



- Committee:** Social and Humanitarian Committee (GA2)
- Issue:** The question of racial profiling and police brutality in developed countries
- Student Officer:** Maria Lucia Steinvorth – President Chair

## **Introduction to the Issue**

Racial profiling and police brutality are still prevalent issues in modern developed countries. Racial profiling targets people based on stereotypes concerning their race, religion, or national origin rather than their individual characteristics. Racial profiling often occurs against minorities in a given country and can result in unfounded discriminatory behavior against individuals. This is known to result in discriminatory practices and physical and verbal abuse directed towards minorities. It is also commonplace for these groups to come under increased suspicion by majority groups, governments, and law enforcement, increasing the potential for anti-minority practices and aggression, such as police brutality.

Police brutality is an excessive and unwarranted amount of force used by a police officer against persons. This includes actions such as physical or verbal harassment, physical or mental injury, property damage, the inaction of police officers, and in some cases, death. In countries, such as the USA, the deaths per 10 million, according to statistics taken in 2021, is relatively high in relation to other Western nations at 28.4. While in other countries such as Australia, the 2021 rate is 1.7 per 10 million. Some countries have found disproportionate violence against minorities, which has triggered protests such as the worldwide BLM movement, which originated in the United States due to the disproportionate amount of people of color killed in relation to the population.



## **Involved Countries & Organizations**

There have been documented cases of police violence in all countries. However, the rates of brutality recorded in countries widely differ between developed countries. The United States and Nordic countries will be examined as countries with relatively high and low police violence levels, respectively.

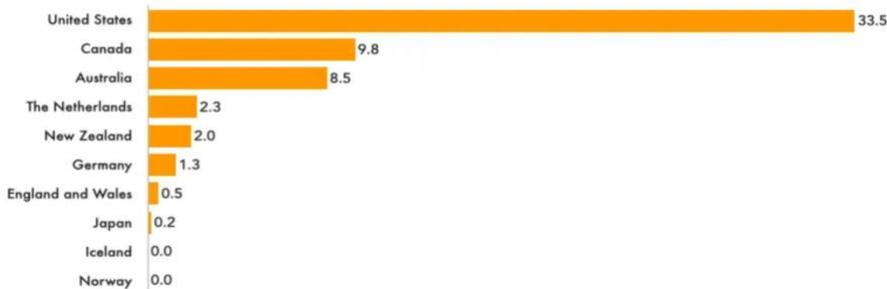
### **United States of America:**

The United States of America statistically shows the highest rate of police killings in comparison to other countries classified by the UN as economically developed. The rate of police-caused fatalities in the US in 2019 was 33.5 per 10 million, a significant outlier to other developed nations with rates below 10 per 10 million. In 2020 there were 1,004 fatal police shootings, up from the 999 fatal shootings in 2019. Statistics also suggest that racial profiling is involved in police killings due to a disproportionate percentage of minorities killed in relation to their percentage composition of the population. 23% of the fatalities consisted of black people, despite them making up 13% of the US population. The high levels of police brutality are attributed to police departments' insular culture, with many being governed at the local level, resulting in over 18,000 police agencies across the nation. In contrast, Sweden has just one police agency overseen by the federal government. Police in the US also have broad legal protections and immunity; for example, they may only be prosecuted for violating a "clearly established" constitutional or statutory right. Partly due to its constitution protecting citizen's rights to firearms, the US has the highest gun density of any country. In 2017, there were estimated to be 120.5 firearms per 100 persons in the US. This is over twice the rate of the country in second place, Yemen, at 52.8 firearms per 100 persons. Hence, it is more likely for a police officer to fear the possibility of confronting an armed civilian. Training duration to become a police officer in the US ranges from 10 – 36 weeks, in contrast to countries like Finland and Norway, where future officers attend three-year universities. The recent unjustified killing of George Floyd by police officer Derek Chauvin catalyzed worldwide protests (such as the Black Lives Matter movement) calling for an end to police brutality and racial profiling. There have been calls by protestors to defund or, more radically, disband the police. President Biden has stated, "We don't have to defund police departments. We have to make sure they meet minimum standards of decency."



