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Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Written statement* submitted by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[04 June 2020]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

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Calls for Justice; the Death of George Floyd

Preamble

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights condemns police brutality and excessive use of force in the United States of America, especially against African Americans and ethnic minorities. On the night of May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a 46-year-old black man, was arrested by an American police officer, who was filmed pinning Floyd to the ground, and pressing his knee into his neck, while Floyd was gasping "Please, I can't breathe". Previously on the same day, an incident in New York's Central Park was caught on video and went viral. The video clip showed a white woman calling the police on a black man after he asked her to put her dog on a leash, which clearly shows deep-seated racial discrimination against ethnic minorities in a country that claims to be the cradle of democracy and liberty.

Maat submits this intervention to indicate the growing violence and brutality of American security forces against African minorities, urgently calling for opening a serious investigation in this case. Maat wishes to draw the attention of the Council to the fact that Floyd's incident was not the first of its kind. There are many other cases of racial discrimination in America, where many African Americans are killed by the police forces

USA police brutality against African Americans

The 46-year-old George Floyd, who worked as a security guard at a restaurant in Minneapolis, Minnesota's largest cities, died on the evening of May 25, 2020. The US police arrested him while they were looking for a suspect wanted for fraud.

In light of the police violations against Africans, in 2018, a black young man was fatally shot by police bullets in a firefight in the parking lot of a supermarket in California, USA, and in 2016, the American police shot a black man dead in Minneapolis, one hour after the US Department of Justice announced that it had opened an investigation into the killing of a black man by two police officers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Moreover, at least 102 black citizens were reportedly killed in 2015, with approximately two people a week and one person out of 3 black citizens killed were unarmed. Also reports have shown that 37% of the unarmed citizens killed by the police were African American, who together account for 13% of the total population of the USA.

Racism against "black" citizens in light of the COVID-19 pandemic

Early data from the US coronavirus pandemic indicates that African Americans are dying at higher rates from COVID-19, undoubtedly pointing out the exacerbating racial and economic inequality in the United States. Statistics issued by health officials in Chicago confirmed that the majority of citizens hit by the virus in the city were African Americans, who represent half of the cases in the city and more than 70% of deaths, although they make up 30% of the total population. Officials in the state of Chicago indicated that as of April 5, 1824 cases out of 4,680 were tested positive for the virus among the black resident, compared to other residents, 847 white, 478 Hispanic and 126 Asian. Death rates went higher in the rest of the states, due to racism, that led to a lack of investment in African American societies and poor health care for the population in general.

In the same framework, the high rate of COVID-19 in the Black population in the U.S can be traced back to racism, marginalization, and the poor economic and social situation they live under. They are more susceptible to heart problems, stress and diabetes, and Maat would like to emphasize that the health care system in the United States of America is very poor, and black citizens are the worst affected among other groups. That is not to mention the surrounding environmental factors, where black Americans live in jammed areas, side by side, with no green spaces, or physical exercise areas, the scarcity of healthy food options, the low income levels, as well as the risky jobs in which they are at high risk of contracting COVID-19, as they constitute the largest proportion of employees working in food

production, bus drivers, Mechanics, factory workers, transporting workers, among others, compared to the economic situation and distinguished occupations in which white people work in the United States of America.

Maat, therefore, urges the United States of America to intervene in order to develop final solutions to eliminate the problem of discrimination and racism against ethnic minorities, as well as work to improve the social, health and economic conditions of the African-American population.

Recommendations

Eventually, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights condemns all forms of violence practiced by the American police forces against people of African descents, and calls on the federal US authorities to open an independent investigation looking into the reasons for the increase and growth of violence against ethnic black minorities, and to work immediately on addressing these problems in a way that allows Ethnic minorities enjoy their full rights.
