FREEDOM AND JUSTICE WEEK

GLOBAL DASHBOARD

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IMPACT PEACE

University of San Diego KROC SCHOOL | Institute for Peace and Justice

In response to the wave of protest that was triggered by the murder of George Floyd, Freedom and Justice Week provides a platform for authors to explore how a wave of anger can be translated into tangible improvements in the lives of people and communities, and can rebuild the basis for collective action on which all our futures depend.

Over the course of Freedom and Justice Week, our authors have provided glimpses into how racism has penetrated their communities, their workplaces, their schools, and their countries. These articles demonstrate that, while country contexts may vary, humanity has a problem with racism and bigotry that knows no borders and that is pervasive, toxic, and dehumanising. Across the board, they call for action – from institutions and individuals, and all points in between. For people asking "what can I do?" this series offers a place to start and a challenge to be honest, ambitious, and practical.

The series was developed with Impact:Peace and the University of San Diego and is edited by its director, Rachel Locke.

Global Dashboard is a platform for ideas to tackle the long crisis of globalisation and fresh thinking on the COVID-19 pandemic. Our authors work on global issues in think tanks, government, civil society, academia and the media.

If you have any comments or reactions, we'd love to hear them via email or Twitter.

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FREEDOM AND JUSTICE WEEK

INTRODUCTION

by Rachel Locke

"Global Dashboard's Freedom and Justice Week provides a platform for authors to explore how a wave of anger can be translated into tangible improvements in the lives of people and communities, and can rebuild the basis for collective action on which all our futures depend."

Over the course of Freedom and Justice Week, our authors have provided glimpses into how racism has penetrated their communities, their workplaces, their schools, and their countries. What these articles demonstrate is that, while country contexts may vary, humanity has a problem with racism and bigotry that knows no borders and that is pervasive, toxic, and dehumanising.

In the article that launched the series, the BBC's Nihal Arthanayake challenges us to confront this problem head on. To find ways to do better, to build political, social, and economic systems that are inclusive, equal, and non-discriminatory. "Tell me how we change," he said.

Our authors did not disappoint. Across the board, they call for action – from institutions and individuals, and all points in between. For people asking "what can I do?" this series offers a place to start and a challenge to be honest, ambitious, and practical.

At Impact:Peace, we amplify change processes through the dissemination of knowledge and evidence in the pursuit of a more peaceful and just world. But we are clear eyed that what is considered 'evidence' is subject to the same power structures and systemic inequalities that pervades all our institutions. Supporting open dialogue and exchange of ideas is one way we work to balance this out, recognising that evidence is both essential and problematic.

For this reason, we were honoured to partner with Global Dashboard and to edit this series of articles.

Jessica Murrey is Black, American, a peacebuilder. And she is grieving. "I feel stripped raw. Despair and rage both threaten to swallow me whole." A feeling shared by so many across the United States, a feeling that has compelled protests across the country that have not let up since the tragic killing of George Floyd. In her article, Murrey applies her expertise and faith in peacebuilding to consider steps that must be taken to build a better world together. We must, by acknowledging pain, she says. For many, this will mean acknowledging the harm committed (past and present) by institutions that many otherwise value and respect. She asks white allies to listen and lean in, to confront their own bias, to use their power to champion their neighbours, and to rethink peace and justice. "Peace is not passive…Vengeance is not justice."

Taking this forward, Kayla Lewis-Hue reminds us that even in protests, power differentials persist. In the neighbourhood of Williamsburg, Brooklyn, home to some of

the most expensive real estate in the world, a protest attracts no harsh police response and no oppressive monitoring. Lewis-Hue asks us to examine how this contrasts with other protests in neighbourhoods with less economic power and where more of the protestors are people of colour. "We must understand these patterns, analyse how the police selectively seek out violence towards Black people, and acknowledge how a proximity to whiteness and wealth can secure one's safety," she writes.

Neda Shaheen and Nikita Shukla describe the wave of protests sparked in Minneapolis as the 'Western Spring' – a take on the 'Arab Spring' which Diego García-Sayán, Allyson Maynard-Gibson and Willy Mutunga also reference. "While Black people make up only 13% of the US population," the authors reminds us, "they are three times more likely to be killed by police and make up over a quarter of deaths by COVID-19." As US policing has militarised, policy changes from the Obama to the Trump Administrations have made it easier for police to brutalise Black lives. Protests around the world have, in turn, demonstrated the pervasiveness of racism and discrimination. The authors call out leaders for their complicity in systems that uphold white male leadership and appeal for civil and human rights to be at the heart of advancing peace and security for all.

While the protests began in the US, the demand for justice spread quickly to the UK. Nihal Arthanayake summed up what so many of us feel after he broke down in tears on his BBC radio show. "I was lucky because I could breathe," he writes, "but I could not articulate the overwhelming sadness that stopped me in my tracks and led to me being momentarily incapable of speaking." A march is one thing, he says, a campaign needs planning and a sustained attention span. He explores how to challenge people and make them uncomfortable, but not in a way that alienates them into inaction. The segregation of communities must also be tackled, before "the valley that separates people… becomes a landfill into which hate and misinformation are dumped."

María Dolores Hernández Montoya from the Mayor's Office in Guadalajara, Mexico reflects on how rapidly systems and communities have adapted in response to the coronavirus pandemic. How people have come together to support those most vulnerable, how governments have shifted mandates to address the spread, and how private business have opened co-operative mechanisms in the search for a vaccine. Montoya believes that active citizens – both those who protest and those who participate in other ways – can shape our societies to be more equal, more just, and freer for all. "People invented the systems and the rules that we live under," she writes, "and people have the power to change them."

Ebru Deniz reflects on her experiences in Turkey and Sudan, where 'Shades of Black' reinforce stereotypes across society. Rather than being seen only at the individual level, these prejudices are manipulated by government and institutions to empower some at the expense of others. Deniz contrasts these experiences with Tanzania, where the first post-Independence President Julius Nyerere took concrete (although not uncontroversial) steps to break down segregation between groups in an effort to prevent the kind of intra-race racism described in Turkey and Sudan. Deniz takes lessons from how such pro-active desegregation could help build more

inclusive and non-discriminatory societies around the world today.

Even the small, isolated island of Bermuda is not immune from the toxic effects of structural racism, as Jeff Baron describes in his article. In an island with fewer than 70,000 inhabitants, racialised disparities and abuse are born out through unequal pay, disparities in access to political power, housing, healthcare, and treatment by the criminal justice system. Acknowledging these patterns of racism and abuse, over 10% of Bermuda's population came together in protest, with calls of "Black Lives Matter" – the largest demonstration in the island's history. To move towards lasting change, Baron calls for Bermudians to confront obstacles directly, calling on white Bermudians to use their own privilege to erase systemic privilege.

Drawing on her work with young Londoners, the psychologist Jenny Chigwende reminds us how past traumas – the abuse exacted by a racist system – can create a sense of helplessness and desperation. "The tone was stark as they told of the brutality they had suffered at the hands of the police," she writes, "How they had been full of hope as young children, believing that anything was possible. But how, as they had grown, they had watched opportunities shrink and their sense of what they could achieve grow smaller and smaller." But young people see an opportunity for change and speak powerfully about what the Black Lives Matter movement means to them. "It is only in this moment – and because of their protest – that our society has finally confronted its complicated past and begun to remove the statues with the worst legacies."

From the UK's National Health Service, Kathryn Perera and Zarah Mowhabuth, leaders from two different generations and positions within the hierarchy, reflect on how public sector leaders can and should respond to the complexity of this moment. The NHS, in addressing the pandemic, has been forced to confront the extent of the risks that Black and minority communities face. They offer three lessons: that morality and neutrality are not the same, that facts must not replace lived experiences and shared stories, and that communities thrive when they participate actively, rather than just passively absorbing information. The NHS is one of many organisations where more junior staff have actively created space for debate, encouraging those further up the hierarchy "to take moral leadership in working with them to mount a response to what we were seeing in the world."

Our last set of articles reflect on how international systems can and must be reformed to deconstruct the asymmetrical power structures upon which they were built. In their article, Aarathi Krishnan and Rahul Chandran question whether the ideals of the international development and humanitarian systems hold up to scrutiny, given that in practice bureaucracy, expediency, and donor demands impair the realisation of these ideals. They deconstruct the racism and classism inherent to our international systems, placing a harsh light on our institutions that have become purveyors of charity, rather than upholders of equity and justice. They propose five values that can underpin fundamental reform and call for those who have benefited from colonial power and privilege to step aside. "Not just to share the money a little bit – but to decline what is offered and insist it is passed to BIPOC and

minority-led groups and allow them to build without gatekeeping."

Diego García-Sayán, Allyson Maynard-Gibson and Willy Mutunga, who have held leadership roles in the justice systems of Peru, the Bahamas, and Kenya, remind us of how the Arab Spring was sparked by fruit vendor Mohamed Bouazizi who set himself on fire after consistent police harassment, comparing this to the protests that followed the murder of George Floyd. "If any President or Prime Minister, parliamentarian or senior public servant, judge or police chief is surprised about this growing wave of protest, they are wilfully naïve," they write. These justice leaders set out a vision for a people-centred justice system which works not only for the few, but for all. Justice systems are resistant to change so justice leaders must work together just as health ministers do, innovating to meet people's justice needs and to addressing injustice in housing, debt burdens, employment, and beyond. They must also apply proven approaches that will prevent crime and violence, while confronting the abuses of the justice system.

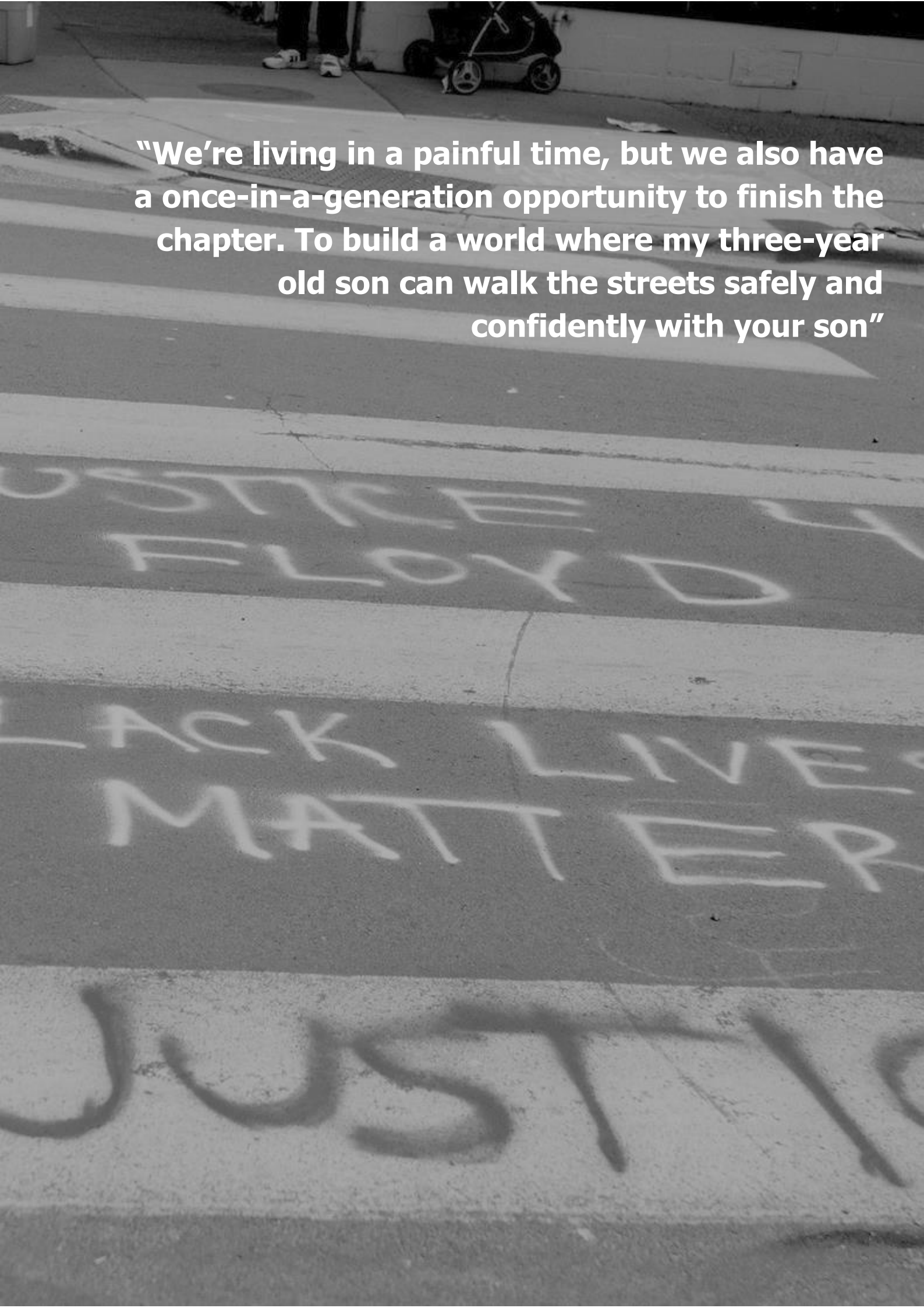
From South Africa, Nangamso Kwinana and Kabelo Kgobisa argue that is insufficient for African leaders to call for justice for people of African descent, while ignoring the urgent need for reform within the African continent itself. They call for a legally binding international treaty that will set standards for ending police brutality. The authors believe the African Union should lead in creating "international standard of policing that prioritises the lives, the well-being and the rights of citizens above the prerogatives of the police. This approach is closer to 'government for the people' rather than the prevailing norm of 'power over the people'."

