

Committee: Special Conference (SPECON)

Topic: The impact of police brutality on promoting peace

Student Officer: Rea Papazissi

Position: Deputy President

Personal Introduction

Dear delegates,

My name is Rea Papazissi, I am 16 years old and I am currently a Grade 12 student at Ekpaideftiki Anagennisi High School. This year I will be serving as the Deputy President for the Special Conference during the 9th Annual Campion School Model United Nations Conference. This past year, my experience in MUN has taught me not to be afraid to speak up and advocate my views, as well as to be open-minded and consider different perspectives that did not always appeal to me alongside with many more. Thus, I am extremely excited that I got the opportunity to work with you during this conference and share this passion with you.

This study guide is designed to help you better understand the topic while also providing you with further information that is essential to the issue. Nevertheless, your research should by no means solely rely on it but instead I would highly encourage you to conduct further research, in order for you to be well-prepared and able to contribute towards a constructive debate in the committee. If you face any difficulties or have any questions, I would be more than glad to assist you.

Looking forward to meeting you all in October!

Yours truly,

Rea Papazissi

rpapazissi05@gmail.com



Topic Introduction

Police brutality is a vital issue that concerns most countries in the world, as it constitutes both a social and political matter, that affects society as a whole. It has been an issue for many years now as it does not only endanger civilians' freedom and weaken the credibility of the government, but it also undermines the legitimacy of the institution of the police force itself. The police force's purpose is to help the enforcement of the law and to promote peace. Police brutality advocates the exact opposite concept, as it gives rise to severe human rights violations, such as the right to be free from discrimination, the right to liberty and security as well as the right to equal protection under the law. This can generate a feeling of unsafety and vulnerability for citizens, which can result in more chaos.

The problem can stem from the desire for power and the feeling of supremacy that police officers have. Nevertheless, justice and integrity should be the principles that a police officer lives by. Overall, police brutality is not an issue that affects only the government or a small percentage of the population, on the contrary, it affects all citizens, as they are the ones who have to confront it. Police brutality is a particularly important problem, as unnecessary or excessive police force can lead to torture and other ill-treatment. The police body is supposed to carry through and protect those who are unable to defend themselves and protect their rights; instead, we witness police officers violating those rights and creating commotion rather than ceasing it. As



a result, we can conclude that it is very important to efficiently tackle this issue and find long-term solutions that will provide a secure society in the future.



Figure 1: The George Floyd Protests Won't Stop Until Police Brutality Does ¹

Definition of key terms

Police

The government agency in charge of protecting citizens' safety, health, and property, enforcing the law, investigating, and solving crimes, and apprehending criminals ²

¹ America's Police Brutality Won't Stop Until Police Brutality Does.

www.nytimes.com/2020/06/01/opinion/george-floyd-protest-police.html.

² "POLICE | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary." *Cambridge Dictionary | English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/police>

Police brutality

The use of disproportionate and unjustified force by law enforcement. We can use this term to describe a variety of police-related human rights crimes including abuse, torture, beatings etc.

Law enforcement

Law enforcement is the activity of some members of the government who work together to enforce the law by identifying, discouraging, rehabilitating, or punishing individuals who breach society's rules and regulations³. In essence, it's "the activity of making certain that the laws of an area are obeyed."⁴

Qualified immunity

It is a judicially created principle that protects government officials from being held personally liable for money damages under federal law for constitutional violations—such as the right to be free from excessive police force—as long as the authorities did not break "firmly established" law.

Militarization of police

"It refers to the use of military equipment and tactics by law enforcement officers."⁵

Disarmament

The act of decreasing, limiting, or abolishing weapons is known as disarmament. Thus, the disarmament of the police force refers to the withdrawal of mass destruction weapons.⁶

³ "What Is Qualified Immunity, and What Does It Have to Do with Police Reform?" *Lawfare*, 10 June 2020, www.lawfareblog.com/what-qualified-immunity-and-what-does-it-have-do-police-reform.

