

June 15, 2020

Re: Urgent Debate on current racially inspired human rights violations, systematic racism, police brutality and the violence against peaceful protests

Excellencies,

I write to you on behalf of the Global Justice Center (“GJC”), an international human rights organization, with special ECOSOC consultative status, dedicated to advancing gender equality through the rule of law. We combine advocacy with legal analysis, working to ensure equal protection of the law for women and girls.

Last week, GJC was proud to join over 600 of our fellow-organizations, as well as the families of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Michael Brown and Philando Castile,¹ in calling for the Human Rights Council to convene a special session the escalating situation of police violence and repression of protests in the United States. We thank the Council for heeding this call and scheduling an urgent debate on this topic for this upcoming Wednesday, June 17, 2020.

While we understand that the debate is not focused solely on the United States, we are hopeful that this session will bring crucial international attention to the unchecked violations against Black people, and peaceful protesters in the United States. We also urge you to utilize this meeting to take concrete action to ensure accountability for racist policing tactics and excessive force used against peaceful protesters in the country, in particular by mandating an independent inquiry to document and investigate extrajudicial killings of unarmed Black men and women, and police violence against protesters and journalists.

The need for such an inquiry is urgent and necessary--the United States has long demonstrated its unwillingness to tackle and ensure accountability for institutional and systemic racism. Despite repeated recommendations by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination regarding police brutality and discriminatory police practices, the United States has failed to take meaningful action.² Of particular note are the experiences of Black women, who are murdered by police, assaulted by police, unlawfully arrested by police, arrested and charged for defending themselves by non-police violence, and nevertheless all too often rendered invisible in public discourse and official responses.³

Accordingly, in line with the call in the letter dated July 8th⁴ requesting this session, we urge you to take the following actions:

- Mandate an independent inquiry into racist policing with impunity in the United States, and the allegations of excessive use of force against peaceful protesters and journalists;
- Request that the inquiry present its findings to the Council, including recommendations on concrete actions the United States must take in line with its obligations under international

human rights law, as well as the responsibility of the United States to end impunity for police violence and other serious human rights violations through appropriate disciplinary actions, prosecutions and fair trials; and

- Call on the United States to give full and unrestricted access to UN Officials and experts conducting the inquiry.

We thank you for your timely attention to this urgent issue.

Sincerely,



Akila Radhakrishnan
President
Global Justice Center

¹ ACLU et. al., Request for the Convening of a Special Session on the Escalating Situation of Police Violence and Repression of Protests in the United States, Jun. 8, 2020, <https://www.aclu.org/letter/coalition-letter-request-un-independent-inquiry-escalating-situation-police-violence-and?redirect=letter/coalition-letter-request-un-investigation-escalating-situation-police-violence-and-repression>.

² Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Statement 1 (2020): United States, Prevention of Racial Discrimination, Including Early Warning and Urgent Action Procedures, Jun. 12, 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CERD/EarlyWarning/Statements/USA.pdf>.

³ See Michelle S. Jacobs, The Violent State: Black Women's Invisible Struggle Against Police Violence, 24(1) William & Mary Journal of Women and Law 39 (2017-2018).

⁴ ACLU et. al., at note 1.