Finally, Alana Hairston, Desta Haile, Karishma Chugani and Stephanie Roe describe their experiences as students at international schools. They discuss the dichotomy of international schools bringing together students from around the world to advocate "tolerance, understanding, compassion, and respect," while simultaneously continuing to reinforcing existing race and gender hierarchies through a system of education that is rooted in colonial legacies and administrative systems dominated by white men. In their article and associated petition, the authors identify four necessary actions to advance anti-racism: Make a statement on anti-racism and outline a plan; critically address HR – hiring, retention, promotion, and leadership at all levels; rethink what you teach, and how you teach it; and ensure accountability and establish a zero-tolerance policy for racism.

The road ahead is long, but we must continue the collective pursuit of societies where Black lives matter, equality of persons is guaranteed, governments exist to serve the people, and freedom and justice are the air we all breathe – this pursuit is noble and this time is now.

We ran this series of articles under a themed week, following previous collections on local responses to COVID-19 and on understanding future risks and opportunities during this time of emergency.

Global Dashboard commits to providing continued space for conversation, dialogue, and action and welcomes submissions at any time. We are also open to exploring partnerships to bring together new collections of linked articles. Please send brief pitches to: editors@globaldashboard.org


"We're living in a painful time, but we also have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to finish the chapter. To build a world where my three-year old son can walk the streets safely and confidently with your son"

I'M BLACK. I'M A PEACEBUILDER. I WANT YOUR HELP

By Jessica Murrey

This article was originally posted on Medium on 3 June. Check out Jessica's work to pick up the broken pieces of this world and build a better one through stories and dialogue.

I am black. And I am grieving.

I thought the days of public lynchings were over. Yet here I was, in the digital crowd, watching a black man being suffocated in broad daylight by the people sworn to protect him.

It happened because of a broken system and lethal assumptions related to black skin. A brokenness that has long been ignored.

I feel stripped raw. Despair and rage both threaten to swallow me whole.

But here's the thing: I'm also a peacebuilder.

I have dedicated my life to stopping human suffering. I specialize in social change communication — how to communicate across dividing lines to shift attitudes and behaviors. I've trained young activists and peacebuilders on nearly every continent on the planet.

Well, now it's come to my doorstep.

I don't feel very peaceful. Right now I just feel pain. But as my 82-year-old grandma, who's been through evolutions of racism, told me today: "A beautiful newborn comes after the mother's agonizing labor."

I wholeheartedly believe in the principles I've touted all over the world. I've seen them work. I believe the only way to build a better world is together. We must support and protect each other.

Ok, how do we do that?

I have so many non-black friends who want to help. "I don't know what to do," they confess.

First, thank you. Thank you for wanting to help. I see you. I appreciate you.

Now here are some things you can do.

1. Acknowledge the pain.

Reconciliation begins with an acknowledgment of suffering and wrong-doing. We have a population who is

experiencing the stages of grief. George Floyd could have been any one of our family members. For many, this has triggered racial trauma that goes back generations.

You cannot take away the pain, but you can be there. When we feel understood and validated, we feel less alone. I'm not talking about some hollow gesture or post. This is not a scroll-by "like". It's sitting in it with us — being present in the moment and having our backs even after the news storm has settled.

Telling someone how they should feel or what they should be doing, without addressing the pain they're in, is bound to make the situation worse. Instead, just start by acknowledging their pain. It seems simple, but it's how healing begins.

Band-Aids and platitudes are not enough; we must address the trauma.

2. Listen and Lean-in

Many people empathize from a place of personal experience. But it's impossible to imagine what it's like to have black skin unless you live it. Being black in America means more than discrimination — it's dangerous. People may see you as a threat.

You may not be able to have this experience from the outside, but you can try to understand. Just listen. Don't excuse, explain, or justify — just listen.

For a long time, the black community has been trying to tell fellow Americans about the black experience. But many people did not listen. So listen now. Dig into why things are happening instead of accepting what you've been fed.

Go the extra step: educate yourself. The murder of George Floyd is not a one-time incident but part of a long history of violence that started AFTER the abolition of slavery. There are so many books, documentaries, and studies about race in America. Take the time to learn.

The most effective leaders that I know are doing just that. They believe people have a right to be heard, and they are the first to listen.

3. Confront your own bias

Black skin is associated with aggression and criminality.

Not just by white supremacists and "racists." It's a subconscious bias that many well-meaning, even woke Americans carry. And it's lethal.

This bias is the reason that black children are four times more likely to get in trouble for the same behavior as their white counterparts. It's why black adults are six times more likely to be incarcerated for the same actions as their white counterparts.

In some U.S. states, if someone feels threatened, they have the right to use lethal force. But what if the threat is skin tone?

This kind of self-reflection — about your own biases — can be very uncomfortable. Most likely, as you're reading this, you are experiencing race-based stress. People of color experience race-based stress daily. We are always aware of our skin color and how people perceive us. We have to think twice about the words we use, the tone of our voice, and even how our presence will affect the room. Being aware of your color all the time is stressful.

When you are in the majority, your color is not always on your mind. So when you're reminded of it, the feeling is not pleasant. Many react to race-based stress with shame, guilt, denial, defensiveness, or aggression.

Try this instead: when you're feeling something like fear or suspicion, explore that feeling. Recognize the bias and work to fix it.

And remember — having biases does not make you a bad, hateful person. It makes you human.

4. Rethink peace and justice.

Let's clear up one misconception: There is no true peace without justice.

Peace is not passive.

Stopping unrest is not peace — it's suppression. We need what is called "positive peace": not the absence of voices, grievances, or conflict, but the presence of justice and equality for all.

Justice is not vengeance.

You might be tempted to support violence masquerading as justice. You might say that oppressed communities have every right to enact retribution for the centuries of unaddressed violence they have faced. That violence is the only way "they" will pay attention.

I'm not going to debate whether or not violence is a language America understands. But I will ask you a question: Whose children will pay the price of that violence? Who will be called aggressive and scary?

Black kids.

Who will be arrested and have to face a broken system?

Black kids.

Justice is not only the acknowledgment of unfairness, or the punishment that follows. Justice is the replacement of systems that have caused disparities with systems that uphold human dignity for everyone, especially historically marginalized groups.

Speak up, take action, and push for change — but be careful of perpetuating narratives that distract from the issue and harm communities of color.

5. Use your power to champion your neighbor.

Sometimes, having privilege means hogging the conversation. So just be conscious of that. Elevate the voices of black activists and community leaders. Make space for the black people in your life to share their experiences without adding your own judgment. They know their community best. Make room for their solutions and leadership.

But don't be silent. We need your voice. Step in and be a vocal advocate — especially in your own community. We black people have had mixed results when it comes to being heard by powerful white people. You hold the power. As a consumer, your dollar is worth more. As a voter, your ballot holds more weight. As a friend, you can call out when someone makes a racist joke or scoffs at our pain. White people don't always listen to us — but they will listen to your reaction.

Actively use that power to champion your neighbors of every color. Use it to build a better system.

This is what my non-black allies are doing for me.

I live in Southern Oregon, a predominantly white, conservative area. We are one of the only black families at my church. The only black family in our friend group. I know I don't owe it to anyone to speak up — since no one should have that burden — but I've chosen to share my pain with my community and told them what I need.

The response gets me choked up just thinking about it. My community has come out in force. I have so many stories, but I'll leave you with one.

Recently, my pastor called me up and asked if all of us — the whole church staff — could go to the solidarity gathering in our town. I won't lie: I was nervous.

When we arrived, I was shocked to see how many white people had gathered and honked their horns in support as they drove by. The highlight was when a white biker guy pulled up on a motorcycle wearing a Kaepernick jersey and started revving his engine. The crowd went wild.

After, my pastor wrote me and asked how the church can give me a platform and use any community influence to find solutions: "We aren't asking you to help us find quick fixes. We need consistent, ongoing leadership alongside us. Whatever that looks like."

I want to see this everywhere. Which is why I'm sharing this with you.

We're living in a painful time in America's story. It sucks. That being said, we also have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to finish the chapter. To write history. To shape the future in a momentous way. To build a world where my now three-year-old son can walk the streets safely and confidently with your son.

We can get there. I'll protect you; you protect me. We'll get there together.

A woman sits in the street during protests Photo: Lorie Shaull, Flickr (CC BY-SA 2.0)

“No change can occur if those who benefit from oppression are not aware of it”

THE PRIVILEGE IN PROTESTING POLICE BRUTALITY

By Kayla Lewis-Hue

The United States – destined to face many truths in 2020 – is confronted by the culmination of its long history of police brutality and exploitation of Black people. Systemic racism is prevalent, thriving, and designed to persist even as the economy teetered, millions lost their jobs, and more than a hundred thousand people died from COVID-19.

The stark reality of privilege in this country was made clear as Black people faced higher infection and mortality rates due to socioeconomic disparities and implicit bias woven into an overwhelmed healthcare system. As social distancing requirements prevented families from grieving loved ones who fell ill and died, we witnessed videos of police brutality and vigilante murder against Black people on social media. It is clear that no matter what crisis Americans face, Black people will suffer trauma at a disproportionate rate.

"Systemic racism is prevalent, thriving, and designed to persist"

Behind the façade of the US as a 'superpower' is a failing healthcare system and a broader inability to protect its citizens. The police prioritise militarisation over the lives of individuals they swore to protect. People have responded to an over-funded and over-protected police force through protests in every single state.

A large part of the population is either unemployed, furloughed, or working from home, giving people the opportunity to look inward and to examine their role in keeping white supremacism alive. They invested the energy normally taken up by commutes or meetings into educating themselves on how systemic racism infiltrates every level of society – from microaggressions to lynching.

Protests took the form of rallies, marches, vigils, intercommunal discussions, bike rides, boycotts, and holding oppressors responsible for their actions.

In McCarren Park in Williamsburg, New York, activists attended a silent vigil, which was followed by a promise by white attendees to use their privilege to aid in the dismantling of white supremacy. No change can occur if those who benefit from oppression are not aware of it. Protestors attempted to remain 6 feet apart and wore masks in order to protest responsibly. As the moment of silence concluded, the march began down Union Avenue towards the Brooklyn Queens Expressway. Onlookers

honked in celebration, cheered from rooftops, and traffic stopped.

"No change can occur if those who benefit from oppression are not aware of it"

But this protest showed that even when protesting for Black Lives Matter, the air of privilege still lingers. In a community with some of the most expensive real estate in the world, there was no police presence to antagonise activists. This was not surprising. The police do not oppressively monitor public spaces in affluent neighbourhoods. If the majority of the protestors had been Black, at a lower economic level, in a different neighbourhood, would the outcome have been the same? No, it would not.

Protests must take place in every city and setting, drawing every person out of their home for effective change. No protest is better than the other – they are all valid, valued, and necessary. But the setting of each protest means that a different type of protestor has access to the space. We must understand these patterns, analyse how the police selectively seek out violence towards Black people, and acknowledge how a proximity to whiteness and wealth can secure one's safety.

There is no single way to promote change – activism starts with a thought and a dedication to a revolution. The process of dismantling white supremacism begins with learning, flexibility, the willingness to change, listening to those affected most, and believing people when they express their hurt. The communities impacted by America's long history of exploitation and violence have made their voices heard.

Privileged individuals must acknowledge the liberties and capital they have is tainted by the trauma of individuals they have never met. Prioritise voices that have asked for a seat at the table – and set the table on fire.

“In order to succeed in our work while living in a country that continues to reinforce systematic racism and white supremacy, we must continue to challenge the institutions upholding racial and ethnic inequalities”

THE WESTERN SPRING

By Neda Shaheen and Nikita Shukla

The fundamental lack of respect and disregard for Black lives in the United States of America is limitless and the latest string of murders have proved no different. An unarmed father (George Floyd), a sleeping girlfriend (Breonna Taylor), a former boxer [misgendered by police] (Tony McDade) gone too soon.

These murders were unsurprising to many, and yet, shook the United States, causing a ripple effect through the Western world. Protests spread from Minneapolis to London, and Washington D.C. to Paris, igniting The Western Spring. The Minnesota Department of Public Safety quickly labelled the Minneapolis protests "urban warfare," and many of us watched as they deployed the national guard against the communities they serve.

Though framing the protests in terms of "war," the one-sided aggression by US law enforcement sparked parallel clashes in Paris, Zurich, Belgium, London, and across European cities. Signs of solidarity from Palestine, Syria, and South Africa have lit up social media, as the #BlackLivesMatter movement garners global support for real and substantive change made to root out systemic and systematic racism.

"While Black people make up only 13% of the US population, they are three times more likely to be killed by police and make up over a quarter of deaths by COVID-19"

Over the last few weeks, The Western Spring, concurrent to the COVID-19 pandemic, unmasked how little Black lives matter. In the US, police and COVID-19 disproportionately kill Black people, as racism manifests in higher rates of mistreatment by police as well as by hospitals, clinics, and physicians. While Black people make up only 13% of the US population, they are three times more likely to be killed by police and make up over a quarter of deaths by COVID-19.