⁵ "Law Enforcement." *Cambridge Dictionary | English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/law-enforcement>

⁵ "Militarization of Police." *Charles Koch Institute*, 19 May 2021, <https://charleskochinstitute.org/stories/militarization-of-police/>

⁶ "Disarmament." *Cambridge Dictionary | English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/disarmament>



Institutional racism

“Policies, rules, practices, etc. that are a usual part of the way an organization works, and that results in and supports a continued unfair advantage to some people and unfair or harmful treatment of others based on race.” ⁷

Impunity

It is the freedom from punishment or from the unpleasant results of something that has been done that would usually be punishable. ⁸

Background Information

The Role of Police in Society

Typically, police officers are responsible for observing and preventing illegal activity, maintaining public safety and reassuring the enforcement of the law. Officers became more required as populations grew and informal systems of socialization and social control, such as the family, schools, and churches, became less effective.

Policing can differ in every country or region. A variety of variables contribute to the diversity of police actions and systems. Such variables could be the economic background of a country or its political status. In more detail, studies have shown that if a county has a more stable and democratic constitution, police violence is less common. However, when a country's constitution is unstable and oppressive, police brutality, as well as general violence, is more frequent. The sorts of crimes that are commonly committed in a community, as well as the methods of the offenders, play a significant role in determining the actions of the police force. The population also has a role, monitoring remote regions and villages differ significantly from policing bigger cities. Thus, the way that police tackles issues can be quite different.

⁷ "Institutional Racism." Cambridge Dictionary | English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/institutional-racism>

⁸ "Impunity." Cambridge Dictionary | English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/impunity>



Police violence is changing over time

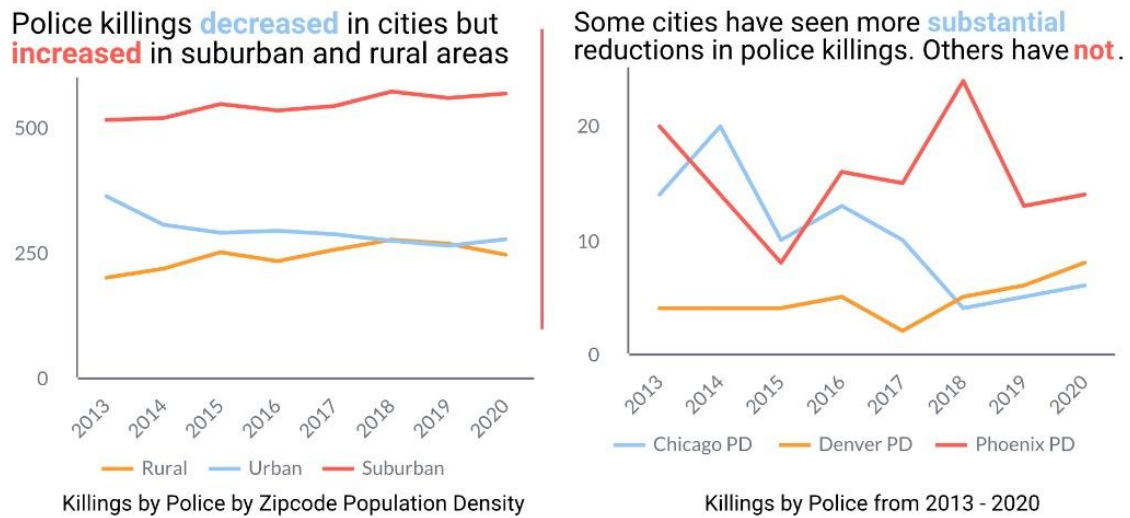


Figure 2: Police Violence is changing over time ⁹

Types of police brutality

Excessive Force

The police body ought to use the sufficient amount of force in order for them be able to carry out their legal obligations. The reason why the police attempted to stop or arrest a person, how the subject replied to police requests or demands, and the circumstances surrounding the interaction all play a crucial role in determining whether force was used excessively. As a result, law enforcement officials may be justified in physically grabbing and restraining someone who is behaving in a violent behaviour, has broken the law or is armed. Even if their suspicions were incorrect, police could act like this , seeing that person is posing an urgent threat. Police officers, on the other hand, are only allowed to use as much force as is required. They should not physically harm someone who is unarmed, does not pose a threat and is obedient to their orders.

⁹ "Death of Watermelon Vendor Sets Off Outcry in China (Published 2013)." The New York Times - Breaking News, US News, World News and Videos, 20 July 2013, www.nytimes.com/2013/07/21/world/asia/death-in-china-stirs-anger-over-urban-rule-enforcers.html.

Therefore, any legal claim for "excessive force" must be based on injuries caused by more force than was required.