## U.S. POLICE KILL CIVILIANS AT A MUCH HIGHER RATE THAN POLICE IN OTHER WEALTHY COUNTRIES

Number of people killed by law enforcement per 10 million population in the most recent year with available data



PRISON  
POLICY INITIATIVE

Sources: Data compiled by the Prison Policy Initiative from news sources, government reports, and advocacy groups. Data from the U.S., the Netherlands, England and Wales, and Iceland are from 2019. Data from Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Japan, and Norway are from 2018, and data from Canada are from 2017. For details, see: [www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2020/06/05/policekillings/](http://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2020/06/05/policekillings/)

*(US Police-Caused Fatalities in Comparison to other Countries)*

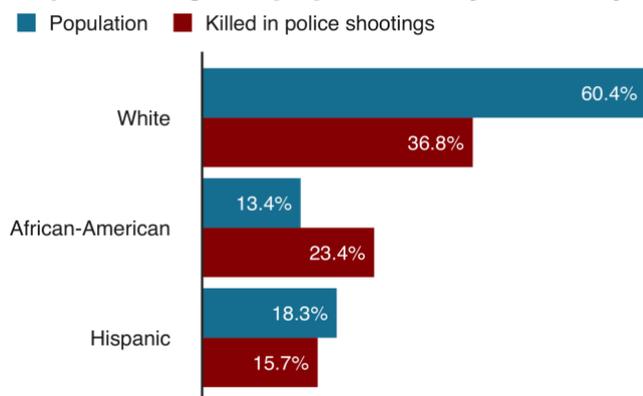
### The Nordic Countries:

The Nordic countries consist of: the Kingdom of Denmark, the Republic of Iceland, the Republic of Finland, the Kingdom of Norway, and the Kingdom of Sweden. In the last decade, collectively, these countries have had fewer civilian killings by police in a decade than the United States has in the singular year 2020. The Republic of Iceland has had just one killing of a civilian by a policeman since the country became a republic in 1944. In 2013, a 59-year-old man was shot by police after opening fire on them. Iceland police do not routinely carry firearms, carrying an extendable baton and pepper spray instead, except in particular circumstances, the same applies in Norway. Statistics updated in June 2020 show that Norwegian police have killed four people since 2002 and that Finland has had nine police-related fatalities since 2000. From 2010-2019, Sweden reported a total of 21 police-caused fatalities, with no fatalities in 2010 or 2012. On the other hand, Denmark has had seven deaths in the same year span, with no fatalities from 2011-12 and 2017-19. Such low police brutality rates are partly due to the also low crime rates, ranging from about 0.5 per 100,000 people in Norway to about 1.6 in Finland, compared to 5 per 100,000 in the US. Prisons in these countries focus on rehabilitation, with the rate of released Nordic prisoners arrested for another crime within two years in 2005 ranging from 20 percent in Norway to 43 percent in Sweden, compared to about 60 percent in the US. Police are further subjected to a more extended training than in the US, averaging three years in Finland and Norway.



## Detailed Analysis of Racial Profiling and Police Brutality in Developed Countries

### Percentage of fatal police shootings compared to percentage of population by ethnicity



Note: 1,004 fatal shootings in 2019, 39 in 'other' ethnic groups, 202 'unknown' ethnicity

Source: US census bureau and Statista.com 2019



*(Fatal Police Shootings of US Ethnicities Compared to Population Composition)*

### Causes of Racial Profiling

Racial profiling or ethnic profiling (the term used more commonly in Europe) is when minority members come under the suspicion of law enforcement solely based on their race. Although this is technically illegal in most developed countries, there is evidence suggesting it still occurs. A study of transport hubs in Paris showed that blacks were six times more likely, and Arabs 7.6 times more likely, to be stopped than white people, for example. A reason racial profiling is difficult to stop is the difficulty of proving it in individual cases. If a black person is stopped by traffic police, for example, it is difficult to distinguish whether this was solely due to their race or a random check where the person was coincidentally black. A country's immigration laws and immigrant demographics often result in racial profiling by police, especially by immigration enforcement. For example, Mexicans make up under half the undocumented US immigrants but made up 70% of those deported in 2015. In 2014, independent monitors at a Customs and Border Protection checkpoint in Arivaca, a city in the US state of Arizona, found that vehicle occupants who looked of Latino descent were twenty-six times more likely to be asked for identification than those who appeared white. White people were usually allowed through the checkpoint without problems. Minorities are often racially profiled due to them committing a higher percentage of crime than



their percentage composition of the population. For example, in the US, black offenders made up 52.5% of homicide offenders from 1980-2008. Several studies have associated high minority crime rates with the inequality they face.