During the height of COVID-19, the federal government put healthcare workers at risk by failing to supply hospitals with personal protective equipment (PPE). The cost of PPE for one worker is $15.33, while the cost of riot gear for one police officer is $496.01. While PPE remains a sought-after commodity, the federal and state government astonishingly found funds for riot gear overnight.

As young leaders, we recognise that in order to succeed in our work while living in a country that continues to reinforce systematic racism and white supremacy, we must continue to challenge the institutions upholding racial and ethnic inequalities.

International Response to Black Lives Matter

2020 will go down in history as the year that the US failed to show leadership in curbing COVID-19 amongst its citizens and saw the reaction both at home and abroad to police brutality against Black people. As a nation, we are under a microscope, and the world is taking notes on our ineffective leadership. The genocide and enslavement of Black people is the foundation by which our nation was built. This habitual mistreatment will continue without heavy pressure.

In an unprecedented move, 54 African nations have coalesced to urge the United Nation Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to establish an independent international commission of inquiry (COI), one of the UNHRC's highest-level tools, to probe systemic racism and violations of international human rights abuses against people of African descent in the US. An emergency meeting on June 17th marked the fifth time in the Council's history that it has agreed to hold an "urgent debate," that, in addition, is in the middle of a pandemic. The agenda includes discussions around cases of police abuse, assault against protesters, and infringement of journalistic freedom.

"France and the United Kingdom have been eerily silent in speaking out against Western anti-Black institutions and police brutality"

In the last few weeks, hypocritical rhetoric by the Global North on human rights violations has become abundantly clear. For example, France and the United Kingdom – generally the loudest to denounce human rights abuses in African countries – have been eerily silent in speaking out against Western anti-Black institutions and police brutality. Emmanuel Macron went as far as to publicly state that France would not be removing the statues of historical figures associated with slavery and other past human rights abuses, in an effort to preserve painful history. White male leaders who benefit from oppressive structures have been the most complicit.

Yet, those dealing with violence day in and day out stand in solidarity. Protestors from Hong Kong to Palestine tweeted advice on how to avoid tear gas and other self-protection methods for those in Minneapolis and around the US. Over 6,000 miles away, Syrian artists have taken to the streets to voice their unity with the #BlackLivesMatter movement by creating large paintings on the remnants of destroyed homes. Despite being often dehumanised by the Western media and living through some of the most restrictive, brutal sanctions under the Caesar Act, the empathy of Syrian, Iraqi, and Palestinian citizens has been overwhelming.

Militarisation of Police

The "War on Terror," contributed to major shifts in militarised policing agendas under the guise of national security. In the US, law enforcement has become synonymous with organised military force. Police wearing armour and carrying AR-15s, deployed through American communities they are sworn to protect and serve, have become the unfortunate reality for far too many. In addition to the visible militarisation, limitations on other civil and political rights

have built fear and insecurity by police and those policed.

In response to the alarming display of gross militancy exhibited during the Ferguson protests in 2014, President Barack Obama enacted Executive Order 13688, limiting federal programmes that provided military equipment to US law enforcement agencies. On August 28, 2017, Donald J. Trump removed those limitations in a horrific action that re-granted access to "military and military-styled equipment, firearms and tactical vehicles."

"Police militarisation against protestors, journalists, and people of colour, force us to question police intentions"

The liberal access granted to military-grade equipment encourages escalated force, inflates perceptions of crime, and endangers Black and Brown communities that are already overpoliced, deepening systemic racism and institutionalising wrongful presumptions of threat and of guilt. Police militarisation against protestors, journalists, and people of colour, particularly Black people, force us to question police intentions, as well as national and international government priorities.

The lack of care has gone so far as to even exploit COVID-19 as a means to fund the Administration's agenda. Just recently, the $2.2 trillion CARES Act allocated $850 million to the "Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding (CESF) Program," for allegedly preparing law enforcement, correctional officers and police, as well as prisons, jails, and detention centres for COVID-19. However, the funding "may include, but is not limited to," law enforcement equipment, hiring, training, etc. By failing to include specific limitations on where the funding can be spent, Congress has essentially handed police departments a blank cheque.

Unbeknownst to many, American policing has insidious roots in slave patrols and has put its hand in various other international oppressive regimes. The Department of Justice has reported that thousands of police departments in the US receive training on the use of force and surveillance by Israeli Defenses Forces (IDF), who enforce the illegal military occupation of Palestine.

We, in the US, cannot disengage or become desensitised to targeted violence in our communities. Rather, it is imperative that our public services detach and de-escalate from the dangerously increasing militarisation in our streets, our schools, and our public spaces. The American public, and particularly Black people deserve better.

As future leaders of the global community, we recognise the importance of our voices, and the importance of intersectional solidarity, demilitarisation, and respect for civil and human rights, particularly in advancing peace and security. Without a radical shift in which all Black lives matter, police militarisation and international complacency will continue to plague Black people in the US and globally. The Western Spring will rage on.

"We need to bring people together if we are to avoid flashpoints in the future"

MAKING ALLIES AND BURNING BRIDGES

by Nihal Arthanayake

On the 2nd of June 2020 at approximately 1.08pm GMT, I broke down whilst presenting my BBC radio show.

[UK readers can listen here, from 6 minutes in. Or read our transcript.]

Hundreds of thousands of listeners were left without a broadcaster as I struggled to compose myself and the sound of me inhaling and exhaling filled the airwaves whilst I tried to find the words to carry on.

I was lucky because I could breathe, but I could not articulate the overwhelming sadness that stopped me in my tracks and led to me being momentarily incapable of speaking. I had just reminded my audience of the savage beating of Rodney King by the Los Angeles Police Department that had taken place 29 years before and as I tried to express my frustration at the fact that history was repeating itself, a tsunami of frustration, anger, and – I say it again – sadness, engulfed me.

When I eventually gathered my thoughts, the only words I could utter were "I am so sick of this." What would it take for this no longer to be seen as a US problem, a black problem, a ghetto problem, a problem for the poor? The killing of George Floyd became a problem for all of us. Filmed from multiple angles on state-of-the-art cell phones, it was the superfast Wi-Fi version of that grainy home video footage that exposed the brutality of the LAPD to the world back in 1991.

"I am so sick of this"

The words "I can't breathe" were relatable, universal. The callousness of the police to Mr Floyd's pleas for mercy were on global display. People from all backgrounds, cultures, and classes felt sick to their stomachs. Worn down by lockdowns, economic uncertainty, and the unsettling nature of the pandemic, our frustrations found a focal point of injustice to focus on, a reason to come out – against government advice – onto the streets.

For many young people who had grown up on a diet of black sporting and musical icons, George Floyd was not an "other." His pain was their pain, and their sense of injustice was amplified and shared around the world at a scale far beyond the flurries of outrage that lead to someone being "cancelled" online for a minor cultural indiscretion.

So, here we are again, broken but not defeated, exhausted but not uncaring. Another act of police brutality before the courts, and another round of hand wringing and soul searching from the powers that be acknowledging the roots of the crisis, and yet honing in on the minority who want to use this as an excuse to burn and loot.

And again, the Prime Minister has announced a cross-government commission to look into all aspects of racial inequality, saying that as a leader he cannot ignore the pleas of peaceful protestors. Yet this has been met with derision from some quarters, including the Shadow Justice Secretary and Labour Member of Parliament, David Lammy, who tweeted that there had been over 200 recommendations made in similar report over the years and asked the Prime Minister simply to implement them.

"What have you been doing all these years?"

But there is something different happening this time. The protests around the world and the interconnectedness of the young gives this moment an urgency. The impatience of youth has been transferred from frustration at the speed at which a video downloads to an angst that asks those of us who are older, "what have you been doing all these years?"

But what is effective protest? What gets results? There are those who believe that Black Lives Matter should not be allied to the political binary of Left or Right. For it to be allied to one ideological base – and to conflate its aims with an overthrow of the capitalist system – ensures its failure. To exclude potential allies, cancel people for honest mistakes, and show zero tolerance for those who scream "All Lives Matter!" is counterproductive. This is not a case for appeasement or surrender. What about empathy, and bridge building not burning?

Living in the United Kingdom, I am mindful that there are those who are terrified by the movement for a myriad of reasons. Some are plain racist and are never likely to change. Others were horrified by watching the 8 minutes and 46 seconds that George Floyd spent on the ground with a white police overseer kneeling on his neck. At that moment, there was a unity of revulsion. These potential allies may now feel alienated by the pockets of violence that have been reported by the media.

And there are those who have yet to fully understand the cumulative toll that societal racism takes on those who bear this burden. Yet they understand the difference between right and wrong. Right to protest for equality, but wrong to deface the statue of a British war hero. Correct to demand that the law is truly blind and doesn't discriminate based on colour, gender, or sexuality, but criminal to attack police officers.

"We need to bring people together if we are to avoid flashpoints in the future"

The challenge is how you make people feel uncomfortable enough to act without alienating them into inaction, or even worse outright hostility to the cause. Despite what you might think, most people believe in fairness and equality. Harnessing this is key and the media has a role to play in not presenting this as a problem that can only be discussed in public forums by people of colour. A fear of saying the wrong thing can make the debate monocultural. This will not help.

Many want to see tangible change. The reports have been written, the statistics are stark, now what about policy? Housing, education, social care, family support, and

investment in youth services should not be seen as the preserve of the Left or of Liberals. For those who think largely through an economic lens, the case for investment in each of these fields is clear. Helping people become citizens with a stake in their societies can yield no negative outcome that I can think of.

Another important conversation that should come out of the killing of George Floyd is the issue of segregated communities. Here in the UK, people live increasingly segregated lives. The valley that separates people then easily becomes a landfill into which hate and misinformation are dumped. For those who balk at the idea of social engineering, an attempt by politicians to compel people to mix will be anathema, but we need to bring people together if we are to avoid flashpoints in the future. It is too easy to compartmentalise a problem in a file marked "Their Problem" if you don't have a meaningful relationship with the people who are covered by "their."

If rage has nowhere to go, it will eventually dissipate or transfer to some other cause. This is the time for BLM leaders to tell people how to practically drive change through their economic and political engagement. Who are the corporations that benefit from the system being as it is? Who are the brands who advertise with media organisations that use division as their business model? How can we change the incentives of the politicians who form out laws, women and men whose electoral survival depends on their popularity at the ballot box?

A march is one thing, a campaign is something different. One is quickly over, the other requires a sustained attention span. And a plan.

We Are All George: Photo: Socialist Appeal, Flickr (CC BY 2.0)


"When you have lost that much – when those who were supposed to take care of you have taken everything away – burning down the house can be a logical response"
NE CAN
BETTER!

THE FREEDOM TO CHANGE – great power requires greater responsibility

By María Dolores Hernández Montoya

Global society is in a moment that history books will recount well into the future. We have entered an era that was foreseen, but also emerged with the intensity of a slap to the face. The time for serious change has arrived.

Contrary to previous breakdowns in social and economic systems, today we are more connected than ever before. With few exceptions, people can access goods from around the globe or travel from one side of the world to the other within 24 hours. We have managed to reduce time and space barriers thanks to technology advancements, magnifying the links between people and nations.

The coronavirus is the perfect example; in less than 6 months, SARS-CoV-2 spread to more than 200 countries infecting around 10% of the world population. But this spread and these aggregate figures represent just the tip of the iceberg. The pandemic opened a Pandora's box, while lockdowns brought to the surface the best and worst of our societies. Those most affected by the virus are also the most vulnerable in society – vulnerabilities that have existed for years. In all too many cases, these vulnerabilities were taken for granted. Societies came to live with them.

But the emergency also brought hope to all of us, as millions of people mobilised to take care of each other. From the 'thank you' clap for the health staff, to sharing meals so those in need do not go hungry, to the scientists accelerating their research to find a cure as quickly as possible, and even governments deploying social assistance programmes as never before, helping each other has not turned out to be that hard. People do not need to die of hunger, the pharmaceutical industry can expedite collaboration to cure diseases, governments can redistribute budgets more inclusively, and the world economic system can be more humane.

This should trigger a conversation about the embedded politics of citizen participation. We live in a global system ruled by free market economics mixed with democratic values that are rooted in the relationship between the people and their

representatives. Six months after the coronavirus appeared, we see that these systems can be transformed. The virus has proven we can make changes that seemed to be impossible before.

"Enough is enough. People around the world agree that a deep change is required"

Now, millions of people all over the world are raising their voice against a virus even deadlier than COVID-19. George Floyd's killing by a police officer in Minneapolis was another reminder that discrimination, marginalisation, exclusion, and racism continue their infectious spread with daily consequences for far too many. Enough is enough. People around the world agree that a deep change is required.

Democracy is about citizens conceding the power of representation. The state materialises in the figure of government. The people relate – formally and informally – in the shape of citizen participation through different democratic mechanisms, such as voting, taxes, and yes, protests too. Citizens expect their democratically elected governments to be efficient in the use of public resources, effective in delivering public goods, responsive to people, and capable of standing up against threats to a country's sovereignty and interests. But what happens when the authorities that should be deliver these functions are the ones that are failing?

Many of the demands expressed by people to government today are rooted in response to expressions of violence that are perpetrated repeatedly: police brutality against black people in the US and elsewhere, children forced to be soldiers, refugees losing their homes for a war that is not theirs, ten women killed in Mexico every day while cartels control the country. Bearing such violence in mind, the legitimacy of the protest cannot be under debate. When you have lost that much – when those who were supposed to take care of you have taken everything away – burning down the house can be a logical response.

