

Human Rights Watch
Submission to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Resolution 43/1 Report on the Promotion and Protection of the Human Rights of
Africans/People of African Descent against Excessive Use of Force
March 9, 2021

Human Rights Watch is pleased to offer this submission to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as background information for the preparation of OHCHR's report on the Promotion and Protection of the Human Rights of Africans/People of African Descent against Excessive Use of Force. We have compiled published reports of our investigations and legal analysis, congressional testimony, and related materials in the United States and France beneath each of the relevant headings from the OHCHR's request for information.

OHCHR has requested information on, "measures taken to identify, address, reform and remedy systems, institutions, structures, mechanisms, legislation, policies and/or practices that give rise to, perpetuate, entrench and/or reinforce systemic racism, racial discrimination and associated human rights violations against Africans and people of African descent, including those resulting from historical legacies, as relevant."

Human Rights Watch would like to draw OHCHR's attention to current efforts to provide reparations to people of African descent within the United States. Human Rights Watch, alongside several local and national activists and groups, has been a part of efforts to call for reparative justice for racial discrimination and human rights violations against people of African descent, including those resulting from historical events, such as the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921 and from the legacy of slavery in the United States.

As we have noted in our reporting,

No one has ever been held responsible for the crimes associated with the Tulsa Race Massacre, the impacts of which black Tulsans still feel today. Efforts to secure justice in the courts have failed due to the statute of limitations. Ongoing racial segregation, discriminatory policies, and structural racism have left black Tulsans, particularly those living in North Tulsa, with a lower quality of life and fewer opportunities.

Under international human rights law, governments have an obligation to provide effective remedies for violations of human rights. The fact that a government abdicated its responsibility nearly 100 years ago and continued to do so in subsequent years does not absolve it of that responsibility today—especially when failure to address the harm and related action and inaction results in further harm, as it has in Tulsa. Like so many other places across the United States marred by similar incidents of racial violence, these harms stem from the legacy of slavery.

There are practical limits to how long, or through how many generations, such claims should survive. However, Human Rights Watch supports the conclusion of the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 (recently renamed the Tulsa Race Massacre Commission)—a commission created by the Oklahoma state legislature in 1997 to study the massacre and make recommendations—that reparations should be made.

The Tulsa Race Massacre occurred in a broader context of racist violence and oppression stemming from slavery, which continues to impact black people in the United States today. Human Rights Watch has long been supportive of the development of broader reparations plans to account for the brutality of slavery and historic racist laws that set different rules for black and white people. Accordingly, Human Rights Watch supports US House Resolution 40 (H.R. 40), a federal bill to establish a commission to examine the impacts of the transatlantic slave trade and subsequent racial and economic discriminatory laws and practices. H.R. 40 has been circulating in Congress for 30 years but recently gained renewed momentum given a growing public understanding about the harms of slavery and its continuing impact today.¹

For more information, please see:

- [The Case for Reparations in Tulsa, Oklahoma: A Human Rights Argument](#)
A report describing the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre and its connections with modern day systemic racism; and outlining the case for reparations under international human rights law.
- [H.R. 40: Exploring the Path to Reparative Justice in America](#)
Congressional testimony submitted by Human Rights Watch to the US House Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties
- [An Innovative Approach to Police Violence in New York City](#)
Commentary describing an innovative attempt by civil society groups in New York City to seek reparations for victims of police violence.

Human Rights Watch draws OHCHR's attention also to the class action suit we initiated, along with five other international and national organizations, against the French state over discriminatory policing. On January 27, 2021, our six organizations filed a letter of formal notice to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Interior, and the Minister of Justice to press for structural reforms and concrete measures to put an end to discriminatory police practices.

¹ Human Rights Watch, *The Case for Reparations in Tulsa, Oklahoma: A Human Rights Argument* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2020), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/05/29/case-reparations-tulsa-oklahoma>.

Ethnic profiling is a longstanding, pervasive, widespread, and well-documented problem in France. Studies have demonstrated that the police use overly broad powers to disproportionately target men and boys perceived to be Black or Arab for stop-and-frisk actions, while qualitative reports by Human Rights Watch and other organizations have documented the devastating impact of discriminatory policing, including on young children. Despite incontrovertible evidence of systematic discrimination, and commitment by successive governments to address the problem, little has changed.