False Arrest or Imprisonment

When the police take someone into custody without an arrest warrant or "probable cause,"¹⁰ this claim arises. If an officer witnessed the individual commit a severe crime or had reasonable suspicion, he or she would have "probable cause." Even if the police officer's belief turns out to be invalid, the reasonable nature of the officer's view is formed upon the information available at the moment of the arrest. When authorities do not have these legal grounds, the individual arrested may be able to file a false arrest claim.

Unreasonable Search

Airports, schools and other public buildings, include some of the places where a law enforcement agent may ask to conduct an identification process, in an attempt to search for firearms. Also, if an officer has "reasonable suspicion"¹¹, that a crime was committed and that individual did it, he or she can halt a person in any public environment. The identification process may be composed of a "pat-down"¹² search, to ensure the person does not have a weapon. In certain situations, law enforcement officials go beyond their jurisdiction and conduct an "unreasonable" search. An example of this could include police domestic searches without the homeowner's consent. A person who is not under arrest or has been arrested for a misdemeanor is subjected to a body cavity search, sometimes known as a "strip search."¹³

¹⁰ Kenton, Will. "Probable Cause." *Investopedia*, Investopedia, 13 Sept. 2021, www.investopedia.com/terms/p/probable-cause.asp.

¹¹ "Reasonable Suspicion Legal Definition." *Merriam-Webster*, Merriam-Webster, www.merriam-webster.com/legal/reasonable%20suspicion.

¹² "Pat-down." *Www.dictionary.com*, www.dictionary.com/browse/pat-down.

¹³ "Definition of STRIP SEARCH." *Dictionary by Merriam-Webster: America's Most-trusted Online Dictionary*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/strip%20search.



Rights of Pre-Trial Detainees

Even if the police has a legal basis for making an arrest, the subject may have a legal claim for injuries sustained while in custody. Law enforcement officials have complete control over the inmate at this point. As a result, they must identify his or her physical and psychological needs as soon as possible, provide the necessary medical treatment, basic needs and insure his or her protection from other convicts. Injuries sustained during pre-trial imprisonment could constitute grounds for a civil claim against the law enforcement agency responsible for the respective facility.

Racial Discrimination

Any involvement in law enforcement, automatically entails the protection of all individuals, regardless of their racial background. According to a Stanford study, police officers are more likely to search African-American and Hispanic motorists than White and Asian motorists¹⁴. Racial prejudice, constitutes a significant issue in modern society and it can be considered a form of police brutality, especially when additional offenses such as excessive force or wrongful arrest are involved.

Causes of the problem

Legal Protections

A significant cause for police brutality is the broad legal protections that are granted to police officials. This impunity is directly connected with the lack of consequences. So even if they break the law by using violence there will be a limited backlash; hence this behavior won't necessarily be discouraged. On the contrary, this leads to a lack of accountability and can encourage the act of police brutality.

¹⁴ Stanford Researchers Develop New Statistical Test That Shows Racial Profiling in Police Traffic Stops, 28 June 2016, news.stanford.edu/press-releases/2016/06/28/stanford-researchce-traffic-stops/.



Tactics

Additionally, police institutions have adopted tactics that escalate tension instead of eliminating it. Such a tactic is the “zero-tolerance policy”¹⁵, which is used in New York City, England, Scotland and South Australia. It is a policing technique that entails maintaining order and enforcing the law aggressively, especially against small crimes and infractions. Stopping, questioning, and frisking suspicious pedestrians or drivers, and then arresting them for infractions, when possible, usually for low-level offenses like carrying drugs, is part of the zero-tolerance policy. These stops can disturb and damage the police-community relations as they have an aggressive nature, which may lead to protests, anarchy, and the increase of violence and crime.

Inequalities and Institutional racism

Moreover, due to inadequate police training and laws, there are many uncertainties surrounding the limitations of a police officer when enforcing the law. However, besides the inadequacies, there are also many inequalities and racial stereotypes in police institutions, which result in police officers being prejudiced to treat certain minorities differently. For example, colored people are targeted in many countries around the globe, and they are treated differently because of the color of their skin. These stereotypical stances are deeply rooted in the law enforcement systems of numerous countries or specific regions. Hence, we are talking about an issue of a great extent. This “preferential” treatment can cause great disruption and can also be the start of many acts of violence. People are frequently stereotyped as being more or less violent. There is a reliance on force that goes beyond what is required to carry out police duties, and much of this is engrained in police departments, which contributes to the problem.

