

KLE MUN 2025

United Nations Human Rights Council



Agenda: Combating Systemic Racism and Police
Brutality in Developed Democracies



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Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

It is with great enthusiasm and anticipation that I welcome you to this committee. As Chair of the United Nations Human Rights Council for the 2025 edition of KLE MUN, it is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to what promises to be an enriching and thought-provoking committee.

Our agenda this year is *Combating Systemic Racism and Police Brutality in Developed Democracies*—addresses one of the most urgent and emotionally charged issues in international human rights discourse. As delegates, you will critically examine structural racism in law enforcement, judicial bias, and the disproportionate use of force against marginalized communities.

Throughout the committee sessions, you will be called upon to analyse case studies from countries such as the United States, France, and Brazil. You will be tasked with crafting solutions that balance the principles of state sovereignty with the urgent need for international accountability. From independent oversight bodies to global racial justice frameworks, your ideas will contribute to developing actionable solutions that restore faith in the human rights system.

KLE MUN provides a unique platform to adopt the roles of diplomats, advocates, and policymakers. I urge you to come prepared with well-researched positions, open minds, and a collaborative spirit. Our committee values inclusive dialogue, critical thinking, and mutual respect.

Should you have any queries or require support during your preparation, please do not hesitate to reach out. I am here to assist you and ensure that your experience is both memorable and rewarding.

I look forward to meeting you all and witnessing the impactful conversations you will lead.

Warm regards,

Praeksha Kamath-Pai
Chair, United Nations Human Rights Council
KLE Model United Nations 2025

The Executive Board
UNHRC

Introduction to the United Nations Human Rights Council

Established in 2006 by the United Nations General Assembly under Resolution 60/251, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) replaced the former Commission on Human Rights as the principal inter-governmental body tasked with promoting and protecting human rights worldwide. The Council is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, and comprises 47 Member States elected by the General Assembly through a system that ensures equitable geographic representation. These members serve three-year terms and are not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms (UNGA Res. 60/251).

The UNHRC is supported by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which provides research, technical support, and capacity building. The Council's core functions include conducting the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of all UN Member States, adopting thematic resolutions, appointing Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts, and launching fact-finding missions and Commissions of Inquiry in cases of serious human rights violations.

Since its creation, the UNHRC has addressed a wide range of pressing human rights concerns, including racial discrimination, violence against women, arbitrary detention, religious intolerance, and abuses in conflict zones.

In the context of racial justice, the Council has been increasingly active. Following the global outcry over the killing of George Floyd in 2020, the UNHRC held an urgent debate and adopted Resolution 43/1, which condemned systemic racism and called for international mechanisms to investigate human rights violations by law enforcement against people of African descent (OHCHR, 2020). This was a landmark moment that reaffirmed the Council's role in upholding racial equity and combatting institutional discrimination, even within developed democracies.

The UNHRC remains a cornerstone of international human rights diplomacy, balancing political complexities with the imperative of moral accountability. Its legitimacy rests on its ability to hold all nations—regardless of power or status—accountable to the shared standards of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and international law.

Introduction to the Agenda

Widespread protests have brought systemic racism and unchecked police brutality to the forefront of international attention. Delegates will address structural discrimination in law enforcement, judiciary bias, and the disproportionate targeting of marginalized communities. The challenge lies in enforcing international human rights standards in nations that often resist external scrutiny. Case studies include the United States, France, and Brazil, among others. Delegates must navigate between state sovereignty, global accountability, and public outrage.

While systemic racism and police brutality are global issues, their persistence in developed democracies presents a paradox: states that champion human rights abroad often fail to protect them within their own borders. The deaths of George Floyd (USA), Adama Traoré (France), Dalian Atkinson (UK), and Kumanjayi Walker (Australia) sparked global outrage and highlighted the urgent need for reform.

Systemic racism refers to institutional policies and practices that disproportionately harm racial minorities. Police brutality is often the most visible manifestation of such systems, reinforced by legal immunity, biased enforcement, and a lack of accountability mechanisms.

Developed democracies are uniquely positioned to lead by example. However, systemic barriers and political resistance often hamper reform. This agenda urges the Council to scrutinize these contradictions and propose enforceable strategies rooted in international human rights law.