### **Effects of Racial Profiling**

Racial profiling can occur in stores as well, where minorities are more likely to be suspected of and checked for shoplifting, which has been described by many as a dehumanizing experience. Being confronted with racial profiling regularly can further lead to long-term health problems and have been shown to suffer higher rates of chronic illnesses. This can also affect the person holding the racial biases, with studies showing this increases the activity of the amygdala, the part of the brain responsible for anxiety and fear. In the US, there have been instances of unjustified racial profiling. Such as a woman calling the police because two Native American students made her feel “uncomfortable” and a student at Yale calling the police because another black student was sleeping in a dorm building. Police responding to scenes where no actual misdemeanor or felony was committed wastes resources that could be directed to fighting real crime and harms the community as a whole. Accusing a person of crimes that they have not committed also endangers that person’s safety. Darren Martin, for example, is a black man who was moving into his New York apartment when a neighbor called police accusing him of being an armed burglar. Police would naturally respond to the call and arrive expecting to confront an armed and dangerous man, increasing the chance that the policeman might feel the need to resort to violence. Racial profiling also affects a person’s job prospects. An American study showed that stereotypically black names on a resume, like Lakisha, were 50% less likely to receive a call back from employers than one with a stereotypically white name such as Greg.

### **Causes of Police Brutality**

Groups particularly vulnerable to police brutality include ethnic minorities, LGBTQI individuals, low-income individuals, homeless individuals, and sex workers. The causes of police brutality are numerous, but academics have commonly referenced a few. Lack of adequate training has been blamed. Some US states can have as little as ten weeks of training, whereas, in Germany, police require at least 130 weeks of training. In 2018, 990 people were killed in the US, compared to 11 in Germany. In different countries and even different regions within a country, the acceptable amount of force to use in a situation varies.



Hence, a specific action in one place may be considered brutal, whereas the same action may be justified and therefore widely used in another. The knee-on-neck restraint tactic, for example, has been banned in most European countries but is still allowed in France. Police may also not be disincentivized from using violent means as certain countries have minimal consequences for misconduct, with only 1/3 of American cops accused ending up convicted. Another contributing factor is the numerous police aware of misconduct occurring within the police force but who are reluctant to report their colleagues. In the US, this has been referred to as the “Blue Wall of Silence.” A Department of Justice study showed that 84% of police had seen a colleague use excessive force and that 61% admitted they did not always report police misconduct they had witnessed. Academics have also used the threat hypothesis as an explanation, into which racial profiling ties in, claiming that police will be more likely to feel threatened and feel it necessary to use force when responding to a perceived threat from racial or economic groups stereotypically associated with higher crime rates.

### **Effects of Police Brutality**

The most apparent effects of police brutality are the injuries it causes to the victim of the brutality. These injuries include broken bones, head injuries, soft tissue injuries, permanent disfigurement and can even lead to death. Depending on the circumstance, this could imply human rights violations of the right to life, the right to be free from discrimination, the right to liberty and security, and the right to equal protection under the law. Apart from affecting physical health, police brutality can also affect a person's mental well-being. Not only may the violence be traumatizing for the victim, but those acquainted with the victim could also suffer grief and distress, hence affecting the larger community. Georges C. Benjamin, M.D., executive director of the APHA, has stated, "The problem is that increasingly those encounters are encounters that are fearful, particularly for people of color," Dr. Benjamin says. "It's been shown that you are being profiled totally because of your color. The police officer approaches you differently than others, approaches you as if you're a threat or you're not worth dignity and respect." This fear can create defensiveness in these encounters, and sometimes aggression, he explains. "So what should be a non-escalating event becomes an escalating event." Furthermore, police brutality creates distrust between the communities it affects and law enforcement. This decrease in trust leads to a reduction in the probability members of the community will report a crime to or cooperate with law enforcement. This makes the



police's job more difficult and can potentially lead to increased crime, negatively affecting the community as a whole.

