to undermine our father's legacy and the significant achievements of the movement. Those who promote the fruit of the FBI's surveillance

will unknowingly align themselves with an ongoing campaign to degrade our father and the Civil Rights Movement.

Instead of repeating the injustices of the past, we encourage the public to continue the work that our father began – building equity, justice, and peace for all. Now more than ever, we must honor his sacrifice by committing ourselves to the realization of his dream – a society rooted in compassion, unity, and equality.

Let us move forward together, inspired by our father's enduring vision of the Beloved Community – a world made possible when we choose to center love in all that we do. By embracing compassion, mutual respect, and justice, we can transform his dream into our shared reality.”

-Martin Luther King III and Dr. Bernice A. King

Please note that the King Family will not be conducting any interviews on this matter at this time.