This discussion is not merely a critique of national governance but a call to strengthen international accountability and rebuild the legitimacy of democratic institutions through tangible reforms. Delegates must consider how global human rights frameworks can be adapted or enforced to confront entrenched racial disparities within law enforcement and justice systems in some of the world's most influential nations.

Resolutions may include creating independent monitoring bodies, racial justice frameworks, and institutional reforms. This agenda demands moral courage and diplomatic finesse. The credibility of the international human rights system is on trial.

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Definition of Key Terms

Systemic Racism: A form of racism that is embedded in the laws and regulations of a society or organization. It manifests in discrimination across housing, education, healthcare, employment, and criminal justice.

Police Brutality: The excessive or unwarranted use of force by law enforcement against civilians. It includes physical violence, verbal abuse, torture, racial profiling, and lethal force.

Qualified Immunity: A legal doctrine in the United States that shields government officials, including police officers, from civil liability unless they violated "clearly established" constitutional rights.

Developed Democracies: Countries with high Human Development Index (HDI) scores, functioning democratic institutions, and advanced economies. These typically include members of the OECD such as the USA, UK, France, Germany, Canada, and Australia.

International Oversight Mechanisms: Tools such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Special Rapporteurs, and treaty-monitoring bodies under the OHCHR used to monitor and evaluate human rights compliance.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Event
21 Dec 1965	Adoption of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) by UN General Assembly Resolution 2106 (XX). [OHCHR]
3 Mar 1991	Rodney King is brutally beaten by LAPD officers. The video footage triggers public outrage and legal proceedings. [History.com]
29 Apr 1992	Acquittal of the LAPD officers leads to the Los Angeles Riots, resulting in 63 deaths, over 12,000 arrests, and nearly \$1 billion in damages. [CNN]
27 Oct 2005	Deaths of Zyed Benna and Bouna Traoré in Clichy-sous-Bois, France, lead to three weeks of unrest in the banlieues. [Le Monde, BBC]
9 Aug 2014	Michael Brown, an unarmed Black teenager, is killed by police in Ferguson, Missouri. Sparked protests and global discourse around racial profiling. [Washington Post]
2015	UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent releases report highlighting structural racism and urges action. [UN WGEPAD Report]
2016	Human Rights Watch publishes reports on racial profiling in France; multiple rulings by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) confirm systemic bias. [HRW, ECHR]
25 May 2020	George Floyd is murdered by a police officer in Minneapolis. His death triggers the largest racial justice protests in U.S. history. [NYT, OHCHR]
17 Jun 2020	UNHRC holds an urgent debate on systemic racism and police brutality in the wake of George Floyd's killing. [UN News]
13 Jul 2021	UNHRC adopts Resolution 47/21 establishing an Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement. [OHCHR]
2022	Ontario Human Rights Commission report "A Disparate Impact" confirms that Black residents in Toronto are 20 times more likely to be fatally shot by police. [Ontario HRC]
Aug 2023	UN Special Rapporteur on Racism delivers a report to the UNHRC highlighting ongoing structural discrimination in policing, especially in the U.S., France, and the UK. [OHCHR, UN SR Racism]
2024	Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch issue joint communiqués urging accountability for France's discriminatory identity checks. [HRW, Amnesty]

Subtopics within the Agenda

6.1 Historical Roots of Systemic Racism in Policing

The origins of modern law enforcement in many developed democracies are deeply intertwined with systems of colonial control, slavery, and racial segregation. In the United States, for instance, policing in the South evolved from slave patrols and post-Reconstruction efforts to enforce racial hierarchies (Vitale, 2017). In Australia and Canada, early policing was used to control Indigenous populations, while in France and the UK, colonial legacies continue to influence attitudes toward minority communities.

6.2 Legal Frameworks and Institutional Accountability

Most developed democracies have constitutional provisions or human rights legislation that prohibit racial discrimination. However, enforcement often falls short. Doctrines such as qualified immunity (U.S.) or discretionary policing powers (UK, France) frequently undermine efforts at accountability. Independent bodies such as civilian review boards or ombudspersons exist but often lack the legal power or funding to be effective (Amnesty International, 2021).

