



Tackling the Issue of Global Police Brutality

General Assembly 4

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Introduction

The purpose of the police, as established and enforced since its origin, is to protect, and to protect everyone. The moment police agents begin to select whom they wish to protect and whom they don't, or whom they would rather cause harm to, they widen the massive gaps that still exist in our world in terms of equality for all.

In recent times, we have seen more and more uproar after cases of police brutality and the increase in awareness of it has propagated globally. Police brutality still occurs regularly, often as a result of discrimination or bias against groups of people that incite the police officer to use unnecessary violence. This can include brutality against a victim as a result of racism, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, ethnic or cultural bias, and many others. This report will provide a basis of knowledge for all of these.

We must ensure we continue to educate ourselves on this topic and actively find solutions for it, instead of forgetting this issue because it may not be a trend anymore. Our conference theme "Human Rights: establishing a world of equality and justice" would not be fulfilled otherwise. It is your role as a delegate to ensure we address this problem with the seriousness it deserves, as it directly concerns the safety of the global population and its law and order.

Definition of Key Terms

Police brutality

The use of excessive and/or unnecessary force by members of law enforcement when handling civilians, including but not limited to physical or verbal harassment, violence, sexual harassment, unlawful torture or killing, and unwarranted use of riot control agents during protests.

Critical race theory (CRT)

A movement branching from Critical Theory legal studies - dissects the idea that law is just and neutral, and instead argues that historical patterns of racism are ingrained into law and modern institutions, thus making racism a systematic problem. It expands theories on class, economic structure, and law to interrogate the role of these in perpetuating racism.

Black, Indigenous or other People of Colour (BIPOC)

Besides POC, which is the more widely used umbrella term for people of colour, BIPOC specifies black and indigenous people, to account for the erasure or unjust treatment of black and indigenous POC specifically, who may face increased levels of injustice compared to other POC.

**People of Colour (POC)**

A term that is commonly used for African American peoples but can also refer to Native Americans, Asian Americans, and some Latino Americans.

Asian American or Pacific Islander (AAPI)

A term used for people who have origins in Asia or the Pacific Islands. They began being referred to collectively especially recently when being targets of stereotyping or discrimination as a result of the provenance of the coronavirus.

Colour of Law

Refers to a pretence of legal authority or power when justifying an act that is actually in violation of the law. An action performed as such "colours" the law to the circumstance, yet in actual fact contravenes it.

Black Lives Matter (BLM)

Black Lives Matter is a sociopolitical movement protesting racially motivated violence against black people.

LGBTQ+

An initialism for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, with + indicating other non-heterosexual or non-cisgender identifications such as asexuality and intersexuality. The collective term grew in usage as a result of the Gay Pride movement.

Stop-and-Frisk

A method of searching or patting down an individual a police officer is suspicious of, usually to determine if they are carrying a weapon.

Threat hypothesis

Argues that as the relative size or influence of a racial/ethnic minority group expands, members of the majority group in the same area feel increasingly threatened.

Blue wall of silence

Used to refer to an unspoken code of conduct among law enforcement officers not to report on colleague's misconducts, leading to an insular culture in police departments.

Qualified immunity

A principle present in some countries stating that a law enforcement official is immune from civil suits unless they have clearly violated constitutional rights.



General Overview

Since the 18th Century in certain countries, officers engaging in police brutality have done so with the implicit approval of the local legal system. Currently, these individuals usually act either with the unspoken approval of their superiors or they can be rogue officers. In both instances, the officers often commit acts of brutality under the colour of law and, more often than not, the local or state government later attempts to cover up the matter so that national sovereignty and citizens' general trust in law enforcement is maintained.

This report has organized the different categories of police brutality into the 4 main sections below.

Police Brutality Associated with Race or Ethnicity

We see police brutality mentioned so often in direct connection with racist abuse that these concepts have become inextricably linked over time. Many believe there are few causes other than racist sentiment that could incite police agents to actively perform the opposite of their duty (and seemingly choosing to do so only with a pattern of specific types of individuals). It is yet another aspect that is believed to factor into critical race theory and the systematic oppression of ethnic groups and minorities.