## List of International Examples of Police Brutality

Date (Day/Month/Year)	Event
25/09/2012	Photos and videos circulate of police using pepper spray and beating peaceful protestors in Madrid on parts of their bodies including the neck and face.
14/12/2018	Amnesty International reports police brutality against protestors in the Yellow Vest movement in France.
31/08/2019	200 riot police enter the the Prince Edward MTR Station in Hong Kong during the 2019-20 Hong Kong Protests and attack suspects in a train compartment on the Tsuen Wan Line with batons and pepper spray. Many suspects sustained head injuries.
25/05/2020	George Floyd is killed by Derek Chauvin in the US State of Minnessota, sparking worldwide protests, like the BLM movement, calling for an end to police brutality.
19/06/2020	The UN Human Rights Council passes a resolution where UN experts are to prepare a global report on systemic racism and brutality against people of African descent by law enforcement.

## Past Attempts to Solve the Issue

Examples of different approaches that have been effective in combatting police brutality in countries are given below. Except for "the UN" section, the country information consists of modified extracts from an



article published by the Washington Post (Noack). Additionally, it must be noted that what works in one country will not necessarily be effective in another due to each country's unique history, political system, and societal values.

### **Sweden:**

In Sweden, mental health professionals were sent in 2015 onto the streets of Stockholm without police officers. "If a patient has an emergency psychiatric issue, it should really be dealt with by trained health professionals," said Andreas Carlborg, managing director of the North Stockholm Psychiatry.

Stockholm's mental health ambulance — an emergency vehicle with two trained nurses and a driver — seeks to free up police resources to allow officers to focus on fields they are the experts in, Carlborg said. An academic analysis concluded that the project gave patients the impression of creating "a safe environment" and an "open and safe place for dialogue."

### **Scotland:**

In 2005, Glasgow was dubbed the "murder capital of Europe." Exasperated by the city's high homicide rates and its notorious booze-and-blade culture, police decided to try something new. They set up a violence reduction unit with a philosophy that violent behavior spreads from person to person; to contain it, you need to interrupt transmission and focus on prevention. Doctors, nurses, paramedics, and oral surgeons travel to schools around Scotland sharing graphic stories about patching people up after knife fights. Inspired by a youth program in Los Angeles, the police also set up cafes called Street and Arrow, staffed by former offenders who gain work experience and access to on-site mentors. Glasgow's homicide rates have dropped dramatically, and the model has drawn interest from police forces as far away as Canada and New Zealand.

### **Switzerland:**

Switzerland restructured its justice system in 2007 after its authorities found that short prison sentences do little to deter criminals from reoffending and can even have the opposite effect. "Farewell to prison," read a 2007 headline for an article in Switzerland's conservative *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* discussing the changes. Whereas convicted thieves were far more likely to receive a prison sentence than a fine or community service sentence in the year before the change, the opposite has been true since. Other



proposals include permitting daytime work release for prisoners with short sentences, allowing them to keep their jobs.

### **Finland:**

As a starting point, Finland offers homeless people a permanent, stable home. From there, the formerly homeless are provided with access to other support services, such as help with addiction and advice on work placements. Finland is the only country in the European Union where homelessness is on the decline. Since launching its "housing-first" program in 2008, the number of long-term homeless has dropped by more than 42 percent. There is only one 52-bed shelter in all of Helsinki. The approach to homelessness isn't police-led, but it has helped to stop the cycle of people coming out of prison or struggling to get clean and not finding a home, advocates say. People in the program also get access to support, which can help reduce reoffending and substance abuse.

### **England and Wales:**

England and Wales have 43 police forces, overseen by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, an independent body that carries out inspections, writes reports, and makes recommendations. Lawrence Sherman, a criminologist from the University of Cambridge, said that this oversight body could effectively defund the police by withholding roughly half of the police budget. The threat of that sanction, he said, helps to concentrate the minds of local police chiefs.

### **The UN:**

On June 19, 2020, the Human Rights Council passed a resolution where UN official would have to write a report detailing systemic abuse by law enforcement of people witan African background. The resolution followed a debate held after a police officer in the US state of Minnesota killed George Floyd on May 25, resulting in international protests . The killing of George Floyd, an African American, gained attention worldwide, due to it affirming the conception of structural racism within police systems. The debate, requested by African nations, had more than 120 speakers address the Council, including Mr. Floyd's brother. Additionally, UN experts condemned and called for strict measures to combat police brutality.





