



Communities United Against Police Brutality™

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Written Submission to the International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement

We urge members of the Expert Mechanism to visit Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota during your visit to the United States April 24-May 5, 2023.

About the Requesters

Communities United Against Police Brutality is a volunteer-led grassroots organization in our 23rd year. We are a statewide organization based in Minneapolis, MN. We work in close collaboration with other organizations, some of whom have signed on to this request or are submitting their own request.

Rationale for Requesting a Visit to Minneapolis

As you are undoubtedly aware, Minneapolis is where George Floyd was killed. Sadly, his death was not an anomaly. It was the predictable result of a systematic failure to hold law enforcement officers accountable for violations of civil and human rights of members of the community. Prior to killing George Floyd, Derek Chauvin had 26 complaints against him and most were never disciplined. Many of those involved placing his knee on people's necks in the same manner in which he killed Mr. Floyd. In addition, Chauvin had been involved in four prior deadly force incidents without consequences. [Chauvin's record as a police officer](#) closely mirrors that of a number of officers on the Minneapolis police force. In the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd, Minneapolis police officers engaged in widespread violations of civil and human rights in their treatment of protesters and other community members, including the [beating of Mr. Jaleel Stallings](#), without consequences. To date, the city has [paid out nearly \\$111 million in lawsuit settlements and judgments](#) for police actions related to Mr. Floyd's death and the ensuing uprising including payouts to a journalist and two others who lost eyes from police shooting 40 mm projectiles into crowds.

In April 2022, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights [released a report](#) of their investigation into the City of Minneapolis and Minneapolis Police Department. They found that the Minneapolis Police Department engages in a pattern or practice of discriminatory, race-based policing which is embedded in the organizational culture. As a result, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights is in the process of negotiating a consent decree with the city. The US Department of Justice is also investigating the Minneapolis Police Department and the City of Minneapolis and will likely also impose a consent decree on the city.

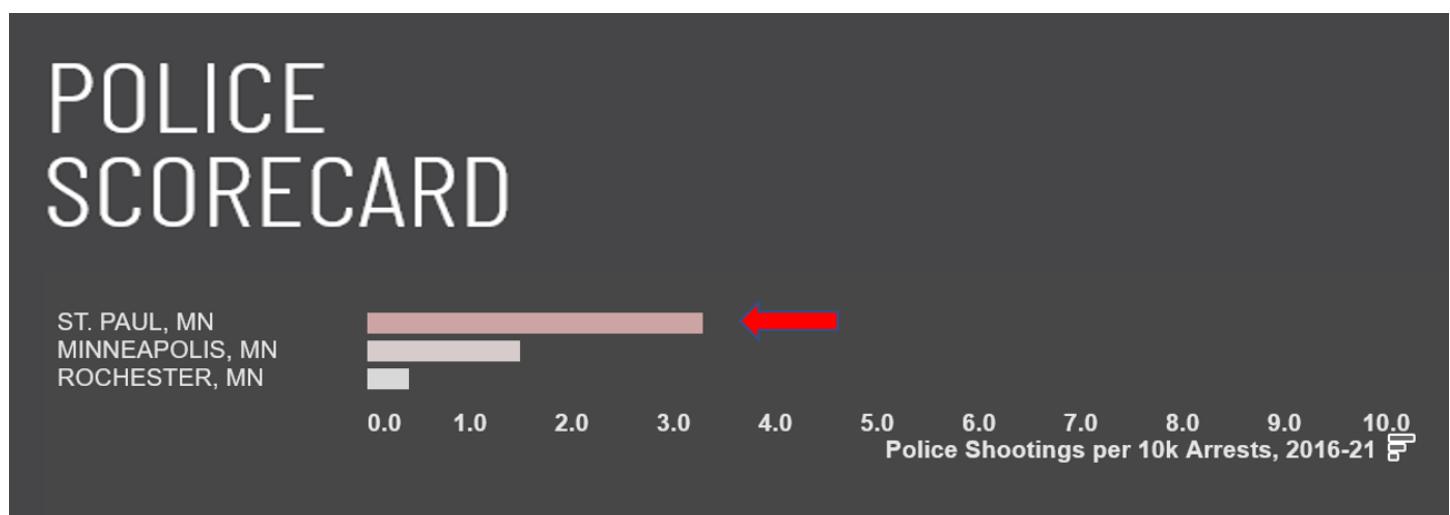
An area of serious concern with the City of Minneapolis is the use of police to brutally evict encampments of unsheltered homeless people. The vast majority of affected people are Native American and African American. During the pandemic, many people fell behind on their rent but had housing because of an eviction moratorium. Once that was lifted, a large number of people became homeless. There are not nearly enough shelter spaces for these newly homeless people. As a result, people form encampments on otherwise unused land. These encampments provide safety and mutual aid. The city has [aggressively evicted these encampments](#), with Minneapolis police arriving during the night or very early morning, slashing tents, and refusing to allow people to take their possessions with them. They have carried out these evictions even in below freezing temperatures. These evictions have the effect of further destabilizing the lives of unsheltered homeless people. There have been significant protests of this conduct but the city persists in this policy.

