

**Urgent Debate on "the current racially inspired human rights violations, systemic racism,
police brutality and the violence against peaceful protest"**

Joint Statement submitted by the American Civil Liberties Union

43rd Session of the Human Rights Council

June 17, 2020

Ms. President:

American policing has never been a neutral institution. The first U.S. city police department was a slave patrol, and modern police forces have directed oppression and violence at Black people to enforce Jim Crow, wage the War on Drugs, and crack down on protests.

Black Americans are 2.5 times more likely to be killed by police than white Americans, despite constituting only 13% of the population. They are also 1.3 times more likely to be unarmed when killed by police.

George Floyd's horrific murder has sparked an unstoppable global movement demanding concrete and bold actions to end racist policing practices and impunity for police violence.

While we recognize the global nature of racism and police violence and stand in full solidarity with victims of police violence everywhere, this Council must ensure that the outcome of this Urgent Debate is focused on efforts to hold the United States accountable. This is an opportunity to demonstrate that no State, no matter how powerful, is above scrutiny, and to demonstrate cross-regional support for the Council's integrity.

The Council should mandate the creation of an independent international accountability mechanism not only to investigate extrajudicial killings of unarmed Black people, but also police violence against protesters and journalists. Since May 26th, there have been over 400 instances of journalists being detained, assaulted while covering the protests. Peaceful protesters have experienced injuries, and sometimes death, from tear gas, rubber bullets, and other crowd control tactics used excessively by the police.

The protesters around the world are demanding radical change; now is the time for accountability, for reimagining public safety and the role of police in a democratic society. It's time to dismantle structural racism and invest in people and communities of color. We therefore ask you to heed the demand of family members of victims of police violence who together with hundreds of civil society groups, asked you to hold this urgent session and mandate an independent investigation into U.S. racist policing practices and suppression of peaceful protests. We cannot remain complicit in the oppression of Black Americans and must take immediate action to end this legacy of state-sanctioned violence.