

Federal court rules Black police officer's racial discrimination & hostile work environment claims may proceed to trial

Federal court denies County's motion for summary judgment, allowing Black officer's discrimination & hostile work environment claims to proceed to trial.

GREENBELT, MD, UNITED STATES, March 28, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a significant legal

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Attorney Jordan D. Howlette

victory, a federal judge has denied Prince George's County's attempt to dismiss crucial civil rights claims brought by Mohamed Magassouba, a former police officer with the Prince George's County Police Department (PGCPD) who alleges he faced systematic discrimination and a hostile work environment based on his race and national origin within the Department.

Judge Timothy J. Sullivan issued a 45-page memorandum opinion yesterday, allowing Mr. Magassouba's case to proceed to trial on multiple counts, including race

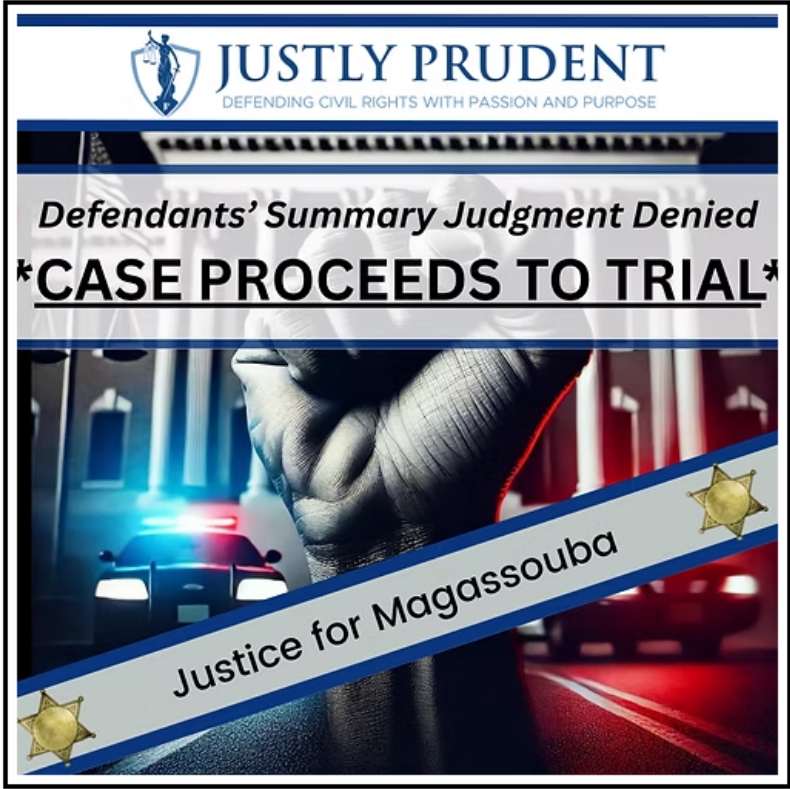
discrimination related to his termination, hostile work environment, and civil rights violations.

"This ruling represents a critical step toward justice for Mr. Magassouba and potentially for other officers of color who have faced similar treatment within the PGCPD," said Attorney Jordan D. Howlette, lead counsel at [Justly Prudent](#) representing Mr. Magassouba. "The Court's detailed analysis acknowledges the existence of sufficient evidence that could lead a reasonable jury to conclude that Prince George's County Police Department unlawfully discriminated against our client and subjected him to a hostile work environment because of his race and national origin as an African immigrant."

The lawsuit stems from events beginning in 2019 when Mr. Magassouba, who had served the PGCPD without incident for nearly nine years, was targeted after refusing to support another officer's excessive use of force during an arrest that was captured on [video](#) and posted to YouTube. The Court found sufficient evidence that PGCPD officials may have subjected Mr. Magassouba to "excessive scrutiny in an attempt to find cause to open an IAD investigation" that ultimately led to his suspension and termination.

The Court highlighted evidence of discriminatory comments made about Mr. Magassouba's status as an African man and noted the timing of increased hostile treatment following his complaints about unequal treatment of Black officers compared to non-Black officers. The Court also found that the circumstances surrounding the investigation, suspension, and termination of Mr. Magassouba raised genuine disputes of fact that require resolution at trial.

Critically, the Court allowed claims to proceed that the County maintained "a series of customs, policies and practices" that violated Mr. Magassouba's constitutional rights, potentially opening the door to broader institutional reform.



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Defendants' Summary Judgment Denied
CASE PROCEEDS TO TRIAL

Justice for Magassouba

Black officer secures procedural victory that allows multiple claims alleging civil rights violations to proceed to trial.

"This decision sends a powerful message that law enforcement agencies are not above the law and must be held accountable when they discriminate against their own officers," said Attorney Howlette. "No one, especially those sworn to uphold the law, should face discrimination or harassment in the workplace based on their race or national origin. And I sincerely wish we could have also held the officers in the January 2019 video accountable for the egregious assault that was carried out against the female civilian in the presence of her son."

The case will now proceed to trial where a jury will decide whether Prince George's County Police Department and the individually named officers discriminated against Mr. Magassouba based on his race and national origin, created a hostile work environment, and violated his civil rights.

The case is Mohamed Magassouba v. Prince George's County, et al. (Case No. 8:23-cv-00767-TJS), filed in the United States District Court for the District of Maryland.

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