The unconscious bias of police officers may cause them to use violence more quickly or to a greater extent with people of a certain background, either because they believe the person deserves greater punishment due to their ethnicity or race, or because they feel more threatened by the person as a result of racial stereotyping, which connects to the threat hypothesis. Police raids, patrols and stop-and-frisks have been shown to disproportionately target neighbourhoods containing people predominantly belonging to ethnic minorities: the potential for these situations escalating into brutality, therefore, heightens with these groups.

BIPOC have been the main targets of police brutality with regards to a number of policies such as increased taser use. AAPI and East Asian people began being increasingly targeted as a result of racial profiling in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic and its origin in China.

More white people are killed in total by police than black people are yearly in most European and American countries, according to a Guardian study in 2015, but when these numbers were adjusted to account for the fact that the black population is a minority in most of these nations, twice as many POC are killed per capita compared to white people. A 2019 study showed that POC face a massively higher probability of suffering police brutality than Caucasian people in countries where POC are not the majority ethnicity.



Police brutality associated with gender

With virtually all police forces worldwide being disproportionately male, brutality towards both female police officers and female citizens is not uncommon.

Throughout the 19th Century, proletariat women were more often subject to punitive sanctions or corporal and capital punishment after arrest.

The most prevalent cause is the remnants of patriarchal culture which gives male officers a feeling of impunity when mistreating women or makes them feel they are justified in more extensively punishing women because they deserve increased violence. Male officers may feel more comfortable abusing women due to their stereotypical portrayal as being submissive to men. Sexism and victim-blaming also ensure that many women do not report instances of their mistreatment by male police officers or they are not listened to when they do so. This issue is more severe in countries with a stronger or more ongoing history of patriarchy including some Arab and West Asian countries. Especially in countries in conflict, sexual violence against women perpetrated by police is a large factor in all non-partner sexual violence. The brutality here is also less measurable because it is more subtle and institutionalized: it can manifest as systemic violence, such as through police being less willing to involve themselves in cases of domestic assault, not filing reports (accurately) in cases of anti-women abuse or femicide, and denying access to justice.

Police brutality associated with the LGBTQ+ community

Police brutality towards members of the LGBTQ+ has historic roots in the criminalization of homophobia and transsexuality. Raids of gay bars, beating and harassment of queer bar patrons, extensive patrolling of gay neighbourhoods in the hopes of arresting couples engaging in homosexual intercourse, and police posing as gay to catch and arrest others that would engage with them shows the extensive past of institutionalized homophobia perpetrated by police. The beginning of the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement itself is regarded as having stemmed from instances of homophobically motivated police brutality.

A large number of instances of brutality still go unreported nowadays due to a fear of repercussion, public ridicule, or a general distrust of law enforcement. In most countries, at least half of the LGBTQ+ community has experienced police misconduct or mistreatment including harassment, physical or sexual assault, constant misgendering or deadnaming, or being forced to perform sexual acts to avoid arrest. These figures are massively inflated in countries where the prevalent religion is intolerant of the LGBTQ+, or where cultural social attitudes are disapproving of the LGBTQ+.

Police brutality associated with political matters or protests

Riots and protests are sites that see the greatest extent of police brutality since they tend to pose the most hostile situations to officers, and they are situations where the use of force or violence is most justified and seemingly excusable. Overuse of tasers, water cannons using subzero temperatures, sonic grenades, or rubber bullets is



common and sometimes tacitly advocated for by law enforcement in order to protect national sovereignty. Protests advocating for the rights of the above groups – ethnic minorities, women, and the LGBTQ+ are common sites of increased police violence when both the access to riot control agents and the police's prejudice against these groups is factored in. A 'vicious cycle' is hereby often seen with police violence and protests: protests occur because of police violence, and police violence occurs because of protests.

The instance of this increases massively in autocratically governed countries, as these are generally harsher when dealing with forms of opposition to the national regime.

Major Parties Involved

Amnesty International

Its goal of ending human rights abuses against all makes it directly responsible for ending the violence and terror caused by police brutality. It has released numerous country-specific reports and investigated the causes or mechanisms for law enforcement's ability to discriminate certain groups of individuals. In its manifesto on police violence, it states: "police brutality and racism international human rights law strictly prohibits all forms of discrimination. No one should be treated differently by law enforcement because of their race, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, religion or belief, political or another opinion, ethnicity, national or social origin, disability, or another status".