This is the first time organizations are using a 2016 law that allows class action cases to be brought against the state in France to seek to address discrimination in policing. The January 27 letter of formal notice launched a four-month period for negotiations among the parties, after which the organizations can take the case to the courts if they are not satisfied with the steps the government pledges to take. The organizations are seeking comprehensive, structural reforms, including:

- Amending the law to explicitly prohibit discrimination in identity checks, abolish so-called preventive identity checks, and circumscribe police authority to ensure that stops are based on an objective and individualized suspicion;
- Adopting specific regulations and instructions for stops targeting children;
- Creating a system to record and evaluate data on identity checks, and to provide those stopped with a record of the stop;
- Creating an effective, independent complaints mechanism;
- Ratifying Protocol 12 of the European Convention on Human Rights on Non-Discrimination; and
- Changing the institutional objectives, guidelines, and training of the police, including with respect to interactions with the public.

For more information, please see:

- [France: End Systemic Police Discrimination](#)

Joint press release with five other organizations announcing the class action procedure against the French state for police use of ethnic profiling

- [Time to Stop Ethnic Profiling in France](#)

A dispatch on why the class action case is necessary

OHCHR has requested information on, “the impact of such measures on the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including, but not limited to, measures, mechanisms and procedures taken to identify, address and provide effective remedy and redress for systemic racism and racial discrimination experienced by Africans and people of African descent within law enforcement and the criminal justice system. Please also identify

or include related public reports in this regard.” Human Rights Watch has not identified effective national measures, mechanisms and procedures taken to provide remedies for systemic racism and racial discrimination in the United States. Instead, we, alongside many others, have identified several ways in which systemic racism and racial discrimination continue to plague the country. For example,

[R]acial disparities in illness and death from Covid-19 are inextricably linked to failures at all levels of government in the United States to fully protect the human rights of people of African descent, as well as government policies over generations that have directly contributed to racial disparities across multiple systems—health, education, housing, and criminal justice, among others. These disparities compound each other in ways that exacerbate the vulnerability of people of color to Covid-19.²

In other contexts, including as documented by Human Rights Watch in Tulsa, Oklahoma, poverty and racial discrimination in policing are interlinked.

For more information, please see:

- [Covid-19 Disparities Reflect Structural Racism, Abuse](#)
Human Rights Watch testimony submitted to US House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee on the ways in which Covid-19 racial disparities reflect structural racism and racial discrimination in the United States.
- [Policing, Poverty, and Racial Inequality in Tulsa, Oklahoma](#)
An interactive feature showing the correlations between poverty, policing, and race in Tulsa, Oklahoma.
- Articles in [The Root](#), [Washington Post](#), [New York Times](#), and [NBC News](#)
These articles describe a lawsuit on behalf of the Tulsa race massacre survivors, citing Human Rights Watch’s findings.
- [Poverty, the Pandemic and Police Violence in the US](#)
This essay discusses the interrelationship between poverty, the pandemic and police violence in the US.

OHCHR has requested information, “regarding specific incidents of alleged violations of international human rights law against Africans and people of African descent by law enforcement agencies, especially those incidents that resulted in the death of George Floyd and other Africans and people of African descent.”

² Human Rights Watch, “Testimony to US House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee: Covid-19 Disparities Reflect Structural Racism, Abuses,” Congressional testimony, June 10, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/10/human-rights-watch-testimony-us-house-representatives-ways-and-means-committee>.

Human Rights Watch has reported that:

Too often police reform discussions in the United States focus on tactics that contribute to killings. Killings are only the tip of an iceberg of much more common daily interactions between police and Black, Latino, Native American, poorer people, and people with disabilities, that are coercive and often violent, even if they do not result in death or serious injury. Such interactions result in high rates of arrest and criminalization, again disproportionately impacting people from these communities, contributing to mass incarceration and devastating long-term consequences for those convicted and those close to them.

