

54 African Countries Called for a Probe into US 'Systemic Racism' and Police Violence

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African countries are pushing for the UN's Human Rights Council to launch a high-level investigation into "systemic racism" and police violence in the United States and abroad after George Floyd died while a police officer was kneeling on his back. The Human Rights Council noted that 600 activist groups and victims' relatives had called last week for a special session. The UN resolution was introduced by the African group and condemns "racial discriminatory and violent practices perpetrated by law enforcement agencies against Africans and people of African descent and structural racism endemic to the criminal justice system, in the United States of America and other parts of the world." It also called for a probe into government responses to peaceful protests, including the alleged use of excessive force against protesters, bystanders and journalists. John Fisher, an official with the UN's Human Rights Watch, said, "When national processes consistently fail, international processes are needed." [Read that last line again. The next phase may be UN troops, called 'peacekeepers' patrolling American streets.] -GEG

African countries are pushing for the UN's top rights body to launch a high-level investigation into "systemic racism" and police violence in the United States and beyond, according to a draft resolution introduced Tuesday.

The text was the subject of heated discussions in Geneva ahead of a so-called "urgent debate" on the topic at the United Nations Human Rights Council on Wednesday.

The debate was called for following unrest in the United States and elsewhere over George Floyd's death in police custody.

The draft resolution, introduced by the African group, condemns "racial discriminatory and violent practices perpetrated by law enforcement agencies against Africans and people of African descent and structural racism endemic to the criminal justice system,

in the United States of America and other parts of the world.”

The text calls for the establishment of an independent international commission of inquiry (COI) – one of the UN’s highest-level probes, generally reserved for major crises like the Syrian conflict.

The commission, the text said, should probe “systemic racism, alleged violations of international human rights law and abuses against Africans and of people of African descent in the United States” and elsewhere by law enforcement agencies.

The aim, it said, should be “bringing perpetrators to justice”.

‘Excessive force’

The investigators should also probe “government responses to peaceful protests, including the alleged use of excessive force against protesters, bystanders and journalists,” it said.

A senior US diplomat in Geneva voiced outrage at the draft resolution.

“Our transparency, commitment to a free press, and insistence on the right to justice allow the world to see our problems and openly engage on our efforts at finding solutions,” said the diplomat.

“It is countries that hide the truth, violently silence their critics, don’t have democratic accountability, and refuse even to recognise fundamental freedoms that merit censure.”

Another senior US official, speaking to AFP in Washington, said the United States would take a “hard look” at whether to cooperate on a COI.

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