We would also like to have the Expert Mechanism examine police treatment of people experiencing mental health crises. People experiencing mental health crises are 16 times more likely than others to be killed by police. Fully 50% of people killed by police are disabled. Further, at any given time, 40-50% of people in our county jail have a mental health diagnosis.

In an effort to address the issue, our organization wrote a very robust [white paper on ending police-only responses to mental health crisis](#). In addition to writing this white paper, our organization wrote and worked for the passage of [Travis' Law](#), a state statute requiring 911 call centers to dispatch mental health crisis teams to mental health crisis calls. Despite this, and despite a state statute requiring these teams to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the city frequently dispatches police only to these calls. The city's mental health crisis team has limited weekday hours only. They are excusing this by referring to the program as a "pilot" even though it has been in effect for over two years. As with other issues in policing, people of color and poor people are most impacted by the city's lack of appropriate response to mental health crises because they are more likely to lack access to ongoing mental health treatment. Travis' Law is named for Travis Jordan, a man of Asian Pacific Islander descent, who was killed by Minneapolis police during a mental health crisis.

Rationale for Requesting a Visit to St. Paul

The City of St. Paul, with 70% of the population of Minneapolis, is the [deadliest city in the state](#) in terms of police deadly force incidents and the 19th deadliest in the country. [The department has killed 45 community members since 2000](#) with the vast majority being people of color. In the past two months alone, St. Paul police have killed two men of color. In virtually all cases, substandard investigations that do not meet the requirements of The Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death (2016) are used to justify the killings and deny justice to the families of the people killed. Our organization has reinvestigated a number of these deadly force incidents and reached very different conclusions about these cases. Our investigations have led to successful lawsuits for some of the families of the individuals killed. The Marcus Golden case is [one such investigation](#) that led to a [successful \\$1.3 million settlement with his family](#).



In 2019, Black Lives Matter Minnesota issued a [Travel Warning](#) for people of color coming into St. Paul that highlighted a long list of non-lethal and lethal incidents involving the St. Paul Police Department and the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department. These kinds of incidents continue to occur. The St. Paul police department's K9 unit is especially notorious for multiple vicious attacks by their dogs on innocent people of color. The Ramsey County Sheriff's Office, which operates the county jail, was recently ordered by the State Department of Corrections to reduce its inmate population over findings that [several inmates were denied or delayed emergency medical care](#). The Ramsey County Sheriff's Office is also [under investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation](#) for an incident in which jailers broke the leg of a woman who was in handcuffs, then failed to provide her with care for over nine hours.

Conclusion

Leaders of both Minneapolis and St. Paul have shown themselves to be resistant to the kinds of changes needed to address the systemic violations of civil and human rights perpetrated by their police departments. These violations are further magnified throughout the criminal justice system. Our state legislature has consistently refused to pass meaningful police accountability legislation that would address these issues. For these reasons, we urge the Expert Mechanism to visit Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota to examine firsthand the conditions that led to the killing of George Floyd and many others in both cities before and since.

This written submission is signed by the following organizations and individuals:

Communities United Against Police Brutality

Center for Victims of Torture

Racial Justice Network

Minnesota Justice Coalition

Families Supporting Families Against Police Violence

Black Lives Matter Twin Cities Metro

Black Lives Matter Minnesota

Amnesty Group 37

Rebecca Frost with Embodied Arts

The Advocates for Human Rights

Minneapolis NAACP

CAIR-Minnesota

University of Minnesota Law School Human Rights Litigation and International Advocacy Clinic

Human Rights Center, University of Minnesota Law School