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[www.hildaforny.com](http://www.hildaforny.com)

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:  
[kenwarner53@gmail.com](mailto:kenwarner53@gmail.com) • 585.355.8538

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# Hilda Rosario-Escher Calls for Calm Amidst Community Violence in Rochester

**May 31st, 2020 • Rochester, NY:** Long-time Community Leader, Hilda Rosario-Escher is spending Sunday morning on North Clinton Avenue helping neighbors clean up streets in the wake of a wave of violence that overshadowed yesterday's peaceful demonstrations. The protests were part of nationwide actions highlighting the death of George Floyd of Minneapolis, Minnesota who died last week at the hands of police.

"I am proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with my Black and Brown brothers and sisters and all others who sincerely detest and resist the needless, brutal murder of Mr. George Floyd," she said in a statement.

"This senseless, shameful and totally unnecessary murder at hands of the Minneapolis police represents a scourge in our nation that we must continue to seek to totally eradicate," she said.

What started as a peaceful Black Lives Matter demonstration by hundreds of community activists, was marred by violence that quickly got out of hand. Cars were overturned and some set on fire. Police cruisers were vandalized and peaceful protesters were soon overwhelmed by crowds who smashed windows, damaged property and looted several local stores.

"We cannot meet violence with violence," said Rosario Escher. "Now is he time for leadership on the part of our elected officials to bring people to the table to make sure what happened in Minneapolis does not happen here".

She was quick to point out though that frustration and community racism resulting from decades of ignoring the real issues of poverty, lack of education and healthcare as well as growing discrimination against people of color leads to a desperation that is bubbling beneath the surface of our community.

"Racism in any form and practiced by any individual at any level of society or government cannot and must not be accepted or tolerated," she said. "I know what it's like to feel the frustration of poverty and being without a voice. I've lived it. We must all join together to fight for the rights and dignity of marginalized people and for social and economic justice for everyone in any way we can."