¹⁵ "Zero-Tolerance Policy Definition and Meaning." *Top Hat*, 6 Nov. 2020, <https://tophat.com/glossary/z/zero-tolerance-policy/>



The possession of power

Furthermore, the psychology of possessing power can also be a root of police brutality. In more detail, police officers have in their possession badges, guns, sirens, and a lot more, that can give them the feeling that they are superior to normal citizens and that they should obey them. As their influence develops, so does their need to be acknowledged, risking at the same time their integrity as law enforcement officers and the human rights of the citizens.

Militarization

Along with all those causes, the militarization of police also plays an incredibly significant role in the rise of police brutality. Since the police has easier access to more dangerous weapons that are designed for military use and not for cities, this encourages officers to use heavier machinery in order to resolve conflicts and promotes violence as the best way to settle them.

Important Events

There have been many police brutality incidents and extrajudicial killings by the police all over the world, some of which have been the spark that started movements, while others didn't even reach the local news.

Accra Sports Stadium tragedy

A very well-known event, was the Accra Sports Stadium tragedy that transpired in the state of Ghana, Africa at the Ohene Djan Stadium on May 9th, 2001.¹⁶ At the time two mildly successful football teams were playing at the stadium. Due to their appeal to the public, police authorities had taken extra security measures as they were expecting disturbances. The result of the match led to fans of the defeated team to throw bottles and other objects into the field. The authorities countered that by throwing tear gas into the crowd. Due to the panic, locked gates, and the few escape

¹⁶ "The Accra Sports Stadium Disaster: A Lesson Learnt For A Hefty Cost." Chase Your Sport, www.chaseyoursport.com/Football/The-Accra-Sports-Stadium-Disaster/718.



doors, the stadium became a “death-trap” really quickly. This incident took the lives of 126 people.

The Beating of Rodney King

Another incident that became well-known was the beating of Rodney King by four police officers on March 3rd 1991, in Los Angeles California.¹⁷ Rodney King, an African-American, was harshly beaten by policemen while being arrested. This beating caused him permanent brain damage alongside with other health problems. This event led to violent protests, which ended with many arrests and a lot of severely wounded people. Two out of the four police officers were later sent to prison.

Deng Zhengjia

On July 17, 2013, a Chinese fruit vendor, Deng Zhengjia was slain in a clash with municipal management officers. When he and his wife were selling watermelons in Linwu, multiple officials allegedly took part of their produce and asked them to relocate to an area designated for street hawking. The couple obeyed, and the chengguan officers returned around 50 minutes later. Witnesses alleged officials assaulted Deng with a weight from his scale, and Linwu police said Deng "dropped to the ground and died abruptly." Witnesses on the scene claim that once Deng fell, the officers continued to beat him and refused to contact 911. Villagers stood in the way of authorities attempting to remove the body later, snapping photographs in the process. Hundreds of unarmed protestors battled with riot police later that evening.¹⁸

Major countries and organizations involved

Police brutality manifests all over the world and has become a global problem. There are however countries that suffer from this problem more severely than others

¹⁷"Rodney King | US News | The Guardian." The Guardian, 3 Mar. 2021, www.theguardian.com/us-news/rodney-king.

¹⁸ "Hong Kong Vs. Mainland China: Understanding the Differences." Investopedia, www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/121814/hong-kong-vs-china-understand-differences.asp.



United States of America (USA)

Police brutality has been a problem in the United States throughout the years. Slave patrols could be found in the Southern United States as some of the first forms of policing, even from the 18th century onwards. Slave patrols were established in all states where slavery was allowed, and they served as the South's first publicly sponsored police force. These patrols were tasked with regulating and enforcing discipline among slaves with an African-American background. They apprehended and returned fugitive slaves, put down slave revolts, frightened slaves to avoid rebellions, disrupted slave gatherings, and kept slaves off the roads. In 1838, Boston became the first city in the United States to establish a police force.¹⁹ Another group that has been recently targeted by police officers are European immigrants, who have been dealt with in an aggressive manner. From then until now, police violence has been a very significant problem for the US, as because of the multipopulational character that it obtains, protests and disruptions have become part of the citizens' lives, and so has police violence. In more detail, in the US there have been numerous extrajudicial killings by the police. Today's stories are far from being a new phenomenon. In a protest during 1963 in Washington, a poster was used with the message "we demand an end to police brutality" written on it. After 50 years, the message remains unanswered, the placard could nearly be confused for a sign from any of the Black Lives Matter marches, as its message still rings uncomfortably true five decades later.