6.3 Use of Force and Racial Profiling

Disparities in the use of force against racial minorities are consistently documented. In the U.S., Black individuals are nearly three times more likely to be killed by police than white individuals (Mapping Police Violence, 2023). In France, Human Rights Watch has recorded routine discriminatory identity checks against Black and Arab youth. Racial profiling is often disguised as risk-based policing or stop-and-search practices, disproportionately targeting racialized communities.

6.4 The Role of Technology and Surveillance

Surveillance technologies, including facial recognition, predictive policing algorithms, and biometric databases, have introduced new layers of racial bias. A 2019 study by MIT Media Lab found that facial recognition systems had significantly higher error rates for darker-skinned individuals, particularly women. These tools often operate without transparency or public oversight, reinforcing racial disparities rather than reducing them (Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018).

6.5 Impact on Marginalized Communities

The consequences of systemic racism in policing extend beyond physical violence. Marginalized communities experience elevated levels of psychological trauma, social stigma, and economic marginalization. Children in over-policed areas are more likely to be suspended from school, leading to what is termed the “school-to-prison pipeline.” Angela Davis and Michelle Alexander have both written extensively on the carceral continuum that links education, policing, and incarceration in racialized ways (Davis, 2003; Alexander, 2010).

Each of these subtopics highlights the multifaceted nature of systemic racism and underscores the urgent need for intersectional, legally grounded, and community-informed approaches to reform.

In the **United States**, Black Americans are 2.9 times more likely to be killed by police than white Americans (Mapping Police Violence, 2023). Efforts like the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act have stalled in Congress. Meanwhile, civil rights investigations by the U.S. Department of Justice have uncovered unconstitutional policing in several cities.

In the **United Kingdom**, a 2021 report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate found that Black individuals were nine times more likely to be stopped and searched. Despite public inquiries like the Macpherson Report (1999), institutional racism persists in the Metropolitan Police.

In **France**, Human Rights Watch (2020) documented routine identity checks targeting Black and Arab youth. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled against France in multiple racial profiling cases.

Canada has faced scrutiny for its treatment of Indigenous populations. A 2021 report by the Ontario Human Rights Commission found that Black people were nearly 20 times more likely to be shot by Toronto police.

Australia continues to see disproportionate deaths of Aboriginal people in custody, despite the 1991 Royal Commission which made over 330 recommendations, many of which remain unimplemented.

Analysis of the Current Situation in Developed Democracies

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International Legal Framework and Previous Resolutions

The international community has established a strong corpus of legal instruments and resolutions that condemn racial discrimination and outline obligations for states to ensure equality and justice over the decades. These frameworks are critical tools for addressing systemic racism and police brutality.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948) – As the foundational human rights document, the UDHR proclaims the right to equality, dignity, and freedom from discrimination. Article 1 states that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights," while Article 7 affirms equality before the law and equal protection without discrimination.

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD, 1965) – A legally binding treaty ratified by 182 states, ICERD obligates countries to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and promote understanding among all races. Article 2 requires states to review and revise government, national, and local policies that perpetuate racial inequality. The ICERD Committee regularly reviews country compliance and can hear individual complaints (Article 14).

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966) – This treaty reinforces legal protections, including the right to life (Article 6), liberty and security (Article 9), and equality before the law (Article 26). The Human Rights Committee monitors implementation and issues General Comments, including on the role of law enforcement and state duties to prevent arbitrary killings.

UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials (1979) and Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (1990) – These non-binding yet widely accepted instruments establish minimum standards for law enforcement, emphasizing necessity, proportionality, and accountability in the use of force.

UNHRC Resolution 43/1 (2020) – Adopted in response to the global protests following George Floyd's murder, this resolution condemned racially discriminatory policing and called for the High Commissioner to prepare a

comprehensive report on systemic racism and violations of international human rights law against people of African descent.

UNHRC Resolution 47/21 (2021) – This resolution established the Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement, tasked with investigating systemic racism and racial bias in policing globally. It marked a historic step in holding all member states, including developed democracies, accountable for their law enforcement practices.

Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (2001) – Adopted during the World Conference Against Racism, this declaration reaffirmed the international community's commitment to combating racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. It recognized the intersection of race and socioeconomic status and emphasized the need for effective remedies and reparations.

