

Comment by the Information and Press Department in connection with massive protests against police brutality in the US

We could not fail to pay attention to the extraordinary situation that has taken place in the United States after the police killed George Floyd, an African-American and US citizen, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May 25.

While being detained, he was suffocated before the eyes of numerous passersby. The video that is on public record shows that this was a cruel murder. A wave of protests has swept across the US. The public is indignant at the criminal actions of the police and demands that the guilty be brought to account.

This incident is far from the first in a series of lawless conduct and unjustified violence from US law enforcement. American police commit such high-profile crimes all too often. It is enough to recall the murder of Laquan McDonald, a minor, by a police officer in 2016. The teenager was shot because he ostensibly started to hide his knife as soon as the police approached him. They opened fire at him although he did not try to attack them.

Americans were also outraged at the murder of unarmed Botham Jean, a 26-year-old African-American, in Dallas in September 2018. Police officer Amber Guyger explained that she shot him because she thought the man was a burglar trying to get into her apartment although he was standing by a door to a neighbouring building.

On March 13, 2020, 26 year-old ambulance worker Breonna Taylor was shot in the city of Louisville, Kentucky.

The United States has certainly accumulated systemic human rights problems: race, ethnic and religious discrimination, police brutality, bias of justice, crowded prisons, and uncontrolled use of fire arms and self-defence weapons by individuals, to name a few.

It is sad that against this backdrop, Washington refuses to expand its humanitarian commitments in international law every year. It still abstains from participation in most international human rights treaties, continues ignoring recommendations of human rights organisations and is deliberately reducing its involvement in relevant international and universal agencies. Thus, the US has withdrawn from the UN Human Rights Council, which many countries perceived as ostentatious disregard for the council and the UN as a whole.

We are urging the US authorities to take effective measures to improve the current state of affairs, resume good-faith efforts to honour international commitments and tailor national legislation to the UN basic principles on the use of force and fire arms by law enforcement.

And, of course, they should meticulously investigate the murder of George Floyd.