China

Economically, China and Hong Kong are complementary. However their long history of political dissent, has led to many disputes between the two opposites. In

¹⁹ Waxman, Olivia B. "The History of Police in America and the First Force." *Time*, Time, 6 Mar. 2019, time.com/4779112/police-history-origins/#:~:text=The%20first%20publicly%20funded%2C%20organized,to%20other%20places%2C%20says%20Potter.



2019, anti-government protests raged in Hong Kong for months.²⁰ The protests began in response to a proposed law that would have permitted extraditions to mainland China; nevertheless, the government's response was criticized, and police were accused of being excessively violent in response to the protests. The demonstrations, which drew a substantial number of young activists, quickly grew into a larger pro-democracy movement that sought an investigation into allegations of police violence. Relations deteriorated further as a result of many high-profile incidents, including an alleged triad attack on protestors to which police were sluggish to respond and violent fights between protesters and police.

Philippines

Thousands of people have died because of Philippine Director General Oscar Albayalde's drug campaign²¹, which began in 2016. There has been no judicial action taken against the killers, who include police officers and independent gangs of guys on motorcycles who are allegedly associated with the police. During the war, law enforcement killed over 12,000 people, and Human Rights Watch has demanded that the rights of the people be considered. The deaths are inextricably linked to the Philippine police's widespread corruption. The concept of violent exchange demonstrates how both corruption and death play a role in different interpretations of state–citizen relations. People are urgently seeking – as the stakes are enormous – to figure out how to engage with the police under these altering conditions because the conflict has changed how death and corruption work.

El Salvador

The police brutality appears to be linked to the gang violence that afflicts El Salvador, as many of the victims are gang members. Extrajudicial executions have become common as a result of decades of aggressive police tactics against gangs,

²⁰ "Hong Kong PROTESTS: Six Months of Rage and Desperation." *BBC News*, BBC, 9 Dec. 2019, www.bbc.com/news/in-pictures-50671513.

²¹ "Former Philippines Chief Drugs Fighter Faces Drug Charges." *BBC News*, 21 Oct. 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-50120723>



sometimes even against citizens with no criminal ties. These deaths are commonly referred to be enfrentamientos. While the original goal was to reduce gang violence, enfrentamientos and other similar measures have now become a part of the problem. Only a few officers were subjected to prosecution in all of the extrajudicial killings conducted by police officers. Although El Salvador has one of the highest murder rates in the world, this does not excuse police personnel from acting in such a cruel manner.

United Kingdom

Manchester is home to the INTERPOL National Control Bureau²² of the United Kingdom. It is vital to the country's and surrounding region's protection from the menace of international organized crime. The NCB assists police officers around the country in an attempt to detect and look into the trade of illicit products along trafficking routes in and around the country by providing globally sourced intelligence regarding regional crime trends. There is no national police force in the United Kingdom. Instead, England and Wales have 44 geographic forces, with Scotland having one and Northern Ireland having one. Regional forces in England have some autonomy, although they must adhere to central government criteria, such as training and investigating misbehavior.

Coalition Against Police Crimes & Repression (CAPCR)²³

The Coalition Against Police Crimes and Repression (CAPCR) was founded in 1983 as a united front to bring justice to Marilyn Banks, who was murdered by a careless cop. Officer Joseph Ferrario was indicted and removed from the force as a result of that effort. Their work led them to policy and legislative initiatives since attaining justice has proven challenging. As a result, CAPCR has focused its efforts on two continuing campaigns: local police control and effective citizen supervision. Their aim is to put an end to police crimes and abuse, to terminate a generation's

²² "National Central Bureaus (Ncbs)." *INTERPOL*, www.interpol.int/en/Who-we-are/Member-countries/National-Central-Bureaus-NCBs#:~:text=Each%20of%20our%20member%20countries,called%20I%2D24%2F7.

²³ *Mysite*, <https://www.capcr-stl.org/>



criminalization, while exposing the prison industrial complex. In order to achieve those goals, they have managed to support through protests, direct action and advocacy, survivors, and victims as well as their families.

