**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**STATEMENT REGARDING ONGOING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

**NEW ORLEANS** – Sept. 24, 2012 – Following is a statement from Orleans Parish Sheriff Marlin Gusman regarding the status of discussions with the US Department of Justice:

“Just as with the New Orleans Police Department, the Justice Department in Washington began negotiating with the Orleans Parish Sheriff’s Office several years ago concerning changes the Department would like to see made in department policies and procedures. After several years of discussions and negotiations, the Dept. of Justice recommended certain changes in the procedures and policies of the OPSO.

In the interim, the Southern Poverty Law Clinic filed a lawsuit against the Sheriff’s Office, regarding certain issues which the SPLC believed needed to be changed with the Sheriff’s Department.

The Justice Department, believing that it would be appropriate to attempt all resolve issues at one time if possible, moved to intervene in the Southern Poverty Law Center lawsuit to determine if a negotiated resolution could be obtained with the Sheriff’s Office, just as it was with the New Orleans Police Department.

We look forward to working within the court system and with the parties involved to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution, just as the New Orleans Police Department did with the Justice Department.”

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