"When you have lost that much – when those who were supposed to take care of you have taken everything away – burning down the house can be a logical response"

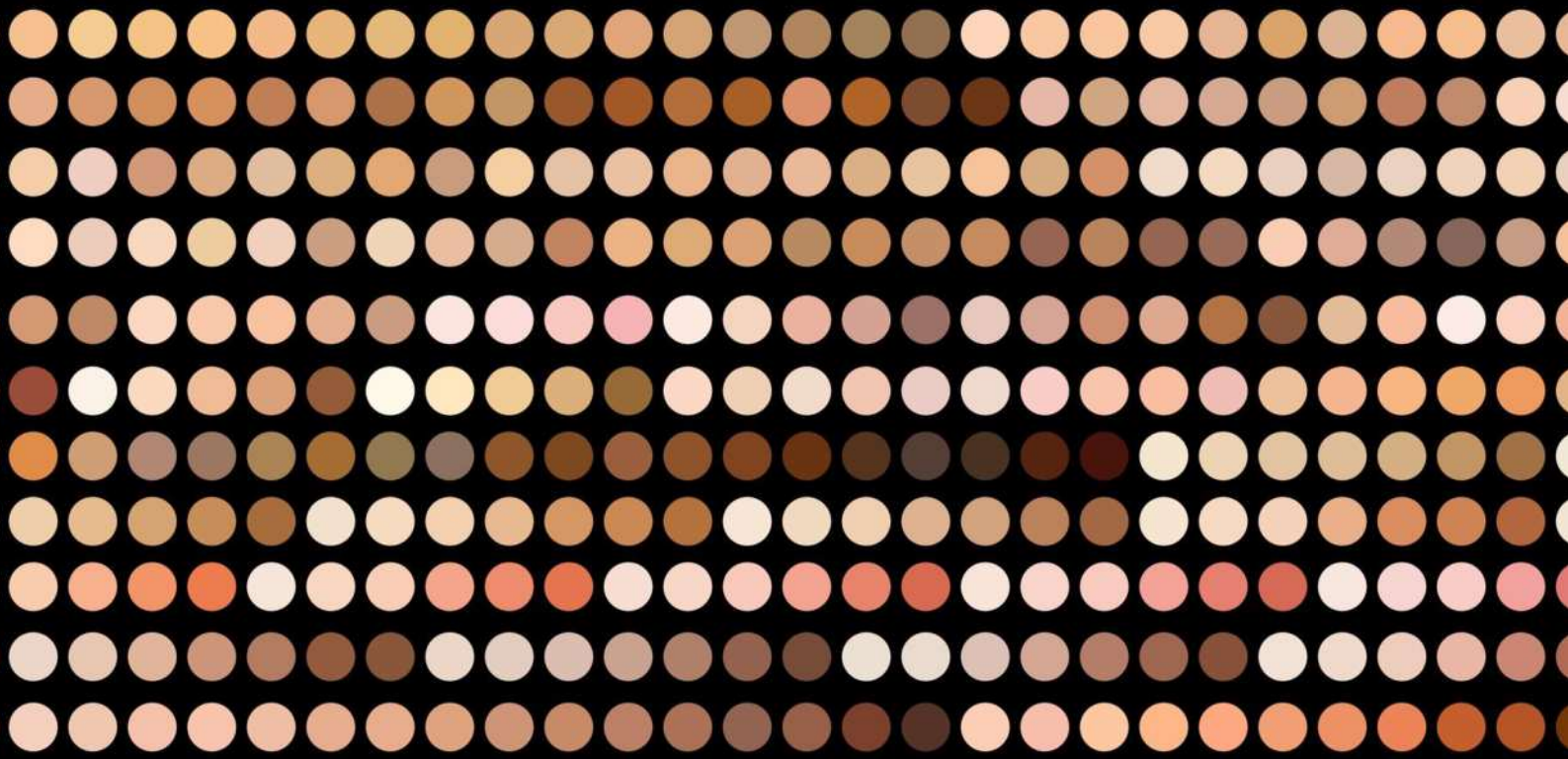
Measuring whether a country is 'well-governed' is a controversial task. Whatever metrics one applies, the protests signal a widespread view that governments are not fulfilling their duties. Health systems are not responsive. The climate emergency is deepening. People lack access to basic goods such as water and food, and to economic opportunities. Police brutality, widescale discrimination and poverty, and unimaginable levels of violence against women, cause profound suffering. Either because they lack money, capacity, or will, governments fail to represent citizens and deliver what they demand.

With systems are at a breaking point, and while democracy gives us the freedom to have a voice, heads of government too often expect us to remain silent. But silence in democracies does not work. Effective governments need politically committed citizens; this enables democracy to function

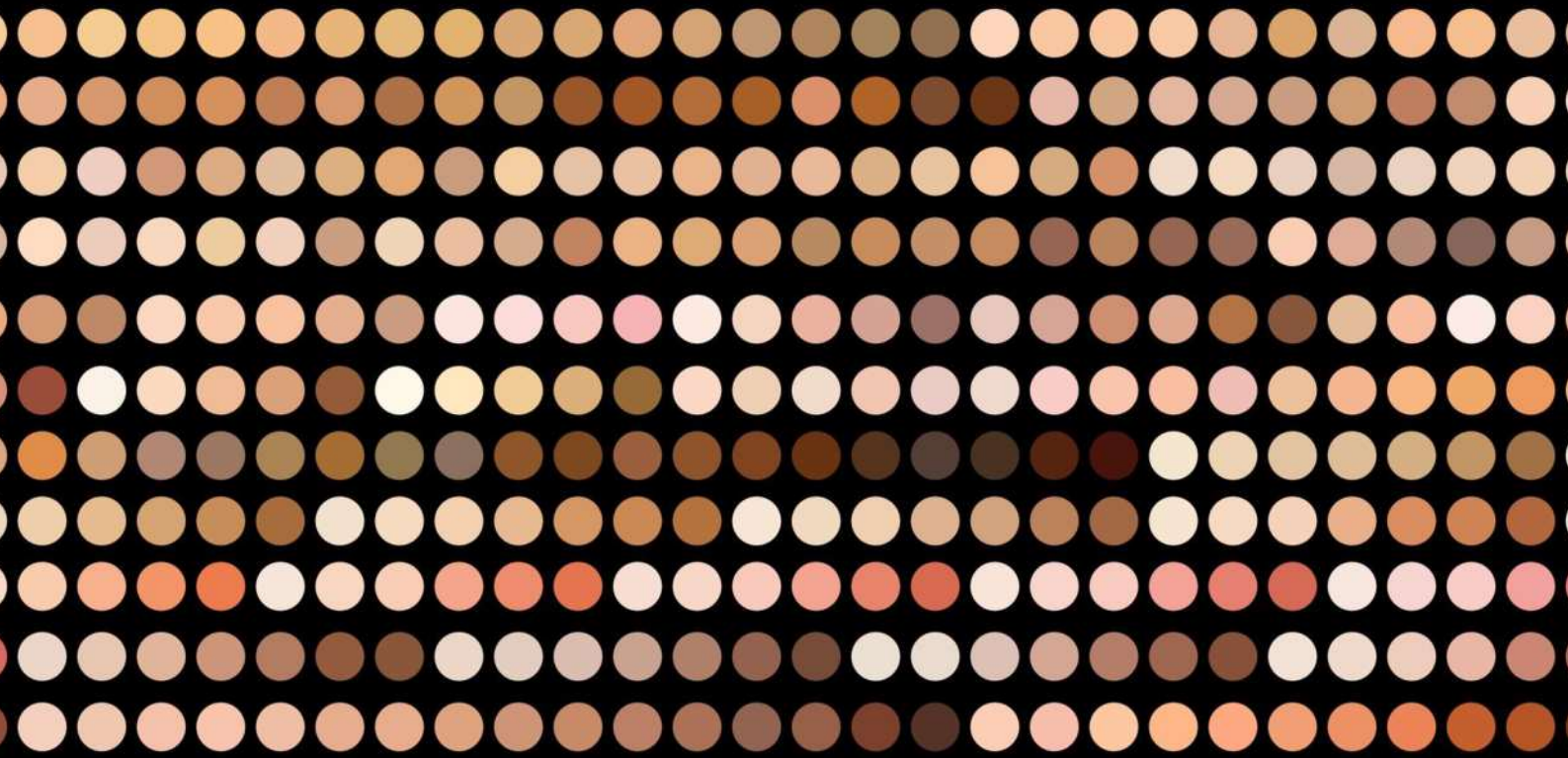
and bring social adaptability to changing contexts. But they also need citizens who express in their lives the ideals they want to see reflected by their governments. We cannot ask for justice if we commit injustice against others. We cannot call for the end of discrimination if we discriminate. We cannot demand respect if we do not respect others.

We must not remain silent, but neither should we become what we criticise. To take power, we must take responsibility. As better citizens we have the authority to demand more from our governments and the power to help shape our societies. We do not wait for elected representatives to act and sit back as governments fail, but actively participate in securing the transformation we want to see. People invented the systems and the rules that we live under, and people have the power to change them.

We Can Do Better Protest Sign Cardboard: Photo: Jason Hargrove, Flickr (CC BY 2.0)



“The perception is that the darker you are, the less sophisticated, the less educated, and the poorer you are. The darker you are, the worse you are treated.”



SHADES OF BLACK

By Ebru Deniz

A dark-skinned man stands at a car show near the latest Audi model he's thinking about buying. The car is cordoned off but he tells the steward who is guarding it that he wants a closer look. The steward says he can't let him in.

While this conversation is taking place, another man who has fairer skin has been allowed in and is sitting in the car, checking it out. The darker man questions the steward who comes up with excuses but still doesn't allow him to look at it. When the dark-skinned man tells him he has enough cash to buy the car there and then, the steward apologises and begs him to come in and have a look – but the man has had enough and Audi has lost a customer.

The dark-skinned man – my late father – is one of many who experience similar challenges in Turkey because of their skin colour. Turkey is a big country with over 80 million people, and although racially homogenous, people's skin colour changes from one end of the country to the other, as does the attitude towards each shade of skin colour.

The perception is that the darker you are, the less sophisticated, the less educated, and the poorer you are. The darker you are, the worse you are treated.

"I have seen many examples of this 'intra-race racism'"

In western Turkey, people with darker features are often regarded with suspicion. They are called Mardinli (meaning from the east, encapsulated in the single town of Mardin), Kürt (Kurdish) or Çingene (gypsy). Gypsies are feared by some because they are assumed to be thieves, Kurds because of the PKK terror group. These words are also used as a joke or an insult if someone behaves badly.

As a Turk from the southeast who has also lived in western Turkey, I have seen many examples of this 'intra-race racism' (sometimes known as colourism) towards Turks with darker skin. A large part of President Tayyip Erdogan's success has been based on his attempts to bring these 'easterners' into the fold, and to empower them at the expense of the western elites.

In Sudan, where I lived until recently, many people from the north feel superior to their darker-skinned counterparts in the south. They turn a blind eye to conflict and poverty in these areas, and they discriminate against them with regard to employment as well as politically and socially.

Fair-skinned friends in the capital Khartoum have told me that the darker you are, the less chance you have of securing a prized office job. Even if they secure good jobs, darker-skinned people may be harassed by family and friends for refusing to alter their natural features by using skin whitener. Their skin colour, it is thought, doesn't

match their status in the community and at work.

"What could have been done to avoid this and provide equal opportunity to all a country's citizens?

While many fair-skinned westerners lie under the sun or use creams to become darker, the opposite happens with those who naturally have darker skin. In many countries in Africa and Asia, those who have darker skin use skin-whitening creams, risking skin cancer, to improve their status.

Governments have fuelled this problem. West has separated itself from East in Turkey, North from South in Sudan. Their people have not been given equal educational and economic opportunities. Those who had these opportunities because they were born in the 'right' part of the country feel superior to the others and discriminate against those who didn't have the same luck.

What could have been done to avoid this and provide equal opportunity to all a country's citizens? Perhaps investing in the country as a whole rather than only in certain privileged parts while ignoring the rest of the country, and perhaps looking for inspiration from other countries where such segregation was avoided.

In Tanzania, where I lived for many years before I moved to Sudan, skin-whitening creams are also popular. But unlike in Turkey and Sudan, there is little intra-race racism there. The ethnic divisions that are so troublesome in neighbouring Kenya, Rwanda, and Burundi are generally absent, a fact Tanzanians discuss with great pride.

What did Tanzania get right that the others missed? The philosophy of the country's first post-independence president, Julius Nyerere, may hold the answer.

To avoid ethnic segregation, Nyerere made civil servants work in parts of the country away from their own ethnic group. Teachers were sent to schools in areas dominated by ethnicities other than their own. Making many secondary schools boarding schools ensured that children, too, would mix beyond their own tribes.

Although somewhat coercive, Nyerere's approach meant people from different backgrounds lived, studied, and worked together and came to see each other as equals. In today's Tanzania, people from more than 100 ethnic groups live together unusually peacefully.