Dream Defenders

After the sorrowful assassination of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman in Sanford, Florida, the Dream Defenders were created in April 2012. One year after the initiation of this movement, in order to demand a repeal of the Stand Your Ground Law, the Dream Defenders tenanted the Florida State Capitol for 31 days. This helped them built the groundwork for the spreading of the movement, even though they did not manage to change the law.

Today the Dream Defenders are trying to advance their vision of safety and security based on healthcare, housing, and employment rather than jails, deportation, and war, through Freedom Papers. They describe themselves and their ideology as expansionists, reformers, feminists, political leaders, and internationalists.

Interpol

Interpol is an intergovernmental body called the International Criminal Police Organization. It has 194 member countries, and it assists their police forces in collaborating to make the globe a safer place. To do so, it provides technical and operational support as well as the ability to share and access data on crimes and criminals. It provides forensics, analysis, and aid in tracking fugitives all around the world as part of their investigation services. In many locations, training is a key component of what it does to ensure that officials understand how to use the services that it provides effectively. This knowledge aids national efforts to combat crime in three worldwide areas that we regard to be the most urgent today: terrorism, cybercrime, and organized crime. Today's crimes are becoming increasingly global. In order to sustain a global security architecture, it is critical that all of the major parties work together. Because INTERPOL is a global organization, it is able to provide this collaborative platform.



Timeline of events

<u>10 December 1948</u>	Adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ²⁴
<u>27 August – 7 September 1990</u>	Adoption of the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, in Havana, Cuba ²⁵
<u>3 March 1991</u>	Rodney King was beaten by four police officers while being arrested. ²⁶
<u>April 1991</u>	Signing of the Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department (the Christopher Commission) ²⁷
<u>Late 1992</u>	Creation of the SARS (Special Anti-Robbery Squad) program
<u>1996</u>	The US Department of Defense was authorized to provide excess equipment to law enforcement organizations under a 1996 statute. As a result, police have been given military-style weaponry to use during protests. ²⁸
<u>9 May 2001</u>	The Accra Sports Stadium tragedy transpired in the state of Ghana, Africa at the Ohene Djan Stadium. ²⁹
<u>29 April 2010</u>	Adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1919 ³⁰
<u>2013</u>	Initiation of the Black Lives Matter hashtag on social media
<u>2015</u>	Launching of Campaign Zero by the BLM activists
<u>December 2017</u>	Beginning of the End SARS campaign



<u>13 March 2020</u>	Shooting of Breonna Taylor by Kentucky police officer ³¹
<u>25 May 2020</u>	Attack and killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers ³²
<u>22 October 2020</u>	Announcement of SARS dismantling by the Nigerian President

Previous attempts to solve the issue

End SARS movement

End SARS is a decentralized social movement in Nigeria that has taken the form of a series of large-scale protests against police violence. It was first introduced in order to eliminate the Special Anti-Robbery Squad which was a Nigerian Police form. This body has been a cause of many controversies as they were excessively involved in abuse, torture, killings, abortions, rapes etc. The slogan first used in the 2017 protests demanded that SARS, a notorious Nigerian police organization with a lengthy history of abuses, be decommissioned. Following a resurgence in October 2020, following fresh reports of the unit's abuses, enormous rallies took place across

²⁴United Nations. "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." United Nations, www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights.

²⁵"OHCHR | Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms." www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/useofforceandfirearms.aspx.

²⁶"Rodney King | US News | The Guardian." The Guardian, 3 Mar. 2021, www.theguardian.com/us-news/rodney-king.

²⁷"Shielded from Justice: Los Angeles: The Christopher Commission Report." Human Rights Watch | Defending Human Rights Worldwide, www.hrw.org/legacy/reports98/police/uspo73.htm.

²⁸"Equipping Law Enforcement Agencies with Military and Tactical Equipment." Center for Strategic and International Studies | www.csis.org/analysis/equipping-law-enforcement-agencies-military-and-tactical-equipment.

²⁹"The Accra Sports Stadium Disaster: A Lesson Learnt For A Hefty Cost." Chase Your Sport, www.chaseyoursport.com/Football/The-Accra-Sports-Stadium-Disaster/718.

³⁰"Security Council Resolution 1919." PeaceWomen, 30 Nov. 2018, www.peacewomen.org/security-council/resolution/security-council-resolution-1919.

