



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UN Report: Human Rights & Policing in the United States

OVERVIEW

The United Nations International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in the Context of Law Enforcement (Expert Mechanism) was established in the wake of mass protests over the police killing of George Floyd. The Expert Mechanism visited the U.S. from April 24-May 4 2023 to evaluate law enforcement practices through a human rights lens. The resulting report offers **actionable recommendations** for government officials at all levels to bring the U.S. into compliance with international human rights laws and minimum standards.

FINDINGS

The Expert Mechanism applauds the U.S. government for its willingness to engage in a dialogue. Nonetheless, the report unequivocally concludes that **policing and criminal legal practices in the U.S. do not meet international human rights standards**, and that the country's failure to address legacies of slavery and ongoing forms of racial discrimination is a major cause. The Expert Mechanism calls upon **all levels of government** to review its recommendations and **bring all policies and practices into compliance through a human rights-based approach to policing**.

Ending the “appalling overrepresentation” of people of African descent in the criminal legal system will require fundamental changes to address systemic discrimination and racial disparities in housing, education, health care and other areas.



RECOMMENDATIONS

For addressing the root causes of discrimination in law enforcement

- Engage in historical truth-telling to understand ongoing impacts of slavery and racial discrimination and seek reparatory justice.
- Address the root causes of homelessness, poverty, and mental health conditions that drive racial disparities in the criminal legal system.
- Address underlying cultural values, attitudes and stereotypes of U.S. society and institutions, which are reproduced through law enforcement.
- Implement civilian alternatives to policing for traffic response, mental health crisis response, and school safety.

For changes in the U.S. criminal legal system at all levels

- End prolonged pre-trial detention and the cash bail system.
- Collect data disaggregated by race for all use-of-force encounters involving police.
- Ensure access to legal counsel, and medical care immediately following arrest and throughout detention by law enforcement.
- Ensure that all public and private police forces understand and comply with international human rights standards, e.g., on the use of force and peaceful protests.
- End the deployment of police in schools and the use of racial profiling and traffic stops by police officers.
- Provide meaningful and constructive alternatives to detention wherever possible.



FULL REPORT