These patterns are themselves a product of generations-old systemic racial inequalities, laws, and policies that have prioritized policing and criminalization as the primary state response to a range of societal problems. They are also the result of an approach to policing in the United States that has too often relied on coercion and force and failed to ensure accountability for abuse. Reform efforts need to address these fundamental problems to be effective.³

For more information, please see:

- [US: House Should Not Pass Policing Bill Without Changes](#)
In this press release, we outline our concerns with the proposed Justice in Policing Act in the US Congress, which passed in the US House of Representatives on March 3, 2021.
- [“Get on the Ground!” Policing, Poverty, and Racial Inequality in Tulsa, Oklahoma](#)
In this report, we describe how abusive policing in Tulsa, Oklahoma that targets Black people and poor people, diminishes the quality of life in all communities.
- [A Roadmap for Re-imagining Public Safety in the United States](#)
This report provides 14 recommendations on how jurisdictions in the United States need to reduce investments in policing as a means to solve social problems such as poverty and substance use; and instead invest in robust forms of police accountability and community support.
- [Video Report Regarding Re-imagining Policing in the United States](#)
This video report discusses a vision for investing in economic, social, and cultural rights that actually promotes public safety in the United States and moving away from over-resourcing a law enforcement response to problems.
- [Defunding the Police is a Reparations Issue](#)
This commentary describes how moving resources away from policing and investing instead in communities can be a form of reparative justice.
- [Why Police Shoot People in the Back](#)

³ Human Rights Watch, *A Roadmap for Re-imagining Public Safety in the United States* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2020), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/08/12/roadmap-re-imagining-public-safety-united-states>.

This commentary describes some elements of the legal and policy context that lead to police shooting people in the back.

- [US: Address Structural Racism Underlying Protests](#)

In this press release, Human Rights Watch connects the killing of George Floyd and the resulting protests to the failure to address structural racism in the United States.

Human Rights Watch has documented persistent and pernicious ethnic profiling by the police in France, with devastating impact on Black and Arab youth and on community-police relations.

French police use broad powers to stop and search Black and Arab youth even when there is no sign or evidence of wrongdoing. These “identity checks,” as they are known in France, often involve invasive searches of bags and cell phones as well as humiliating body pat-downs, even of young children. Accounts of police stops, video footage, and official data, suggest that police stops related to enforcement of lockdown measures beginning in mid-March 2020 amid the Covid-19 pandemic showed a bias targeting minorities in poor neighborhoods.

There is little evidence from France or elsewhere to demonstrate that identity checks are effective in identifying and preventing potential criminal behavior. The French state does not collect the kind of data necessary for any kind of assessment, including reliable data on the number and outcome of identity checks.

Abusive and discriminatory identity checks are a longstanding problem in France. Pent-up anger over police abuse, including heavy-handed identity checks, played a role in riots in 2005 in cities across France. It appears to underlie countless lower-intensity conflicts between police and young people in urban areas and the poor suburbs—often referred to in French as the *banlieues*. Statistical evidence gathered by social scientists and nongovernmental organizations indicates that young Blacks and Arabs, or people perceived as such, in particular those living in economically disadvantaged areas, are disproportionate targets of such stops, suggesting that police engage in ethnic profiling (that is, making assumptions about who is more likely to be a delinquent based on appearance, including race and ethnicity, rather than behavior) to determine whom to stop.

Even though anecdotal accounts suggest the police stop more children than adults, the procedures and treatment are in no way adapted to interactions with young people and children. There are no specific regulations or laws governing identity checks involving children, nor does there appear to be any specific guidance to police about how to conduct stops involving children. Human Rights Watch spoke with children as young as 12 who described being forced to put their hands against a wall or car, spread their legs and submit to an invasive pat-down in which officers touch every part of their bodies, including buttocks and genitalia. Adults described experiencing these kinds of stops when they were as young as 10.

Studies elsewhere, including the United States, have demonstrated that early, repeated negative interactions by children with the police have a negative impact on their well-being and may be counterproductive in deterring crime.⁴

There is clear evidence of harm and growing calls for reform from international and national authorities, including the Defender of Rights and the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights. Nevertheless, successive French governments have failed to adopt comprehensive reforms to tackle the problem.