³¹"What to Know About Breonna Taylor's Death." The New York Times - Breaking News, US News, World News and Videos, 26 Apr. 2021, www.nytimes.com/article/breonna-taylor-police.html.

³²"How George Floyd Died, and What Happened Next." The New York Times - Breaking News, US News, World News and Videos, 26 May 2021, www.nytimes.com/article/george-floyd.html.



Nigeria's major cities, accompanied by a barrage of social media indignation. Following a few days of persistent protests, the Nigerian Police Force stated on October 11, 2020 that the unit will be disbanded with immediate effect. The move was widely hailed as a victory for the protesters.³³

Black Lives Matter

#BlackLivesMatter was formed in 2013 in response to Trayvon Martin's murderer's acquittal.³⁴ The objective of this global organization is to end white supremacy and establish local power to intervene in state and vigilante violence against Black communities. We are winning immediate changes in our lives by resisting and countering acts of violence, providing space for Black ingenuity and innovation, and focusing on Black joy.

The Black Lives Matter movement was reborn with the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. The attack and killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers occurred on May 25th of 2020. George Floyd died while getting arrested, as the officer who was trying to arrest him had him pinned to the ground with his knee on his neck. Floyd kept repeating "I can't breathe". After this incident, protests came swiftly, spreading all over the US. Protestors called for the officers to be arrested and held accountable for their actions. This erupted into a national outcry against police brutality and the lack of police accountability, with the help of social media. These demonstrations have been multi-racial. On March 13, 2020, Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old African-American woman, was fatally shot after white plainclothed cops forced access in her Louisville, Kentucky apartment as part of an investigation into drug trading operations. Taylor's death has not been linked to any of the cops participating in the raid. The shooting of Taylor by police officers sparked a flurry of rallies across the country against police violence and racism. Further civic turmoil erupted after a grand jury failed to indict the officers for her killing. Both these killings

³³ "What is the #EndSARS Movement?" Amnesty International Australia, 11 Nov. 2020, www.amnesty.org.au/what-is-the-endsars-movement/

³⁴ Just a Moment..., www.blacklivesmatter.com/.



had a very big impact on the Black Lives Matter movement which became highly influential and had a significant effect in our world and society.

Christopher Commission

In the aftermath of the Rodney King beating, then-mayor of Los Angeles Tom Bradley, established the Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department, sometimes known as the Christopher Commission.³⁵ The panel was established to conduct a "full and unbiased assessment of the LAPD's structure and functioning," covering recruitment and training standards, internal disciplinary procedures, and citizen complaint procedures. The commission drew the attention on the fact that the lack of management to control the officers that conduct offences is at the root of the problem. The problem of "repeat offenders" on the force was emphasized by the commission.

Relevant UN Resolutions, Events, Treaties and Legislation

UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials

It was adopted on August 27 to September 7 of 1990, by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, in Havana, Cuba. In general, it refers to law enforcement agents carrying out their duty, it mentions that they must employ nonviolent methods whenever possible before resorting to force and weaponry. They may only use force and firearms if all other options have failed or offer no hope of obtaining the desired objective.³⁶

The UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials

Resolution 34/169 of the United Nations General Assembly, enacted on December 17, 1979. Reports that law enforcement officers must always carry out the

³⁵ "Report of the Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department: Summary." Office of Justice Programs, www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/report-independent-commission-los-angeles-police-department-0

³⁶ "OHCHR | Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms.", <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/useofforceandfirearms.aspx>



legal obligations imposed on them by supporting the community and preventing illegal acts, which may pose a threat to society, in accordance with the high level of responsibility demanded by their profession.³⁷

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1919

It was adopted unanimously on April 29th of 2010 by the Security Council. The Security Council emphasized the significance of fully implementing the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)³⁸, the people of South Sudan's right to self-determination, and the UN's efforts to promote confidence between the two parties. They also mentioned that every act of violence committed by any party, as well as their consequences for civilians, were denounced.³⁹

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Declaration was drafted by representatives from all parts of the world with various legal and cultural backgrounds, and it was affirmed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and nations. For the first time, it establishes universally guaranteed fundamental human rights. This is very important, because when dealing with police violence, human rights can be and many times are breached.⁴⁰

Possible solutions

Police reforms:

Police reforms are changes than can be done within the police system, which have the intention of improving the efficiency of police institutions.

³⁷ "OHCHR | Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials."

www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/lawenforcementofficials.aspx.