"The philosophy of Julius Nyerere may hold the answer"

Nyerere's success in promoting ethnic equality could be replicated by countries like Sudan and Turkey. This could be done by:

- Opening schools and universities that offer the same quality education throughout the country. As well as improving the prospects of those in traditionally disadvantaged areas, this will encourage movement and cultural mixing between different cities and districts.
- Ensuring that the best teachers are posted not only to privileged areas but also to marginalised areas and

providing incentives to good teachers who are willing to work in the latter.

- Incentivising businesses to invest in different parts of the country – again, to provide jobs to local people at the same time as promoting cultural cohesion. Relocating public sector organisations to traditionally marginalised areas can perform a similar function, while also demonstrating the state's commitment to levelling up.

Tayyip Erdogan's promotion of people from eastern Turkey at the expense of westerners has created discrimination in the opposite direction and increased westerners' resentment of easterners. Julius Nyerere, on the other hand, saw Tanzanians as one people, regardless of ethnicity or skin colour. The divisions in Sudan and Turkey, where people nominally of the same race are racist against each other, highlight racism's absurdity. We need visionary leadership that tackles intra-race racism as well as the hatred that festers between races, so that we are no longer defined by the colour of our skin.

"White Bermudian offenders are given chances while black Bermudian offenders are given sentences. We have to fix this"

SEA OF CHANGE – A NEW WAVE OF ACTIVISM IN BERMUDA

By Jeff Baron

It's been two weeks since two young black women led the largest demonstration in Bermuda's 400 year history. Over 11% of the population marched on the streets of Hamilton, the island's capital. Chants of "Black Lives Matter" rocketed skyward – as if the message was meant for God himself and Bermudian ancestors who faced slavery and racial injustices.

There has never been a more visible display of social unity in Bermuda. The demands – the immutable demands – for social justice are clear. While Bermuda does not have the same racialised violence that has sparked widespread protest in the United States, even our idyllic island is not immune to the poison prejudice of racism. We have our own brand of racism – it just looks and feels different. It always has.

"We have our own brand of racism – it looks and feels different. It always has"

Before the sun set and the city streets were swept clean, dozens of young, progressive Bermudians began to unpack and share data on systemic racism. Another march was organised and social justice reform groups continued to make the case that Bermuda has a racism problem. The time is now to confront it, not conceal it. Thousands of comments, anecdotes, and accounts of mistreatment by police, corporations, and neighbours were shared. A wall of shame was being built, brick by brick, and now stands boldly facing white Bermuda's conscience. What echoed from this wall was a common theme: Black Bermudians have – for centuries – been disproportionately left behind by the Government and disproportionately targeted by the criminal justice system.

The public census report from 2016 makes this plain. Its dry, emotionless mathematics never evoked outcry – or even a captive audience when it was released. However, if we revisit this report and view the data through the lens of the Black Lives Matter movement, the systemic racism and inequity is plain to see.

Between the years of 2009 – 2011, approximately 30,725 instances of stop and frisks were performed by police officers in Bermuda. Nearly all were black Bermudian males. This means black males between the ages of 16 and 39 were stopped and frisked by police officers repeatedly – some reportedly dozens of times – in the name of law and public safety.

“Whites have never been the target audience for law enforcement in Bermuda”

This attention – the wrong type – ensnared hundreds of young black men and recycled them through the criminal justice system. Arrests for minor drug possession, apprehension warrants, and a miscellany of summary offences skyrocketed. In contrast, their same-age Caucasian peers, who also possess drugs, warrants, and commit crimes, were – as we now know – never stopped or frisked. They were allowed free passage to live their lives. Whites have never been the target audience for law enforcement in Bermuda.

Because of this racial profiling, many young black men are convicted of minor offences and are forever denied entry into the US, as their long-standing foreign policy allows a never-publicly-discussed ‘stop-list’ of banned travellers, most of them for minor drug possession and summary offences. Travelling beyond our 21 square miles may, very well, be the escape from the status quo that many of them need and that many white Bermudian families afford for their troubled young folk – who aren’t targeted and convicted – every day.

In 2018, there were a total of 192 inmates in Bermuda’s correctional facilities – 186 of them were black. 52% of Bermuda’s total population is black, yet 97% of its prison population is black. The average age of a person serving a life sentence was 38 years old. All of them male. All of them black. The attention from Bermuda’s criminal justice system towards the black community is grossly disproportionate. White Bermudian offenders are given chances while black Bermudian offenders are given sentences. The data is clear. We have to fix this.

“White Bermudian offenders are given chances while black Bermudian offenders are given sentences. We have to fix this”

Systemic inequality of this magnitude will require careful but sweeping reform and it warrants a bipartisan effort between Bermuda’s Government and the Opposition, along with various institutions in the private sector to address income inequality, affordable healthcare, employment opportunities – the list is long. But that’s not happening. In fact, we don’t even talk about that. Yet.

In 2016, a total of 1,843 people were unemployed in Bermuda. 70% of those people were black. Black Bermudians who are employed earn on average 25,000 dollars less than whites, despite making up over 51% of the total labour force. 92% of Bermuda’s homeless population was black. 5,341 people had no healthcare coverage. 77% of those people were black Bermudian.

The gaps are widening and there’s little room in the margins – they’re already full of black Bermudians chewed and spat out by a system that hasn’t worked for them. Since the end of slavery, the political and economic system has never sufficiently provided the means through which black Bermudians were seen as fully equal to whites. Even though the Emancipation Act in Bermuda took effect in 1834, the political climate, economic system, and social structure has never allowed for true equality between the races in Bermuda. Even primary schools on the island remained

segregated until 1971 – less than 50 years ago.

The seas of resistance to the status quo and pursuit of social justice ahead for this generation of leaders will be vast and rough. Providing the space and platforms for conversation isn't enough – it's too passive in a moment that calls for action. Instead, let us actively confront any barriers that may present obstacles in their way.

"We need to actively call out racism when we see it, teaching our children to recognise it and use their platform to advance racial equality"

Let us use our privilege, this moment to clear a path forward to justice. For white Bermuda this means actively calling out racism when we see it, teaching our children to recognise it and use their platform to advance racial equality. Use your business, education, and political experience to advise taskforces committed to tackling systemic racism. Teach your children comprehensive history – beyond the current textbooks – because black history is Bermudian history and it should not be reduced to the month of February. Support black Bermudian-owned businesses with as much fervour as you've supported white Bermudian-owned businesses.

Not all Bermudians are triggered into action by the murder of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, Black Lives Matter, or even the homecooked versions of racism served to folks here daily. Some outright deny the history and the harm. But their voices and words are the death-rattle of an ideology, one that rewarded white privilege and ignored historic harms.

However, if social media is a barometer for Bermuda's onshore tensions then we have room for hope. For four hours on a Sunday afternoon, Bermuda's turquoise sea was juxtaposed with a sea of fists raised in the air. Black fists, white fists, young and old fists. The salty air has been energised by generations, young and old, of Bermudians who are poised to lead us. Now is the moment to right the wrongs and the tides are changing.

"What has moved me the most was the reaction of the young people I work

Hope!

Ve Still have

ream!

WE STILL HAVE A DREAM

By Jenny Chigwende

The scenes over the last few weeks have often been intolerable. Of a man with a police officer's knee on his neck until he ends his life. Eight minutes and forty six seconds – an excruciatingly long time to watch another human being expire.

When I first watched the video, I did not immediately know what I was watching. As it began to dawn on me, I became angrier than I have been in a long time. It was a visceral anger about the injustice, the dehumanisation, the disrespect of the officer who committed the crime – seeming to not be breaking a sweat, hands casually in his pockets – but of the three other policemen watching the scene and not intervening.

I was not the only one. All around the world, people have marched and protested George Floyd's treatment as the Black Lives Matter movement has taken centre stage. On the one hand, we have seen aggressive police officers in America attacking and tear gassing their own people as they protest and a president who stokes the flames of their anger by his every action. On the other, we have witnessed peaceful protests where those marching have sung and danced together, and silently taken a knee for the time it took George Floyd to die.

Where I work as a psychologist for an NHS service for young people with emotional, behavioural, and mental health difficulties, the stories of past traumas from racist experiences came pouring out from both staff and young people. And as I heard their experiences, my initial anger turned into an overwhelming feeling of helplessness.

"As I heard their experiences, my initial anger turned into an overwhelming feeling of helplessness"

But this sense of heaviness also began to change, as I understood the opportunity for people to speak their truth. In my personal life, I have had conversations with family about issues of race and racism that only took place because of those brutal scenes. At work, colleagues and friends have talked in ways they never have before.

These have not always been comfortable conversations but they have been necessary ones. Navigating the complexity of explaining to friends and colleagues that, with their white privilege, they become allies to the Black Lives Matter movement. Stand against racism. Take these views to spaces where few black people are represented, such as the senior management of the NHS or the police.

"What has moved me the most was the reaction of the young people I work with"

Through this time, what has moved me the most was the reaction of the young people I know and work with. Many were going to protests for the first time and speaking their

truth for the first time. The rawness of the distress pierced me, but their earnest cry for change has heartened and sustained me.

Some of them created a video in which they talk about where they have come from. I am not able to share it due to our duty of confidentiality, but I want to describe the haunting impact it has had on me.

The tone was stark as they told of the brutality they had suffered at the hands of the police. How they had been full of hope as young children, believing that anything was possible. But how, as they had grown, they had watched opportunities shrink and their sense of what they could achieve grow smaller and smaller. And how, as they looked over at the wealth of the business district of Canary Wharf, this compounded their sense that no-one was willing to invest in their potential.

“Change does not happen overnight, but Dr King’s dream of equality can still be realised in the generations to come”

But then they drew and painted Black Lives Matter banners and spoke with such power about what the movement meant to them. And it was not just the voices of young black people, but of young people from all races and backgrounds. The outrage of some was rooted in a lifetime of experience and their knowledge of history. Others were learning for the first time about the legacies of slavery and its role in building the country in which we live.

All now know that the statues they walk past every day are visible links to a time when black people were enslaved. They also know that it is only in this moment – and because of their protest – that our society has finally confronted its complicated past and begun to remove the statues with the worst legacies.

We have witnessed a brutal moment, but I fear we will see more scenes of abuse. Change does not happen overnight, but Dr King’s dream of equality can still be realised in the generations to come. But for that to happen, all of us – old and young – must sustain our work against oppression long after this wave of protests is over and the attention of the media has moved on.


"The thing that has stayed with me most, is just how difficult this leadership moment is and that the leaders who are really thriving are those who are able to hold the complexity of the moment"
RACISM IS A PANDEMIC TOO

PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERSHIP: LESSONS FROM #BLACKLIVESMATTER

By Kathryn Perera and Zarah Mowhabuth

Two NHS leaders from different generations, and different points of the institutional hierarchy, reflect on the impact of the Black Lives Matter resurgence within the NHS and offer three reflections for public service leaders.

Find out more in this reflective video (7 minutes – full transcript below).

Zarah: Hello and welcome. My name is Zarah Mowhabuth, and this is my colleague Kathryn Perera.

Kathryn: Welcome and thank you for being with us. So, we're going to offer a short reflection each on what struck us over the past month in terms of the intersection of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter resurgence. And then we're going to offer three lessons for you to reflect on in your own leadership in public service. Let me just share how this conversation came

about. Following the murder of George Floyd, a group of more junior members in the hierarchy within the NHS and our team – NHS Horizons – came to me and gently but firmly encouraged me to take moral leadership in working with them to mount a response to what we were seeing in the world. And it was that that led me into conversations with Zarah to better understand from her position of leadership how I could think differently about the response to what's been happening in terms of Black Lives Matter and the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities. So my reflection, the thing that has stayed with me most, is just how difficult this leadership moment is and that the leaders who are really thriving are those who are able to hold the complexity of the moment and not be drawn into demands that they create binary choices In Bristol, in the west of England, where we've just seen the statue of a famous slave trader ripped off its plinth and dropped into the harbour, the Bristol mayor, Marvin Rees, was able to hold that space. He was able to say, "I do not condone public disorder" and "I cannot say I am sorry that that statue has gone". And despite repeated attempts for him to make a choice of one or the other, he denied that false dichotomy and found a space where he could speak to the multitudes of issues and feelings and historical contexts.

Zarah: And I think that really relates to the one thing I have held closest through this, and that is the importance of history.

Zarah: If we want to truly address and understand Black Lives Matter and other issues of racism, we really need to see where this all stemmed from. And this is all generational trauma. And this generational trauma is the thread that link the past to the present day.

Kathryn: Let's look at that through the lens of the NHS. There is growing anger about the disproportionate impact on Black and Minority Ethnic populations of this COVID-19 pandemic. Look at this research from Oxford that's emerging. Trisha Greenhalgh says that BAME communities are at markedly higher risk and the causes may be over representation of BAME populations in lower socio economic groups, or perhaps because more BAME people are employed in lower band, key worker roles, or perhaps because black and minority ethnic colleagues have comorbidities, such as diabetes. All of these factors may be true. Yet my question is, what are the causes of these causes? What Professor Michael Marmot calls the "social determinants of health". What are the structural inequalities that we put up with? We accept or we don't even notice, that lead to this disparity.

Kathryn: We're going to offer three lessons on which to reflect. Lesson one: **Morality and neutrality are not the same thing**. It took this thread from Prerana Issar, the NHS Chief People Officer, for me to better understand that. And what Prerana did in this thread was to decouple proper neutrality of a public service institution, and the thirst that people have now for moral leadership and to say there are moral issues which supersede the need to have due recourse to neutrality in public life. I learned that from my own team, from younger activists calling for a different quality of leadership around what is fundamentally a moral issue. So let's try not to conflate morality and neutrality as we develop our leadership through COVID-19 and beyond.