## Useful Documents

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_killings\\_by\\_law\\_enforcement\\_officers\\_by\\_country](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_killings_by_law_enforcement_officers_by_country)
- <https://policehumanrightsresources.org/category/amnesty-international>
- <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/>
- <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights>
- <https://www.un.org/en/sections/documents/general-assembly-resolutions/index.html>
- <https://treaties.un.org/pages/Index.aspx>

## Possible Solutions

A small, but nevertheless important step towards combatting racial profiling and police brutality, consists of nations clearly defining both terms as well as the actions that constitute them. After identifying these actions, countries should then condemn and outlaw them. Clearly marking and resolving discrepancies in what constitutes the otherwise vague terms could help the public and enforcement more effectively identify actions as right or wrong. Nations should further discourage violent arrest tactics, such as the choke and sleeper holds, and find alternatives. This would prevent civilian injuries and fatalities.

It is also essential that nations invest more time in training future police officers. A longer training time would serve to have a more highly-trained police force and discourage those who are not genuinely invested in the field. Refresher training should also be offered to police officers every appropriate time interval to ensure they are up to date with any recent adjustments in the area. Police training programs should further receive training on identifying and resolving implicit bias as well as structural racism within the law enforcement system.

Police should be required to wear body cameras in order to document interactions with citizens and ensure proper conduct. A national police database could also be created. Police are required to submit information on each encounter with citizens, including race, to see whether an officer has carried noticeably disproportionate checks on a certain group of people and hence track racial profiling. This information should be available to the public to encourage transparency and trust between law enforcement and the public. Analyses on the data should further be routinely published to the public, providing processed information on police brutality and racial profiling and suggestions on combatting it.



Nations should also direct resources towards preventative measures, which prevent civilians from resorting to crime and hence lessen the chances of police brutality. They should focus on programs designed to reduce disparities (social, economic, etc.) in the community. Youth who committed crimes, but pose little risk to the community, should be introduced to community service-based alternatives. Inmates should also be introduced to crime-prevention and rehabilitation programs in order to prevent future relapses into crime.

With no predisposed incentives to protect or hide police misconduct, independent bodies should be created to supervise police agencies. Furthermore, they should ensure that police misconduct complaints are thoroughly investigated and that any necessary disciplinary action or compensation is addressed.



## Bibliography

- Berger, Miriam, and Rick Noack . “How US Police Tactics Differ to Those Used in Europe and around the World.” *The Independent*, Independent Digital News and Media, 7 June 2020, [www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/police-tactics-brutality-us-hong-kong-iceland-norway-uk-a9552886.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/police-tactics-brutality-us-hong-kong-iceland-norway-uk-a9552886.html).
- Carlsson , Sven Hultberg. “Does Sweden Have a Racial Profiling Problem?” *The Christian Science Monitor*, The Christian Science Monitor, 2 Apr. 2013, [www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2013/0402/Does-Sweden-have-a-racial-profiling-problem](http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2013/0402/Does-Sweden-have-a-racial-profiling-problem).
- Delsol , Rebekah. “Racial Profiling.” *Racial Profiling | Centre for Crime and Justice Studies*, Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, [www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/publications/cjm/article/racial-profiling](http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/publications/cjm/article/racial-profiling).
- “Ethnic Profiling: What It Is and Why It Must End.” *Open Society Foundations*, May 2019, [www.opensocietyfoundations.org/explainers/ethnic-profiling-what-it-and-why-it-must-end](http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/explainers/ethnic-profiling-what-it-and-why-it-must-end).
- Horton, Jake. “US 2020 Election: Does Joe Biden Support Defunding the Police?” *BBC News*, BBC, 7 Sept. 2020, [www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2020-53997196](http://www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2020-53997196).
- Jones, Alexi, and Wendy Sawyer. “Not Just ‘a Few Bad Apples’: U.S. Police Kill Civilians at Much Higher Rates than Other Countries.” *Prison Policy Initiative*, Prison Policy Initiative, 5 June 2020, [www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2020/06/05/policekillings/](http://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2020/06/05/policekillings/).
- Kevin B. O'Reilly News Editor .cls-1 {fill:none;} .cls-2 {fill:#1da1f2;} Twitter logo. “11 Beginning Steps to Reform Policing and Tackle Racial Injustices.” *American Medical Association*, 7 July 2020, [www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/11-beginning-steps-reform-policing-and-tackle-racial-injustices](http://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/11-beginning-steps-reform-policing-and-tackle-racial-injustices).
- Kristian, Bonnie. “7 Reasons Police Brutality Is Not Going Away.” *Business Insider*, Business Insider, 2 July 2014, [www.businessinsider.com/7-underlying-reasons-for-police-brutality-2014-7?r=DE&IR=T](http://www.businessinsider.com/7-underlying-reasons-for-police-brutality-2014-7?r=DE&IR=T).
- “List of Killings by Law Enforcement Officers by Country.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 25 Feb. 2021, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_killings\\_by\\_law\\_enforcement\\_officers\\_by\\_country](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_killings_by_law_enforcement_officers_by_country).
- Marie Provine, Doris. “Institutional Racism in Enforcing Immigration Law.” *Norteamérica*, vol. 8, no. Número Especial, 2013, pp. 31–53., doi:10.20999/nam.2013.c002.
- McGrath, Timothy, and Traci Tong. “Iceland Grieves after Police Shoot and Kill a Man for the First Time in Its History.” *The World from PRX*, The World, 3 Dec. 2013, [www.pri.org/stories/2013-12-03/iceland-grieves-after-police-kill-man-first-time-its-history](http://www.pri.org/stories/2013-12-03/iceland-grieves-after-police-kill-man-first-time-its-history).