³⁸ UN Peacemaker,

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³⁹ "Resolution 1919." UNSCR - Search Engine for the UN Security Council Resolutions,

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⁴⁰ Welcome to the United Nations, www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/udhr.pdf.



Improving police training

Firstly, in order for police officers to be disciplined and to properly understand the extent of their duties, there is need for strong leadership, through means such as specially trained police officers. This will assist all police officers as they will work in a stricter and better structured environment. Moreover, it is necessary for police training to be improved, and modernized. By improving the training, the police force will consist of officers who are better equipped to deal with their every-day duties, as they will be better educated and will have learnt to use tactics that can be implemented in today's society in order to protect and promote peace.

Police-citizen contact

In addition, enhanced police-citizen contact, will benefit both citizens and the police force in many ways. Citizens will be able to get to know better the police officers of their region and thus build a friendly relationship with them, which will then allow them to be more trusting and cooperative with the authorities. However, this will also help police officers, as they will get a better idea of people's backgrounds and be more efficient in their jobs. Nevertheless, if police-citizen relations become too personal, there is a prospect of officer prioritizing the bond they have with citizens over their obligation to carry out their duties.

Body cameras

Another solution for improving the monitorization of the police force, are body cameras. Body cameras are little cameras that are implemented in the uniforms of police officers. Police body cameras can drastically reduce police misconduct reports, since visual and audio information from police body cameras can be used to verify events. Also, in domestic violence instances, police body cams are an effective tool. When an officer wearing a camera arrives at a domestic violence scene, the camera can record the immediate aftermath of the attack, including the victim's injuries and victim statements, which may be more genuine than later statements once victims remember financial and emotional ties to their abusers. This measure can also instill a sense of safety and confidence in the face of victims, since they have the sufficient evidence to back up their statements. However, civilian's privacy is invaded by police



body cameras, and it could create several legal issues.. Recording police encounters with the public could expose private medical issues like mental illness to the public. Furthermore, victims of rape or domestic abuse may be further traumatized as a result of recordings.

Screening of candidates

Furthermore, it is of great importance to have police officers who are suitably “equipped” for the job in the police force, thus the screening of candidates is crucial. This can be done through thorough background checks on candidates, psychological screening and tests, which will detect possible psychological problems or disorders, as well as gaps in their knowledge about the force. This will help the police force become more stable and stronger. Yet, in the instance that the screening process becomes too complicated, many possible candidates could be discouraged and choose to pursue another career.

Demilitarization of police

Additionally, the demilitarization of police is another possible solution, as many believe that it will promote the concept of peace and protection of human rights in a non-violent way, because officers will not be as tempted to use weapons to resolve issues and conflicts. In more detail, by demilitarizing the police force, police officers can regain the community's trust, as they will no longer be viewed as soldiers. Nonetheless, by doing this there is the risk of leaving the police force defenseless, because in case of an unexpected threat, police may not be able to face it, since it won't have the necessary weaponry.

External solutions

External solutions are measures that can be taken by citizens and their communities, in order to improve law enforcement.

Civilian review boards

Firstly, the implementation of civilians' review boards could have many benefits, as these review board would constitute some kind of an evaluation system for the police. Civilians would be able to express their complaints and propose reforms that



they think are necessary in order for the law enforcement to be more efficient. However, if these boards have too much influence over the police, there is a risk that they may cause more damage than good, seeing that civilians are not experts and are unaware of the holistic scope of the law.

Stricter laws and protocols

Additionally, stricter laws and protocols would help define better the duties of a police officer, as well as the extent of their power. Policies that protect human rights, such as a hands-off policy or protect life principle, could be implemented. This would make citizens feel safer, while at the same time, police officials would be more aware of what is allowed and what's not. However, this will only be effective if every country ratifies and adopts these policies. Thus, it is of high importance to monitor countries and their police systems.

Defund of the police force

Furthermore, a very controversial solution is the movement to defund the police, as there are both benefits and disadvantages. In more detail, by defunding the police, some of the funds allocated to police would be redirected to the community and social services. This would benefit the community in many ways, as both the power that the police possess would be reduced and the social services would be empowered and able to work more efficiently. However, in order for the police to operate correctly, be productive and be ready to combat everything that may happen, money is necessary. Thus, this solution must be executed with great caution as it could deconstruct the force instead of helping it be more effective.

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