Zarah: Our second lesson is: **Don't bring a fact to a narrative fight**. And what we mean by that is experts and health professionals can arm themselves with white papers and peer reviewed studies. But if these are our only weapons, then there is only so much we can do. In this era where experts are increasingly distrusted, the "we know best" mindset is counterproductive. If we want to truly to catalyse progressive change, then we need to identify and amplify stories from lived experiences and real life and we can start that by just listening to the people around us in our communities. A great example of this is footballer Marcus Rashford. He wrote an open letter and shared his experiences of free food vouchers and because of this, there has been a government u-turn, and children all around the country can continue to enjoy free food vouchers during their six week summer holidays.

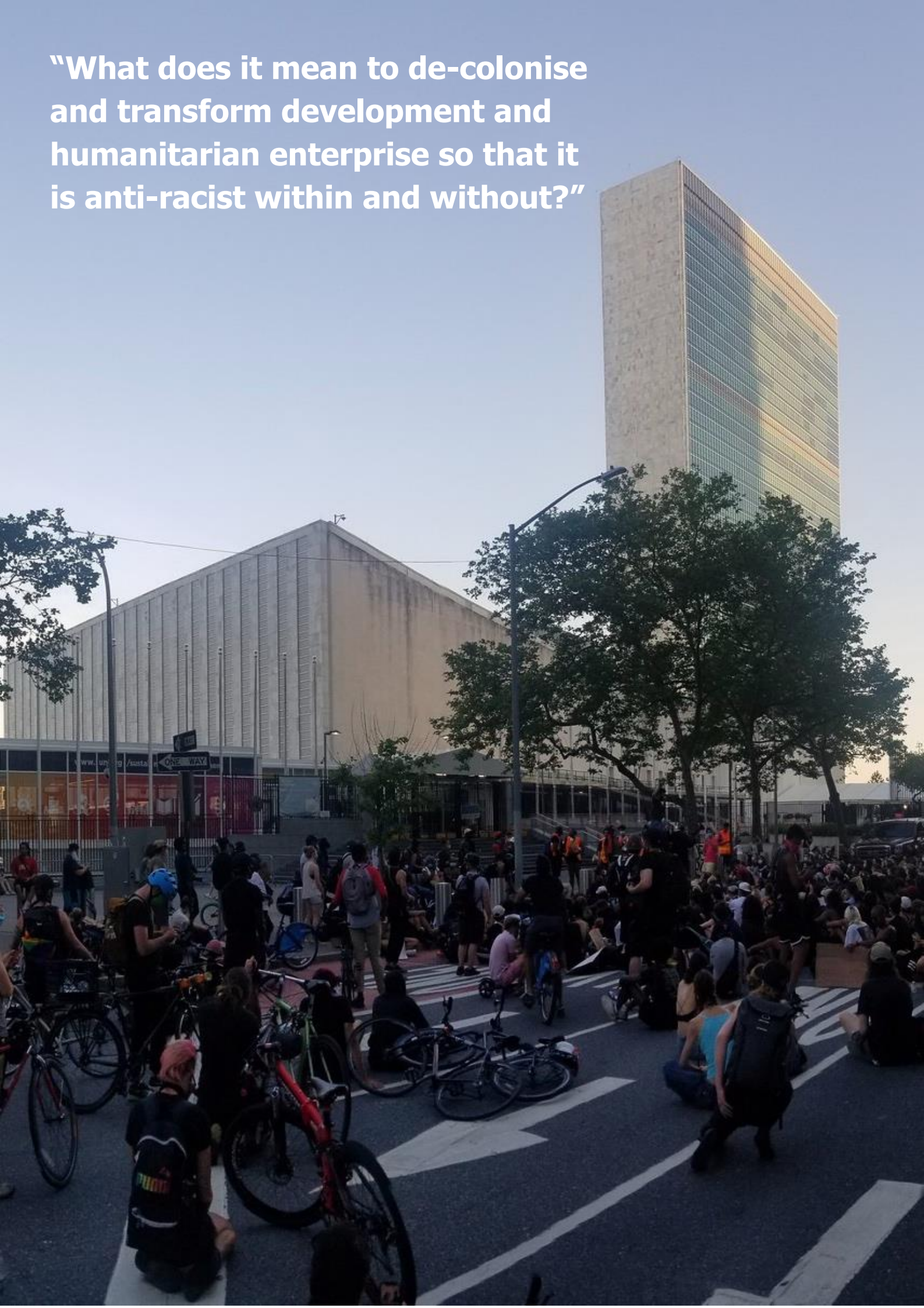
Kathryn: Our third lesson is this: **Create context, not content**. Gone are the days when a single woman or man stands and provides leadership and all the answers. New power, energy driven communities thrive when they are invited to participate and not simply to consume. Let me give a dark example of that – the anti vaccination movement was spawned out of Andrew Wakefield, a now discredited former clinician, creating a context around fear of vaccinations around which people could organise. And we've seen hundreds of Facebook groups, of Instagram groups now feeding into the anxiety around COVID-19 vaccinations and antibodies. And they thrive not because they're told what to do, but because a space which is self organising, is created around a set of values. I think we in public service institutions have a huge amount to learn from how the counter Black Lives Matter movement, from how the anti vaccination movement, from how dark web activists think about that context and the creation of power.

Zarah: We hope these reflections and these lessons can help you and your leadership as someone who works in the public service.

Suggested further reading:

- Professor Richard Bolden, The Fall of Edward Colston and the Rise of Inclusive Place-Based Leadership (2020)
- Kathryn Perera, Jeremy Heimans, Henry Timms, New power versus old: to beat antivaccination campaigners we need to learn from them (2019)
- How To Use Social Media To Be An Effective Ally

“What does it mean to de-colonise and transform development and humanitarian enterprise so that it is anti-racist within and without?”



A WORLD IN WHICH MANY WORLDS FIT

By Aarathi Krishnan and Rahul Chandran

"Many words are walked in the world. Many worlds are made. Many worlds make us. There are words and worlds that are lies and injustices. There are words and worlds that are truthful and true. In the world of the powerful there is only room for the big and their helpers. In the world we want, everybody fits. The world we want is a world in which many worlds fit."

Fourth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle

In our dreams for a post-COVID world, what should we demand of our international relations and international public good institutions? What does it mean to de-colonise and transform development and humanitarian enterprise so that it is anti-racist within and without?

These questions have come to a head in the last weeks, as a movement that began with murder most foul has begun an overdue reckoning with deep structural racism.

We want to offer some thoughts.

Before we get to those, however, a brief anecdote. This week, a small UN entity considered putting out a statement in support of Black Lives Matter. The statement was carefully crafted to express support for human rights – as is appropriate for UN staff, who should not take positions against member states.

But it hasn't happened. The staff were so worried about the potential impact that they voted it down. They feared alienating donors and losing the ability to do their genuinely valuable work. The problem is in part that the staff felt this way, in part with the leadership for not pushing and demonstrating their charter fundamentalism – that the core values of the UN Charter should trump other considerations. But most of all, it's that the staff were probably right.

"What does it mean to de-colonise and transform development and humanitarian enterprise so that it is anti-racist within and without?"

What we know is this – we are a billion dollar industry invested into protecting the status quo. It is widely acknowledged that humanitarian decisions, for example, are not made on the basis of need, but rather in a triage of donor desires, human needs, and bureaucracy. But when asked to correct itself – to revisit its core assumptions and ideals (as happened with proposals to re-open the core humanitarian framework (known as resolution 46/182) in 2012) – they were rejected by the architects of the current system. Why? Because "not all the states will agree, and we'll end up with less."

Yet if you look where we are today – with hospitals and civilians bombed with aplomb – it's not clear what the legitimacy of these ideals is, or how that matters in practice.

This inability of a system to accept its illegitimacy is why we are dealing with a deep crisis of legitimacy. International order is not an abstract good – it was imagined by a particular group of people with a particular power structure, who cemented the power-relations of 1945 into its architecture. That's a first principles problem.

But it also stems from the deep racism and classism that is fundamental to the institutions and their systems. To each specific institution, with its own quirks of exclusion (the French run peacekeeping; the Brits get OCHA and so forth). To their interactions, funding, and processes. To the decisions they make, and the vision of development, progress, and democracy they see in the world – refracted through a prism of a particular privilege and perspective. And from all of these emerges a complex, self-reinforcing culture, completely at odds with the mandates, missions, values, and professed principles.

Which gives us the worst possible outcome: at the moment of great change – a rare chance for a shift in power to be cemented, the patterns of exclusion are powerful. The institutional orthodoxy is radically exclusive. And therefore, the likelihood of positive change for the people who most need it is likely to be undermined by the self-appointed guardians of that dream.

"We take a charity lens to aid and development, rather than of justice and equity"

We have allowed shallow objectives of change, seen through narrow ideas of what this might look like, to permeate how we think of need, of resilience, of how people earn an income, of how people come together and care for each other, of binary concepts of gender and diversity, of tokenistic inclusion sentiments. We say 'leave no-one behind' as if it's an accidental and surprising after-effect of crisis and disasters, rather than a deep seated, historical unseating that has colonial roots. We take a charity lens to aid and development, rather than of justice and equity – and work to improve 'aid' rather than address global tax injustice.

And the reality within these institutions is part of what has forced us to ask ourselves: have we done enough to fight the orthodoxy, hew to the deeper values of the Charter, and the Universal Declaration and confront these power imbalances? Or have we merely reinforced injustice by design, forcing minoritied groups to become 'model minorities' in order to get access, fit in, not make anyone uncomfortable? Did we lose our way and stop speaking to truth and power?

What we have done is we've self censored, like our friends in the anecdote above. This piece is, in part, the beginning of our atonement.

The strategic change work we see, particularly responding to COVID-19, fundamentally excludes minoritied groups and their lenses, is trivial on gender and disability, diminishes mental health and the role of communities, and in doing so, reifies the power of the powerful elite and their corporate interests.

Black lives matter BLM UNITED NATIONS: Photo: Jon Mannion, Flickr (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0).

"We want new values and new approaches, to challenge the how, the why, and the basic architecture of our work"

This cannot continue. We're not going to delve into the technicalities and politics of reform; we've done so elsewhere. Rather, we want new values and new approaches, to challenge the how, the why, and the basic architecture of our work. Here are 5 simple ideas:

1. Acknowledge our flawed history. We have to own present and historical flaws in our processes, systems, institutions, and their visions, in order to preserve what may be valuable in their ideals. The UN Charter and the Universal Declaration may be fabulous documents that could help all people. The institutions and structures that are their guardians are not. Let's call that out.

We draw an analogue here to what we see in the US. The mythology of the perfection of the constitution has prevented serious analysis of how and why it fails to protect its people. The same is true for monarchies…why do they still exist in the 21st century? For so many of our institutions, people prefer the romantic myths sanitised of the slavery that built them and the inequity they represent and propagate. We must face the truth and set aside these myths if we are to build a world in which everybody fits.

2. We need to build on a deeper, more intimate politics. We embrace Marie Berry and Milli Lake's call for a politics grounded in intimacy, trust, collection, and care – a politics of love. It's not just rhetoric. Re-imagining institutions so that they deliver care and love – how might that play out in prisons, or policing? How might that play out in development and humanitarian aid? Is a New York and Geneva-centred aid architecture a practice of cross community solidarity? Or of the preservation of power?

3. At the same time, **we need to embrace anger and grief.** We cannot continue to demand that policy and politics be 'civil', because, as we've seen, civility doesn't keep black and minoritied people alive. It doesn't dismantle power. By insisting on calm proposals, we translate that anger into pablum, into mediocrity, that intrinsically racist systems swallow, and excrete, neither changing because of it, nor being changed by it. Anger is also a face of love – self-love of the oppressed.

4. We must move beyond binary 'gender and diversity'. Intersectional equity and justice is a fundamental truth. Our task is to address inequity and inequality. The counterweight to that is radical inclusion. It will go slower. It will not work in convenient logframes. It will respect the wishes of the people who lead. That's how we begin – with the ethic of equity, inclusion, and justice as the core design principle, not the post-facto reporting.

5. Last, but not least, **it is time for people who have benefited from colonial power and privilege, from extraction and looting, to step aside**. Not just to share the money a little bit – but to decline what is offered and insist it is passed to BIPOC and minority-led groups and allow them to build without gatekeeping.

This will not look like the world that the people in power imagine. That's the point.

"In too many countries, justice systems serve the needs of the few, not the many"

JUSTICE IN A GLOBAL EMERGENCY

by Diego García-Sayán, Allyson Maynard-Gibson QC, and Willy Mutunga

A cry for justice is echoing around the world. In the US, millions of people are marching to demand changes to the failures of the American justice system after the murder of George Floyd, with the Black Lives Matter protests spreading rapidly to other countries. In Mali, crowds gathered to demand change to a justice system that is considered corrupt. The cry for an independent judiciary was loud on the streets of Beirut last weekend.

If any President or Prime Minister, parliamentarian or senior public servant, judge or police chief is surprised about this growing wave of protest, they are wilfully naive. After all, we have been here before. The spark that lit the Arab Spring was the death of the Tunisian fruit vendor named Mohamed Bouazizi. He set himself alight outside a government building after repeated harassment by the police who used his lack of a licence to assault him, steal his produce, and demand bribes. Ten years apart, George Floyd and Mohamed Bouazizi had their lives stolen from them, as a minor justice problem became the trigger for an uprising.