Human Rights Watch

Similarly to Amnesty International, as an NGO dedicated to conducting research on and advocating for human rights, the group has the ability to pressure governments, policymakers, and companies to denounce abuse and begin to respect human rights in connection to police violence. It publishes many country-specific reports on their situation with police brutality that are publicly available.

United States of America

The USA's police force has killed more people compared to any other industrialized democratic country. From 1980-2018, over 30,000 people have died due to police violence in the US. The legal doctrine of qualified immunity has been criticized as a cause for this: it is regarded as a tool to let brutality go unpunished.

Police brutality against African Americans has existed most prominently, especially since the eras of segregation. There was a period of riots in the 1960s in response to police violence against African-Americans and Latinos. Parties such as the Black Panthers were formed to challenge the brutality coming from majorly white police departments. These groups were later targeted by the FBI to cause harm.

SWAT teams began being selected for raids for drug-related purposes during the War on Drugs, and African-Americans, as well as Latinos, have been disproportionately



targeted in these. The War on Terror following 9/11 created an environment with increased impunity for police officers in acts of violence against Middle Eastern or Muslim Americans. A large number of recent killings due to racism have highlighted the severity of the issue in the US, the most recent including the murders of George Floyd, Jacob Blake, and Breonna Taylor. These led to public outrage and subsequent local, national and international BLM protests and riots.

The frequent police raids on gay bars during the 1960s – 1980s period where the solicitation of homosexual relations was illegal in parts of the USA caused large amounts of violence against lesbian or gay people. The Stonewall riots, those that are believed to have started the Pride movement, began in the US as a result of violent confrontation between police and gay rights activists. Over 50% of LGBTQ+ members still currently report having experienced mistreatment from the US police. Protests and riots for movements such as Dakota Access Pipeline and BLM saw the enormous deployment of riot control agents, which later led to a nationwide call to stop the use of rubber bullets as these had caused severe long-term effects in protesters who had been hit by them. Some police officers engaged in the torture or beating of rioters during BLM protests, and some during peaceful pride rallies or marches.

Brazil

Brazil has one of the highest global numbers of police killings. Rio de Janeiro in particular, whose violent state began to be noticed after the 2016 Olympics hosted there, has regularly had the title of area with the highest rate of police killings in the world in past. Large fractions of all homicides in Brazil annually are carried out by police officers, this having been one-fifth in 2015. Nearly all of these deaths are reported as self-defence or state that the victim was armed and actively engaging in confrontation. Around 50-75% of victims tend to be black men, with women closely following as another majority category herein. Brazil retains a large amount of racial bias as well as machoism or patriarchal culture: they were the last to abolish the slave trade in 1888, and the remnants of sexist traditions from Iberian culture that held women subordinate to men in all relationships affect the perception of women's role in society. This causes the incidence of police mistreatment for these groups to be significantly higher.

Venezuela

Venezuela sees one of the highest taxes of police brutality worldwide and one of the most elevated rates of police-perpetrated deaths. The country's results of 16-19 killed per 100,000 inhabitants place it among the highest for police-caused death rates globally. The large majority of these occur as a result of political instability, especially in the past - Maduro's determination to maintain national sovereignty and his consequentially extreme measures when handling riots or protests against the regime. Generally, targeting of ethnic minorities occurs within this as protesters belonging to minority groups are more likely to be harmed by police. Venezuela, like



many other Latin American countries, continues to increasingly militarize the police, which increases the potential for escalation in any vaguely hostile situations.

South Africa

Sometimes referred to as the “world capital for police violence”, South Africa has seen an increasing trend in police-caused deaths since 2014 and has one of the highest tolls of torture or rape carried out by uniformed officers. This problem with police brutality has been significant since the days of apartheid. If all civil liability suits brought against South African police had been upheld, there would have been enough to wipe out their entire budget. There were 244 deaths in police custody in 2015 and there have consistently been over 100 reported cases of rape and over 100 reported cases of torture carried out by police officers yearly since then. Protesters are also regularly faced with the firing of rubber bullets and the use of concussion grenades.

