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**NINA MOINI:** A new progress report finds the Minneapolis Police Department is falling behind on court enforced reforms. It's the fourth report over two years from the independent evaluator Effective Law Enforcement For All. Joining me now to go over the report is Department of Human Rights Commissioner Rebecca Lucero, who helped create the court agreement. Thanks for your time this afternoon, Commissioner Lucero.

**REBECCA** Thank you for having me.

**LUCERO:**

**NINA MOINI:** It's been four years since the agency you lead found the city of Minneapolis and its police department engaged in race based policing. That's a summary of your findings that you put together over a couple of years. And it's been two years since Minneapolis Police was put under these court mandated reforms. Where would you say, overall, the department is two years in to this agreement?

**REBECCA** Yeah. Thank you for the question. I think that the department and the city of Minneapolis are in the very early stages of a consent decree. It's a long process. And it requires really complex organizational change work that takes time. And so they're where we expect them to be very early in the process.

**NINA MOINI:** OK. And so Effective Law Enforcement For All, or the independent monitor, which, just to remind folks, signed on or was contracted to be independent and monitor what was going on-- the name speaks for itself there. But in the report, they talk about persistent problems in the internal affairs unit, which investigates complaints against officers. The report found complaints remain open for months, even years, in some cases.

And you shared in a letter that's included in the report that it's one of the underlying conditions that result in race based policing and some of those patterns your department found. Can you explain how internal affairs impacts accountability here?

**REBECCA** Sure. And I guess I just want to start by saying what is in this report that ELEFA dropped yesterday, and we provided a letter for as well, is consistent with exactly what we found in those April 2022 findings. At that point, we found that the officers were not being held accountable, that there was ineffective accountability and oversight systems, that there was problems with the structure, that things weren't being correctly implemented, and complaints were inadequately investigated, and officers were not held consistently accountable.

And so what we are really seeing is really just affirming what was found then. And so you asked specifically why is this important. So it is really important that there is a quality accountability system because it helps to surface and address all the underlying conditions that are resulting in race based policing. When officers are not getting the support they need on the front end, it's going to result in discipline issues down the road. And so it is important that not only is there a good accountability system in place so that there can be good public confidence and morale can exist within the department, it also needs to be holistic to try to prevent it from getting to that spot in the first place.

**NINA MOINI:** And you also noted areas where there has been positive progress, in your opinion. But I just want to go through some of the areas of stalled progress, including data system development delays, a lack of guidelines for a field training program, among other things. I think people want to know, is this normal? Is it where it's supposed to be?

From what I'm gathering, you're saying it's still in the very early stages, and you're comfortable where things are. But I think you have to take into account all of these different criteria. So I'm sure it's hard to assess where exactly things are at. But how do you think the department can get back on track in some of the places where they are behind where they need to be?

**REBECCA** Sure. I guess I would start by just saying I'm not comfortable with where things are.

**LUCERO:**

**NINA MOINI:** OK.

**REBECCA** I'm very aware that there's a need for urgent, and persistent, and coordinated change that happens both within the city and MPD. I'm just also holding to be true, at the exact same time, that it takes a lot of work, and that we're asking for a whole lot of different pieces to move simultaneously-- policies, and training, and culture change. So all of it has to move together. And that's that real holistic approach you need.

**LUCERO:**

So I don't even know if I believe that they are stalling. So, certainly, they are behind meeting all their goals and the deadlines in many places. That is true. And the complexity of what they are doing is going to mean that they're kind of where we expect them to be right now. And I think that the culture piece is really the thing that is highlighted for me, because I think that is the thing that will move things quickly.

We oftentimes talk about moving slow to go fast. And that moving slow piece is around organizational culture. And we talked about in our findings that without coordinated and sustained action, by both city and MPD leaders, MPD's organizational culture will continue to undercut the efficacy of any of these public safety systems that are being changed and will continue to perpetuate race based policing. And so that is where I think the focus could go to really help get on track and move things faster with alignment.

**NINA MOINI:** So you did mention that MPD completed its in-service training on updated use of force policies. This is highlighted as a really consequential accomplishment, one of the real pillars there toward the accountability and the culture change that you're talking about. But also, we know that it's been a really difficult time in the time frame this report covered from October 1, I believe, through March 31. Obviously, we all know Operation Metro Surge was occurring at that time-- difficult times recently as well for the department, with Police Chief Brian O'Hara resigning after allegedly interfering with an internal investigation into his own conduct. How does that disruption or these disruptions affect the progress? It's hard for people to envision culture change when a chief resigns under these types of allegations.

**REBECCA** Yeah. And I think I want to, of course, honor how unbelievably challenging the first parts of this year were for the entire city. And what we're talking about here is we're talking about a pattern of practice of problems that existed for many, many, many years. And I think, in fact, that demonstrates how essential it is to have really good organizational culture, and prevent race based policing, and have really well-functioning public safety systems, because what it means to be a leader-- when you're a leader, there is going to be a crisis. And there will be the next crisis.

**LUCERO:**

That is part of really challenging leadership. And many of us know how challenging that is. But that also, then, means that when you can, you need to do everything possible to create really good systems around you, to set the team and the city up for success. Both community members and officers need to be set for success. It's a hard job being a chief. So three to five years is not a surprising amount of time.

And right now, this really is an opportunity. As Minneapolis is recruiting and hiring a new chief of police, it really could be an opportunity to embed lasting practices, take on a holistic approach, be very strategic and sequenced in how things are moving, rather than just relying on aspirational commitments. I think the disconnect between actions and words is oftentimes where that frustration and that disappointment exists. And so this moment really requires leadership that understands complex change management and not just procedural changes. So I see it more as an opportunity.

**NINA MOINI:** So we're entering year three of this agreement, and the report shares it's a new phase. Year one and two, created policy foundations. Year three is meant to be about training implementation and accountability. So what will you be closely looking at in this next review period?

**REBECCA LUCERO:** So, certainly, there are still substantial policies that are being worked on. Really stop, search, and arrest, the policies around the discipline matrix, different pieces that have a lot more work to move forward on. So we'll certainly continue to be working on policies. The city will spend a lot of time on that.

But for me, I'm really looking for that holistic approach to make sure that there can be lasting changes-- so clear lines of responsibility, effective supervision and performance management, commitment to proactively prevent problems before they turn into accountability concerns, a culture that values intervention, and learning, and humanity, and civil rights. Without that centering the work moving forward, no changes to policy will matter that much. And so that's what I'm really looking forward to seeing transformational change in the many years ahead.

**NINA MOINI:** Thanks for this update, commissioner. Appreciate your time.

**REBECCA LUCERO:** Thank you, and have a good day.

**NINA MOINI:** That's Minnesota Department of Human Rights Commissioner Rebecca Lucero.