



WILPF International Secretariat Statement on Systemic Racism and Police Brutality

As WILPF is dedicated to building a peaceful, equal, just world, we cannot stay silent about the targeted killings of Black people, acts which are rooted in and emboldened by white supremacy and structural racism, especially as people are in the streets calling for those with a platform to speak up.

Without justice, there can be no peace or freedom. The white supremacist patriarchy on which the US has been founded has for generations looted and murdered Black lives, Black communities, and Black futures, bolstered by leaders and institutions.

The killings of [#GeorgeFloyd](#), [David McAtee](#), [#BreonnaTaylor](#), [#AhmaudArbery](#), and thousands of other Black people add to what Black people have been saying every single day: that our society has made little progress from its racist underpinnings, and Black people continue to be daily denied their basic human rights to living in freedom, safety, and with dignity.

This system that dehumanises Black people is inextricable from the structures and mindset of the white supremacist structures that have imposed slavery, colonialism, war, invasion, weapons testing, covert operations, the development of military bases, and contributed to the destruction of black and brown communities in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

White supremacy is a global system of violence, invested in militarism. Nonviolent resistance requires standing against oppression in all of its forms, as well as systems that perpetrate structural violence.

As [protests erupted](#) across the United States in response to the murder of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis, heavily militarised police forces cracked down violently against everyone in the streets. As one commentator [noted](#) on Saturday, 30 May, “The police are rioting across America tonight—shooting and mowing down protestors, assaulting journalists, terrorising neighbourhoods, gleefully brutalising and arresting civilians en masse.”

The US spends about \$100 billion annually on policing and an additional \$80 billion on incarceration. In the midst of COVID-19 related budget cuts, many cities are looking to slash education, health care, housing, and other social services while police forces remain unscathed. Many police departments across the country are heavily militarised with equipment and training from the US military.

Militarisation of the police only leads to one thing: violence. As [WILPF's Disarmament Programme Director has noted in a recent blog post](#), there is no room for militarisation as a means to de-escalation of conflict or resolution of grievances. When governments and police forces decide to go down this road, they take an active stance toward violence.



We can see that clearly now, as the violence by police over the past week is leading to even more militarised responses to the protests against white supremacy and police brutality. On 1 June, the US president threatened to deploy the US military against those in the streets - protestors, journalists, legal and humanitarian aid workers, etc, while military police used teargas, rubber bullets and flash-bangs against peaceful protests near the White House. The US National Guard military police, which have been deployed in numerous cities, has also met protestors with rubber bullets, baton beatings, and arrests, alongside local police. [Veterans for Peace](#) and [About Face](#) have called on National Guard and military personnel to [refuse deployment](#) and [stand down](#).

Since its founding in 1915, WILPF has challenged and spoken out against militarism. The increasingly militarised, violent response of the US government and certain other state or local authorities and police forces to the legitimate human rights objectives and concerns of citizens is unacceptable.

As WILPF has been urging through its [blog series during the COVID-19 crisis](#), a fundamental reframing of security, one that dismantles the structures of capitalism, racism, militarism, and patriarchy, is essential for building an equitable future of well-being and care for all. This will include, as Black activists have long-demanded, [defunding, disarming, and demilitarising police](#), and dismantling the system of white supremacy.