In too many countries, justice systems serve the needs of the few, not the many. Governments try to deliver universal health and education, but too few are committed to providing justice for all. At any one time, 1.5 billion people have criminal, civil, and administrative justice problems they cannot solve. They are victims of crime, face eviction or have fallen into debt, are in a dispute with an employer or neighbour, or are struggling to access the public services that should be available to them. This injustice wrecks lives as much as a denial of healthcare or schooling, and it hits hardest groups who are most discriminated against by their societies.

“In too many countries, justice systems serve the needs of the few, not the many”

Despite the scale of unmet need, justice systems remain resistant to change. Most lack systematic ways to monitor the legal needs of their citizens and to track what is and is not working. They fail to use the latest scientific knowledge and are largely offline and paper-based. And, far from serving the public, many frontline justice institutions are exploitative, corrupt, or violent. Courts often protect the interests of the privileged and many communities fear the police. For too long, we have allowed our systems of justice to escalate disputes, exacerbate conflict, entrench discrimination, and fuel grievances among those who

already have the least reason to trust the society they live in.

The COVID-19 crisis has brought the justice gap into sharp focus. Governments have imposed harsh restrictions on freedom of movement and association, and these have often been enforced inequitably. We have seen a surge in domestic violence and family disputes, gangs strengthening their hold on neighbourhoods where the state's authority is weak, and criminals probing for opportunities to siphon off money that is supposed to be used for humanitarian needs and for recovery.

But the demand for justice will continue to grow. The World Bank expects the global economy to shrink by at least 5% this year, as a wave of job losses, bankruptcies, and evictions builds. In the coming months, tens or hundreds of millions of landlords and tenants, creditors and debtors, employers and employees, businesses and consumers will need help in resolving disputes. Divorces and other family disputes will also spike upwards. As a result, the number of people with unmet legal needs seems certain to grow beyond 1.5 billion.

This will happen at a time when COVID-19 is undermining the capacity of justice systems to deliver. Frontline justice workers are falling ill in increasing numbers. Many government buildings have been shut and no-one can access the paper files that most justice systems still depend on. A recent survey of justice leaders by HiiL, a Dutch social enterprise dedicated to user-friendly justice, demonstrates widespread alarm at how overloaded systems are, with lockdowns leading a large backlog in cases as institutions were shut down.

But for better or worse, the justice sector will remain on the frontline of this pandemic. If justice systems fail to deliver, it will be hard or impossible to control the pandemic, while the economic recovery will be stymied. The wave of protest is also likely to grow, as trust between citizen and state is destroyed.

"The justice sector will remain on the frontline of this pandemic"

But there is a better way. As justice leaders, we are part of a movement that starts with people and their need for justice, finds innovative and lower cost ways to prevent or solve these problems, and uses justice systems to provide a platform for people to participate fully in their communities, economies, and societies. These people-centred approaches address inequalities rather than exacerbate them. They support communities rather than abuse them. And they create opportunities for renewal rather than blocking the long road to recovery.

So, what are our recommended next steps?

First, we urge ministers who are responsible for justice in every country to stand together at this time of crisis, just as health ministers are doing as they scale up testing, improve treatments, and search for vaccine. It would send a strong message if ministers made a joint commitment to tracking people's justice needs, understanding their experience of injustice at the hands of state institutions, and implementing ambitious plans to fill the justice gap.

Second, justice ministers must make the case for investing in people-centred justice to their Presidents or Prime Ministers, given the massive risks that societies face if the thirst for justice continues to be denied. Resources must be redirected from approaches that are ineffective or that are exacerbating injustice. Partnerships with the private sector and with other sectors are essential. But new finance to fill the justice gap should be included in all stimulus and bailout packages.

Third, the justice ministers must innovate. Proven approaches to prevent violence and crime should be implemented, drawing on models that have been tested around the world. The law should be used as a tool to reduce the burden of injustice in areas such as housing, debt, and employment, and also within justice systems where far too many people languish in prison systems. Justice should be taken online wherever possible, with ministers leading a mission to de-escalate disputes rather than entangling people in expensive court proceedings.

We have seen the transformative power of people-centred justice, in Kenya, Peru, and The Bahamas – how it can provide a new hope and a new direction for a society. We also know from experience how difficult and often lonely reform can be. That is why the justice leaders need to come together in a global movement to get the job done.

Protesters facing the police outside St. Paul City Hall: Photo: Fibonaaci Blue, Flickr (CC BY 2.0)


"This moment is a fitting one to capture our shared commitment to finally eradicating police brutality everywhere"
Freddie Gray & Sam Dubose
Philando Castile & Alton Sterling
Terence Crutcher & Jamar Clark
Jeremy McDole & Walter Scott
William Chapman II
END POLICE BRUTALITY

CRAFTING A LASTING, GLOBAL LEGACY FOR GEORGE FLOYD

By Nangamso Kwinana and Kabelo Kgobisa

Human history is steeped in violence, war, and oppression. In the past, this manifested itself in wars of conquest, slavery, and colonialism. Today, oppression frequently wears the cloak of state power and takes the form of mass incarceration and police brutality. Our focus here is on the latter. This moment is a fitting one to consolidate a body of work by activists, academics, and other civil society organisations into an international instrument capturing our shared commitment to finally eradicating police brutality everywhere.

On 25 May 2020 in Minneapolis, Officer Derek Chauvin, during an arrest, knelt on the neck of George Floyd, for nearly nine minutes. George Floyd was handcuffed and lying on the ground. He posed no threat to Derek Chauvin; he was neither resisting arrest nor fleeing. After crying out repeatedly, saying he could not breathe, George Floyd died calling out to his deceased mother.

The gut-wrenching video of George Floyd's murder sparked protests in cities across the United States that soon went global.

"This moment is a fitting one… to capture our shared commitment to finally eradicating police brutality everywhere"

In many parts of the world, protestors have seized on the moment to reflect not only on the death of George Floyd, but also on the state of justice, equality, and freedom in their own countries and cities. Protestors worldwide have been able to link the international moment to their local struggles; to use international solidarity to fuel local change; and to analyse the complexities of the issues at hand, identifying the inadequacies of policies governing law enforcement officials in their own contexts. At least eight African countries have seen protests, including here in South Africa.

The response of Africa's leaders to protestors in their own countries crying out for justice has been to keep their eyes abroad, zooming into police brutality on people of African descent. Burkina Faso, on behalf of 54 African countries, requested an urgent debate in the United Nations Human Rights Council on "racially inspired human rights violations, police brutality against people of African descent and the violence against the peaceful protests that call for these injustices to stop". The debate was scheduled for Wednesday, 17 June 2020. It

has also been reported that the African Union has drafted a resolution in the same vein.

"Police brutality is not confined to the United States"

The question we should ask on the back of these developments is whether resolutions and debates are an adequate and constructive response to the global outcry. George Floyd's death is widely understood to flow from the systemic racism endemic to American policing. But police brutality is not confined to the United States, and black people are not only victimised by American or white police officers. In South Africa, where we live, police brutality similarly affects the black poor disproportionately. Our President, Cyril Ramaphosa, is the African Union Chairperson for 2020. How will the indictment of the United States by the United Nations make African people safer here and around the world?

Racism must be eradicated. We must do the work now to make sure that future generations only ever learn about racism in textbooks as a barbaric historical notion long repudiated by all people everywhere. But the work of eradicating racism is a battle fought in the hearts and minds of people who resist reason, and resist change to status quo power structures. These are people who are unwilling to imagine an egalitarian society, and unable to hear us or acknowledge our equal existence. The dignity and the safety of citizens should not depend on the disposition of anyone's heart and mind.

World leaders must rethink the framework within which law enforcement operates in their respective countries. They must embed safeguards into institutional frameworks to prevent the abuse of power and the unjustifiable killing of civilians by law enforcement officials.

"The dignity and the safety of citizens should not depend on the disposition of anyone's heart and mind"

More than expensive international inquiries and debates, we need to advocate for the creation of a binding treaty that requires signatories to: (1) implement legal policy measures at the national level to prevent police brutality and violent enforcement of democratic laws, and (2) to ensure accountability where prevention fails. These measures must be designed to ensure that the safety of civilians is not dependent on the mood of malevolent, benighted officers.

Much of the work has already been done. Activists and organisations worldwide have invested great effort and resources into researching the mechanisms that are most effective for combatting police brutality and violent enforcement of the law. The time and resources of the African Union would be better spent consolidating this body of work into a binding standard against which all states should be monitored and evaluated.

The aim of any treaty on policing ought not to be prescribing how policing is done. Sovereign states have the right and the power to adopt policing models that are suited to the context within which they are to operate. The objective should be to set forth the critical features which must be present to ensure that whichever model is implemented, it prioritises lives and human

rights, maximising justice and freedom for all civilians.

"Pointing fingers is easy and talk is cheap…we need a binding treaty"

Amongst the areas in which minimum standards must be set are:

1. The models of policing adopted
2. Accountability and oversight mechanisms
3. Ethics in policing
4. Good practice in policing
5. Standards of training
6. Sanctions against unlawful police activity

This approach of consolidating concrete policy proposals into a legally binding instrument has, as its greatest merit, the focus on problem solving. Pointing fingers is easy and talk is cheap. Solidarity is needed, but it is a means to an end. It is only useful insofar as it builds momentum towards action and change.

What Africans need from Africa's Heads of State, more than solidarity, is leadership and action. The resources of the African Union are best aimed at a concrete goal such as the creation of an internationally accepted standard of policing that prioritises the lives, the well-being and the rights of citizens above the prerogatives of the police. This approach is closer to 'government for the people' rather than the prevailing norm of 'power over the people'.

If the death of George Floyd is to be a watershed moment, let it mark a shift from police brutality to accountable policing. If, in the aftermath to George Floyd's tragedy, the murder of a civilian by an on-duty policeman constituted a priority crime, taken as seriously as the murder of police officers, we would move closer to a free society. When the murder of a civilian by agents of the state is seen as crime exceeding that of a civilian against the state, then we will have a human rights-centred approach to policing. Because the chief aim of the state is the freedom and security of mankind, not the other way around.

End Police Brutality Photo: Taymaz Valley, Flickr (CC BY 2.0)

“As women of colour, we have seen racism manifest itself in our personal and professional lives. Our international schools did little to directly address cultural or racial prejudice in classrooms or dismantle structural racism in their institutions”

REALISING THE TRUE POTENTIAL OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

By Alana Hairston, Desta Haile, Karishma Chugani and Stephanie Roe

We are a group of women who met in high school in the late 90s, at ACS International School in Cobham, just outside of London, UK. Between the four of us, we have lived in 38 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and South America and attended 14 international schools. We currently work in education, science, and culture in Lagos, London, New York City, and Washington D.C.

The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmed Aubrey in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic have sparked global outrage, putting a spotlight on the systemic racism that continues to persist, not just in the United States but all around the world.

Fifty-four African countries are calling for an urgent United Nations Human Rights Council meeting to look into police brutality and violence against peaceful protests in the US. Protesters around the world are voicing their anger at the systemic racism and police brutality within their own countries. Statues of colonisers, slave traders, and Confederate soldiers have been torn down in Western cities from Antwerp to Bristol to Richmond, following the lead that countries in the Global South, like South Africa, Mexico, and South Korea have taken in the last decades. The world is waking and finally saying ENOUGH is ENOUGH.

“As women of colour, we have seen racism manifest itself in our personal and professional lives”

As women of colour, we have seen racism manifest itself in our personal and professional lives. As products of international schools, we have also benefited from the tremendous privilege of being educated in world-class institutions and being exposed to many cultures, religions, and ethnicities from an early age. International schools advocate a multicultural education that uphold values of tolerance, understanding, compassion, and

respect. International school mission statements focus on developing global citizens who embrace diversity.

For many former students, their memories of international schools are filled with images of racial harmony; celebrations of international holidays, eating foods from all around the world, and travelling to other countries for sports or volunteer service. All four of us have very fond memories of our time and cultural exchanges with our friends at international schools. However, in our experience, our international schools did little to directly address cultural or racial prejudice in classrooms or dismantle structural racism in their institutions.

Some of our anecdotal experiences include blatant individual racism. Being told by a music teacher in Belgium that black people can't learn classical music. Being asked to educate and empathise with a colleague who was openly racist in the UK. Other, more pervasive examples at the institutional level stem from the global legacy of colonialism, where we were often taught history, arts, and perspectives through colonial lenses, and where the leaders and administrators were predominantly male and white, even in schools in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

While there are many examples of the good work and progress that have been made by international schools to address racism (often student or teacher-led), there are many others that continue to shelter an environment of racial inequity. The protests around the world provide a moment of reckoning and a teachable moment.

"It is time that ALL international schools be proactive global leaders and incorporate and promote anti-racism into their education and institutions"

There are more than 11,000 international schools with over 5.6 million students. It is time that ALL international schools be proactive global leaders and incorporate and promote anti-racism into their education and institutions. Anti-racism is not just a statement or sentiment, it is the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organisational structures, policies and practices and attitudes. International schools need to challenge systemic racism and colonial mentalities at all levels. Their mission statements must match their hiring policies, leadership teams, curriculum, and environment.

