

UN body urges U.S. to end police violence, discrimination against blacks



Geneva, September 30 (RHC-Xinhua), -- Contemporary police killings and continued racial discrimination against African Americans in the United States are reminiscent of racial terror practices which were once used against black slaves, according to a United Nations-affiliated human rights body report released earlier this week.

Presenting the findings to the ongoing 33rd session of the Human Rights Council (HRC), the Chairperson of HRC's Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent warned that "the legacy of colonial history, enslavement, racial subordination and segregation, racial terrorism and racial inequality in the United States remained a serious challenge."

The working group, which visited the U.S. in January this year, was alarmed by the level of police brutality and excessive use of lethal force by law enforcement officials against African Americans.

It also deplored the fact that no official national system has been set up to track killings perpetrated by police officials, who are rarely held accountable for their crimes despite overwhelming evidence.

"Killings of unarmed African Americans by the police is only the tip of the iceberg in what is a pervasive racial bias in the justice system," the report highlighted.

Over one third (36 percent) of sentenced federal and state prisoners are African Americans, with the imprisonment rate for black males and females respectively 5.9 and 2.1 times higher than for their white counterparts.

According to the Working Group, the racial composition of juries is one of the main factors behind racial bias when sentencing offenders to the death penalty.

Hate crimes targeting African Americans also continue to exist, as was seen by the Charleston church attack in 2015.

Findings also showed that disparities in access to education, health, housing and employment have severely impacted the well-being of African Americans in the U.S..

In light of these trends, the Working Group underlined the "profound need" to recognise the transatlantic trade in Africans, enslavement, colonization and colonialism as a crime against humanity.

It also urged Washington to take serious action to prevent any further unlawful killings as a matter of national priority while granting reparations to African Americans for past injustices.

Created in 2006, the HRC is an inter-governmental body working to promote and protect human rights around the globe through thematic discussions and structured recommendations.

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