- Noack , Rick, and Karla Adam. “Defund the Police? Other Countries Have Narrowed Their Role and Boosted Other Services.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 14 June 2020, [www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/police-protests-countries-reforms/2020/06/13/596eab16-abf2-11ea-a43b-be9f6494a87d\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/police-protests-countries-reforms/2020/06/13/596eab16-abf2-11ea-a43b-be9f6494a87d_story.html).
- Philipp, Jennifer. “5 Examples of Police Brutality Internationally.” *The Borgen Project*, Jennifer Philipp [https://Borgenproject.org/Wp-Content/Uploads/The\\_Borgen\\_Project\\_Logo\\_small.Jpg](https://Borgenproject.org/Wp-Content/Uploads/The_Borgen_Project_Logo_small.Jpg), 20 Aug. 2020, [borgenproject.org/police-brutality-internationally/](https://borgenproject.org/police-brutality-internationally/).
- “Police Brutality.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 23 Feb. 2021, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Police\\_brutality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Police_brutality).
- “POLICE VIOLENCE AROUND THE WORLD.” *Amnesty International USA*, Amnesty International, [www.amnestyusa.org/issues/deadly-force-police-accountability-police-violence/](http://www.amnestyusa.org/issues/deadly-force-police-accountability-police-violence/).
- Poon, Linda, and Marie Patino. “A Timeline of U.S. Police Protests.” *Bloomberg.com*, Bloomberg, 9 June 2020, [www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-06-09/a-history-of-protests-against-police-brutality](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-06-09/a-history-of-protests-against-police-brutality).
- team, Reality Check. “George Floyd: How Are African-Americans Treated under the Law?” *BBC News*, BBC, 1 June 2020, [www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52877678](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52877678).
- Todd, Carolyn L. “Why Police Brutality Is a Public Health Issue.” *SELF*, SELF, 17 June 2020, [www.self.com/story/police-brutality-public-health-issue](http://www.self.com/story/police-brutality-public-health-issue).
- “Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” *United Nations*, United Nations, [www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/](http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/).
- Venezky , Emily. “PolitiFact - Post Comparing U.S. Police Training and Fatal Shootings with Nordic Countries Lacks Context.” *Politifact*, Politifact, 16 June 2020, [www.politifact.com/factchecks/2020/jun/16/viral-image/post-comparing-us-police-training-and-fatal-shooti/](http://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2020/jun/16/viral-image/post-comparing-us-police-training-and-fatal-shooti/).
- Yan, Holly. “This Is Why Everyday Racial Profiling Is so Dangerous.” *CNN*, Cable News Network, 11 May 2018, [edition.cnn.com/2018/05/11/us/everyday-racial-profiling-consequences-trnd/index.html](http://edition.cnn.com/2018/05/11/us/everyday-racial-profiling-consequences-trnd/index.html).