These international instruments—both binding treaties and normative guidelines—provide a powerful foundation upon which the UNHRC can build. Delegates are encouraged to reference these frameworks when drafting resolutions, ensuring alignment with established legal norms and human rights obligations. The task before the Council is to transform these commitments into effective mechanisms for change and accountability.

Challenges in Implementation and Enforcement

Efforts to combat systemic racism and police brutality often encounter practical and political barriers in developed democracies. These challenges hinder meaningful and sustained progress:

- **Political Resistance:** Governments may downplay systemic racism or resist reforms perceived as threats to national sovereignty or internal stability. Policymaking may also be influenced by lobbying from powerful police unions.
- **Data Collection Gaps:** Many states lack disaggregated data on police violence by race or ethnicity, which is crucial for identifying disparities and informing reforms.
- **Legal Barriers:** Doctrines such as qualified immunity (USA) and legal loopholes elsewhere shield police officers from accountability. Judicial systems may also be slow or reluctant to prosecute misconduct.
- **Cultural Resistance:** Media framing and public attitudes in some countries perpetuate the perception that police violence is an isolated issue, making systemic reform politically unpopular.
- **Limited International Enforcement:** UN mechanisms like the OHCHR lack binding enforcement powers. Their effectiveness depends heavily on state cooperation and voluntary compliance.

These limitations necessitate a mix of domestic reform and international advocacy, with clear commitments to transparency, community engagement, and legal accountability.

Possible Solutions

- **Establish Independent Oversight Bodies:** National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) with investigatory powers, adequate funding, and legal independence can help restore public trust by investigating misconduct and enforcing reforms.
- **International Monitoring Mechanisms:** Expand the mandates of UN Special Rapporteurs and the OHCHR to actively monitor and report on law enforcement practices in developed democracies. These mechanisms can include periodic reviews, on-ground fact-finding, and the publication of thematic reports.
- **Police Reform Standards:** Encourage universal adoption of the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials (1990). These guidelines emphasize necessity, proportionality, and accountability in the use of force.
- **Legal Reform:** Reform or abolish doctrines such as qualified immunity and laws that hinder prosecutions of police misconduct. National legislatures can adopt statutory frameworks to guarantee the prosecution of racially motivated abuse by law enforcement.
- **Education and Training:** Implement mandatory anti-bias, anti-racism, and de-escalation training programs for all law enforcement personnel. Such training should be evidence-based, recurrent, and include community interaction.
- **Data Transparency:** Require the standardized collection and publication of disaggregated data on police stops, use of force, and complaints, categorized by race, gender, and ethnicity. Transparency fosters accountability and allows for targeted interventions.
- **Community-Led Public Safety Models:** Pilot community-based alternatives to traditional policing, such as crisis response units for mental health or social workers in school systems. These models have shown success in cities like Eugene, Oregon (CAHOOTS program).
- **Empowering Affected Communities:** Ensure that affected groups are meaningfully represented in all policy-making, oversight, and reform efforts. Participatory frameworks can improve the legitimacy and sustainability of interventions.

These solutions must be context-sensitive and implemented in partnership with civil society, international institutions, and local communities. While reform is difficult, it is both necessary and achievable with sustained political will and multilateral cooperation. National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) with legal power to investigate law enforcement.

- **International Monitoring Mechanisms:** Expand mandates of Special Rapporteurs and OHCHR offices to include developed democracies.
- **Police Reform Standards:** Promote adoption of the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms.
- **Legal Reform:** Reconsider or abolish legal doctrines that shield police from accountability.
- **Education and Training:** Mandate anti-bias training and community engagement programs.
- **Data Transparency:** Standardize race-disaggregated data collection on police interactions.
- **Community-Led Public Safety Models:** Pilot programs that shift certain responsibilities from police to social services.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer (QARMA)

1. What legal and institutional mechanisms can ensure consistent accountability for racially motivated police misconduct?
2. How should international human rights bodies engage with developed democracies that resist external scrutiny?
3. In what ways can civilian oversight be strengthened to ensure independence and transparency in law enforcement?
4. How can national legal systems be reformed to remove protections like qualified immunity without undermining due process?
5. What are effective strategies for integrating community-led safety models into national security frameworks?
6. How can international treaties and mechanisms be better enforced or adapted to compel compliance in developed democracies?
7. What role can disaggregated data and public reporting play in shaping policy and improving institutional accountability?

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