As women who have international school education, have worked in international schools, and have children who attend international schools, we ask for them to do better. We ask that the systems that govern international schools do better.

We are not alone. Students, alumni, teachers, and administrators around the world are leading the way, providing commentary (on the role of international schools on anti-racism, the black experience and ways forward in international schools, and hiring practices), developing strategies (anti-racist approach in international education, international school accreditation standards), and adopting plans (commitment from ISS) on how international schools can incorporate anti-

racism and create the global education our children deserve. It is our love for the ideals of international schools, our belief in the power of education, and our commitment to creating the world we want to see that has inspired us to call for action.

"We ask that the *systems* that govern international schools do better"

We have created a petition that asks for support from international school students, parents, alumni, teachers, staff, and administration, and identifies four actions on anti-racism (listed below), that we suggest be taken by international schools and the bodies that govern them.

The listed actions build on and were inspired by the work of others in the international school and education community, but they are not exhaustive. We invite people to share their ideas, resources, workshops, plans, and progress related to anti-racism at their school on social media using the hashtag **#intschoolantiracism.** We want to encourage others to push for progress, track progress, and hold schools and decision making bodies accountable.

International schools need to acknowledge and address racism in all its forms if they are serious about creating conscious and caring global citizens. And there is no time like the present. We hope you will join us in creating the world we all deserve.

Action towards anti-racism at international schools:

1. Make a statement on anti-racism and outline a plan.

Many international schools and accreditation bodies are already issuing statements that acknowledge and condemn systemic racism. We laud this effort, however, they should go a step further and stand with their student and teacher activists, affirm Black Lives Matter, and specify a plan on how their institutions will take action to develop anti-racist policies, structures, and systems within their specific context. Before finalising a plan, schools and institutions should consult with students, teachers, and other staff to identify the shortcomings of the school or institution and better understand how to make progress with specific actions. The international school associations that set standards, provide accreditation, and training for international schools should also revise their accreditation standards (see suggestions from this petition), require their member schools to develop an anti-racism plan, and ensure administration and teacher training adequately address anti-racism. Schools and associations should track their progress and provide a transparent assessment to the international school community.

2. Critically address HR: hiring, retention, promotion, and leadership at all levels.

A high level of diversity is represented in the student bodies at international schools, but often, the same level of diversity is not reflected in the staff, administration, and in international school associations. Welcoming and retaining diverse teachers and leaders will increase the effectiveness of addressing structural racism and (neo) colonialism. Some ways to foster workplace diversity include: a) assessing written policies, procedures, selection and promotion criteria to identify bias, and make changes (like

nationality restrictions and definitions of native english language proficiency); b) ensuring parity of remuneration across nationalities, ethnicities and gender; c) implementing retention measures and incentives that keep non-white faculty within the international school system.

3. Rethink what you teach, and how you teach it.

Students, teachers, and leadership teams must work together to create anti-racist and decolonised education models, approaches and curricula. For example, curricula could incorporate discussions on anti-racism within each country's context, global anti-blackness and colourism, the Black Lives Matter movement, and social justice. Furthermore, international schools should take the lead in decolonising pedagogy and curricula by asking critical questions and using educational materials and resources with a variety of cultural and historical perspectives.

4. Ensure accountability and establish a zero-tolerance policy for racism.

Make clear that racial discrimination and harassment, including on social media, will not be tolerated and can be grounds for termination or expulsion. Put in place accountability mechanisms that have clear consequences for racist acts and create an enabling environment for sustainable conflict resolution. For this to be successful, international schools should provide an avenue for providing feedback, asking questions, and reporting racist incidents.

National School Walkout Photo: Phil Roeder, Flickr (CC BY 2.0)

AUTHORS

Nihal Arthanayake

Nihal Arthanayake is a broadcaster and TV presenter. Over twenty years, he has become one of the best-known voices on the BBC, featuring on Radio 1 and the BBC Asian Network before moving to BBC Radio 5 Live where he presents a daily daytime show and the Headliners podcast. He was winner of "Interview of the Year" at the 2019 BBC Radio & Music Awards. He regularly appears on television and has made several documentaries for the BBC.

Jeff Baron

Jeffrey Baron is Former Minster of National Security in Bermuda, former Senator and former Member of Parliament in Bermuda's legislature. He is a Mason Fellow at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Rahul Chandran

Rahul Chandran is a Managing Director at CARE. Before this, he was the Executive Director of the Global Alliance for Humanitarian Innovation, and has previously worked at the intersection of peacekeeping, humanitarian, and development efforts across the globe as well as systems reform and strategic planning efforts at the United Nations. Prior to this, he was the Deputy Director of the Center on International Cooperation, the Director of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Programme, and an advisor to the United Nations Foundation, the OECD, the Clinton Global Initiative and numerous other institutions. He has previously worked in civil rights, in documentary film, and on a number of start-ups. He writes here in his personal capacity.

Jenny Chigwende

Jenny Chigwende is a Counselling Psychologist and Winston Churchill Fellow who works in a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in London. Her main interests are in working with children and young people in the care system and culturally appropriate therapy. Her research has been looking into the experience of Black African and Black Caribbean People's experience of Primary Care Mental Health Services. She is also the health lead for W12 Together, the White City and Wormholt Big Local where they are working together with local residents and local health professionals to offer culturally informed and culturally appropriate healthcare, that also includes third sector providers as well as the NHS.

Karishma Chugani

Karishma Chugani is the Director of Alumni Relations and Communications at the American International school of Lagos, Nigeria since February 2016, where she started the alumni relations department and has since then, grown the community to over 2,000 active members on online platforms, has developed programming for alumni to return and lead mentorship sessions with the existing students through career-style events and athletics, and connected with alumni worldwide through in-person reunions. Karishma has most recently spearheaded the brand redesign and communications strategy for the school and is currently working on building a strategic plan for advancement and fundraising in line with the school's mission. She attended American International School of Lagos, Nigeria (1992-1996), American Embassy School, New Delhi, India (1996-1997), and ACS International School, UK (1997-1999). She graduated with an Honors Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, Sociology, and a Minor in Psychology from the University of Toronto, in Canada.

Ebru Deniz

Ebru Deniz works in education and professional development

Diego García-Sayán

Diego García-Sayán, UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, Former Minister of Justice of Peru and former President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

Desta Haile

Bangkok-born British-Eritrean, Desta is a vocalist, educator, and Creative Director of Languages through Music. As International Intern at the Theatre of the Oppressed in Rio de Janeiro and facilitator with the International School Theatre Association since 2005, she has contributed to many performing arts festivals worldwide. As a singer and songwriter, Desta has toured extensively, working with artists such as Joe Bataan, Baloji, Zap Mama, and opening for Sara Tavares at London's Jazz Cafe last year. She attended ICSA Abidjan from 1992-1994, ACS Amman from 1994-1998, ACS International School Cobham, UK from 1998-1999, and the International School of Brussels from 1999-2002.

Alana Hairston

Alana is Grenadian-American and was raised in Ethiopia, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Eswatini. Alana is The Africa Center's Director of Programs, where she develops public programmes aligned with the Center's mission of transforming narratives about the African continent and people of African descent. Prior to that, she worked as a Senior Program Advisor with Keep a Child Alive, an operating foundation co-founded by Alicia Keys. Alana has studied and worked in France, South Africa, the UK, Guinea, Mozambique, and Lesotho. She attended ICS in Addis Ababa from 1986-1987; UNIS in NYC from 1987-1988; BMIS in Lilongwe from 1988-1992; Waterford Kamhlaba - UWCSA in Mbabane, from 1994-1997; TASIS Switzerland in 1998; and ACS International School Cobham from 1998-1999.

Maria Dolores Hernández Montoya

Dolores Hernández is head of the International Relations Department at the Mayor's Office of Guadalajara in Mexico. She is also founding partner of Uno Integra Consultores a consultancy firm specialized in internationalization processes and strategic projects management. She has experience in topics such as governance and development, safer cities, creative economy, mobility and climate change.

Kabelo Kgobisa

Communications Consultant based in Cape Town, South Africa. She has a background in Human Rights Law, and has previously worked as a researcher in the Parliament of South Africa.

Aarathi Krishnan

Aarathi Krishnan specialises in humanitarian futures and strategic foresight. She has worked in humanitarian and development aid globally for over 15 years and now focuses her work on reimagining futures for the humanitarian system and social change. A 2020-21 Technology and Human Rights Fellow at the Harvard Carr Centre for Technology and Human Rights, she also works on research initiatives with a range of partners, including the World Economic Forum, on inclusive technologies, AI and Civil Society Futures. She is specifically interested in issues of planetary health, inclusive and equitable technology futures, new forms of growth and power, with a lens on decolonised and feminist futures. She writes and speaks publicly and can be found on Twitter at @akrishnan23

Nangamso Kwinana

Justice and Freedom activist based in South Africa. She has a background in national and international political strategy.

Kayla Lewis-Hue

Kayla Lewis- Hue is a native New Yorker and current resident of Brooklyn.

Rachel Locke

Rachel Locke joined the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice as Director of Impact:Peace in July 2019. Rachel has extensive experience delivering evidence-based violence prevention solutions to some of the most difficult international contexts while simultaneously advancing policy for peace. Prior to joining IPJ, Rachel was Head of Research for violence prevention with the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies at New York University's Center on International Cooperation. In this capacity, Rachel led coalition building and evidence curation with the UN, bilateral governments, the African Union, civil society and others to explore the challenge of delivering the 2030 Agenda targets for peaceful societies (SDG 16.1).

Allyson Maynard-Gibson

Allyson Maynard-Gibson QC, Barrister, former Attorney-General and Minister for Legal Affairs of The Bahamas.

Zarah Mowhabuth

Zarah Mowhabuth is a Programme Officer at NHS Horizons. She recently completed her Masters degree at the University of Warwick in History (Global and Comparative). Determined to understand more about her own background, Zarah focused her work on identity politics and challenging the marginalisation of the black community within her own Mauritian heritage. She is now drawing the bridges between her academic background and job role with the intent to address these issues for the BAME community within the NHS.

Willy Mtunga

Willy Mutunga, Former Chief Justice & President Supreme Court, Republic of Kenya. Now building the Office of the Former Chief Justice (OFCJ) as a public office as decreed by the Kenyan Parliament.

Jessica Murrey

Jessica Murrey is a social change communication expert with Search for Common Ground. She's the Co-founder/CEO of W!CKED SAiNTS Studios. Currently living in Southern Oregon with her husband, two kids, and oversized dog.

Kathryn Perera

Kathryn Perera is the Director of NHS Horizons, a national unit within the health service which uses social movement approaches to accelerate the pace of change. NHS Horizons is now 100% re-purposed towards the national COVID-19 response effort. A Community Organiser and political activist by background, Kathryn writes regularly on how "new power" approaches to change will shape the future of public services. Both as an "institutional leader" and as a mum of two children whose heritage is mixed Asian/Irish, she's learning a great deal from the resurgence of #BlackLivesMatter and its impact in the UK.

Stephanie Roe

Stephanie Roe is an environmental scientist working on land-based climate mitigation as a Senior Consultant at Climate Focus and PhD researcher at the University of Virginia. She is also a Lead Author on the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6). Previously, Stephanie worked with the United Nations in Indonesia, negotiated international climate policy with the Philippine Delegation to the UNFCCC, and advised various governments and companies on land-use and climate policy. Stephanie holds a Bachelor of Arts from San Diego State University and a Master's of Environmental Science from Duke University. Originally from the Philippines, Stephanie has worked and lived in Germany, the UK, US, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Austria, and Puerto Rico. She attended Brent International School Baguio, Philippines from 1996-1998 and ACS International School Cobham, UK from 1998 to 2001.

Neda Shaheen

Neda Shaheen is an attorney and human rights advocate in Washington, D.C. She is the Fellow at Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security & Conflict Transformation, and co-chairs the Young Ambassadors Program as well as the Middle East and North Africa Working Group. She manages WCAPS programs and projects, and leads WCAPS legislative strategy. Neda moved to the District for a Fellowship at the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, where her work focused on immigration and security, including discrimination, government surveillance, right of entry and privacy. Neda was very active in Cheriff Bassiouni's International Human Rights Law Institute, where she conducted field research on the rule of law in Senegal and Kenya. After earning her J.D. and a Certificate in International & Comparative Law, Neda served at the United Nations Security Council. Neda teaches an International Humanitarian Law seminar for the American Red Cross.

Nikita Shukla

Nikita Shukla is currently an analytics associate at a global health organization, supporting various stakeholders in health systems strengthening work. She is also an active member of the WCAPS Young Ambassadors Program. Outside of work, Nikita served as the 2020 Sherpa to the G7 Youth Summit on the COVID-19 response. Nikita is currently a Global Shaper through the World Economic Forum, where she is heavily engaged in local gubernatorial advocacy. She was recently elected to serve on the Public Leaders for Inclusion Council (PLC) by America Indivisible. This past March, she completed a fellowship through the United Nations SDSN Global Schools Program as a Global Schools Advocate. Prior to her current work, Nikita was the 2019 USA Head Delegate to the G7 Youth Summit (Y7) in Paris. Nikita received the highest civilian honor from the New Jersey Senate for her advocacy work and has been featured in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Élysée Palace newsletter, and Young Professionals in Foreign Policy (YPFP).

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