Philippines

Filipino police have killed and paid others, such as paid assassins, to kill thousands of drug offenders in their extensive war on drugs and abuse of illegal substances. Very high-ranking strands of governments have previously instructed Filipino police to conduct massive numbers of extrajudicial executions. The police have hereby been shown to predominantly and systematically target mostly poor and defenceless people nationwide by planting evidence and fabricating incident reports. The national police profit from the murder of impoverished people who are being killed illegally for cash, as officers are paid per “encounter” with those accused of drug abuse yet often work from unverified lists of offenders and use these to raid the homes of, torture, or kill unarmed and compliant citizens. This system driven by the financial incentive to stop drug abuse is often called an “economy of murder”. Police routinely claim they have been fired upon first in fabricated subsequent incident reports, and sometimes plant drugs and weapons accordingly as evidence to back up their claims.

Timeline of Key Events

October 1966	Black Panther party formed to challenge police brutality
June 28 th 1969	Stonewall riots for gay rights in NYC: the birth of pride
December 4 th 1969	Black Panther leaders Clark & Hampton killed in FBI raid
March 3 rd 1991	Beating of Rodney King by LAPD officers
August 9 th 2014	Michael Brown Jr shot fatally by a police officer
April 2016 – February 2017	noDAP protesters attacked by police
August 10 th 2016	Killing of Tony Timpa by officers of Dallas PD
Throughout 2017	Waves of police attacks on homosexuals in Chechnya
January 23 rd 2019	Anti-Maduro riots in Venezuela: four murdered by police
March 13 th 2020	Breonna Taylor murdered in her home by police officers



May 25 th 2020	Murder of George Floyd: subsequent public outrage, riots
June 8 th 2020	Anti-Chokehold Act passed in New York
August 23 rd 2020	Fatal shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha
March 3 rd 2021	Rape and murder of Sarah Everard by a uniformed officer
April 20 th 2021	Derek Chauvin, Floyd's murderer, convicted on 3 counts

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

There have been numerous attempts to solve the issue of police brutality, especially after this issue became more prominent during the BLM protests. A US law passed in 2006 previously required reporting of homicides perpetrated by police, but many departments do not obey it and it is therefore not effective. The Obama administration supplied 20 million USD for body cameras to be implemented in police departments throughout its government. However, the actual use of these by police officers, and later the access to the footage by legal authorities when reviewing incidents, was limited by the fact that these could be turned on and off manually. Civilian review boards have attempted to disseminate the use of body cameras as much as possible but have been criticized in their other functions, as they lack the funding to be truly effective and have been previously staffed by police while advising repercussions for offending officers. The Security Council resolution 2185 and the UN's Multi-Year Vision and Strategy titled United Nations Police Towards 2020: Serve and Protect to Build Peace and Security, both adopted in 2014, meaning the UN engaged in increasing diversity and acceptance within their own police forces and encouraging national governments to do the same for themselves. The first output of the Strategic Guidance Framework for International Policing or SGF was also released in 2014, which detailed guidelines all police internationally should hold themselves to. The George Floyd Anti-Chokehold Act of 2020, as proposed by Eric Garner, began outlining restrictions and punishment for police officers that used certain techniques of excessive force when handling civilians.

Possible Solutions

There are three different types of solutions that tend to be advocated for concerning this issue.

Reform the Police

Those who aim to reform the police believe in bettering the law enforcement systems already in place to reduce the instances of brutality. This can be done in a number of ways including:

- Systems to decrease the hiring of police officers with discriminatory bias and providing training against this



- More heavily punishing instances of police brutality and reducing legal protections for officers in these cases
- Educating citizens on police brutality to raise awareness on their rights by law, and what to do in case they are witness to an instance of brutality

Defund the Police

Those who advocate defunding the police call for a total or partial diversion of the funding that is given to police departments to be redirected to community and social services.

Dismantle / Abolish the Police

Those who strive to dismantle the police desire police departments to be dismantled and rebuilt, whereas those who strive to abolish police departments call for them to be removed permanently and replaced by other social services.

Appendix/Appendices

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