For more information, please see:

- [“They Talk to Us like We’re Dogs”: Abusive Police Stops in France.](#)
A June 2020 report documenting discriminatory policing in France, based on more than 90 interviews in four cities with people about their experiences of identity checks as well as social workers, community activists, teachers, mothers, and police officers.
- [“The Root of Humiliation”: Abusive Identity Checks in France.](#)
A January 2012 report on ethnic profiling by the French police based on more than 65 interviews in three cities with people about their experiences of identity checks as well as community activists and police officers.
- [End Discriminatory Police Checks and Fines](#)
Joint press release calling on French government to prevent and punish discriminatory policing linked to restrictions of movement imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic
- [Joint open letter to the government of France on ending abusive and discriminatory police identity checks in the context of lockdown enforcement](#)

OHCHR has requested information on, “measures taken to ensure accountability, remedy and redress and address any impunity for human rights violations against Africans and people of African descent, particularly by law enforcement agencies; and the outcomes and effectiveness of such measures. Please also share information about the functioning of accountability mechanisms and associated decision-making processes addressing human rights violations, and identify any patterns or trends in the outcomes of these mechanisms and processes that show or suggest differential experience of Africans and people of African descent with respect to accountability for violations suffered by them. Please also identify or include related public reports in this regard.”

Human Rights Watch has not compiled information responsive to this category of inquiry.

OHCHR has requested information “concerning laws, regulations, policies and other measures taken to prevent and address alleged human rights violations by law enforcement officials

⁴ Impact of police stops on youth’s mental health, <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191009075125.htm> (accessed February 2, 2020). Dylan B. Jackson, Chantal Fahmy, Michael G. Vaughn, Alexander Testa “Police Stops Among At-Risk Youth: Repercussions for Mental Health,” *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 2019; DOI: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2019.05.027; “The criminogenic and psychological effects of police stops on adolescent black and Latino boys,” Juan Del Toro, Tracey Lloyd, Kim S. Buchanan, Summer Joi Robins, Lucy Zhang Bencharit, Meredith Gamson Smiedt, Kavita S. Reddy, Enrique Rodriguez Pouget, Erin M. Kerrison, and Phillip Atiba Goff, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 201808976, doi:10.1073/pnas.1808976116, 2019, <https://www.pnas.org/content/early/2019/04/02/1808976116> (accessed December 5, 2019).

against Africans and people of African descent, as well as contribute to accountability, remedy and redress, and the outcomes and effectiveness of such measures.”

Human Rights Watch has recently commented on proposed legislation in the US Congress, known as the Justice in Policing Act.

For more information, please see:

- [Human Rights Watch Recommendations for the Justice in Policing Act](#)
In this letter, we outline our concerns with key provisions in the Justice in Policing Act.
- [House Should Not Pass Policing Bill Without Changes](#)
In this press release, we explain that the proposed legislation, touted as significant reform, contains some positive provisions, but it funnels excessive amounts of federal funds to law enforcement that would be better spent on investments for communities in need.

With respect to France, Human Rights Watch has reported:

Over the past eight years, concern over police practices moved from the streets of Paris and *banlieues* to the halls of power and courts of justice, and the issues were taken up not only by community organizers and civil society organizations but by state institutions. The Defender of Rights, France’s independent human rights institution, issued reports in 2014 and 2017 criticizing abusive practices and calling for reforms. In 2012, then-presidential candidate François Hollande pledged he would “fight against ethnic profiling.”

In 2016, the Court of Cassation, France’s highest court, found that three young men had experienced identity checks based on profiling without any objective justification, constituting “gross misconduct on the part of the state.”

Yet, despite these advances, the law and practice of identity checks in France remain problematic. Parliamentarians tabled numerous bills proposing reforms to more narrowly circumscribe police powers—none have passed. Police unions and hierarchies have rejected proposals to institute the use of “stop forms”—a written record of the procedure—which would help produce reliable statistics and contribute to accountability for abuses. President Hollande failed to follow through on his pledge to tackle ethnic profiling during his time in office, and his successor Emmanuel Macron, although he recognized the problem of ethnic profiling, had still not taken up the issue in a serious and comprehensive way at the time of writing.

In lieu of stop forms and better laws, the government opted for increased use of body-worn police cameras. Between March 2017 and March 2018, a pilot project was carried out under which police were supposed to systematically film identity checks. An evaluation of the project sent by the Director General of the National Police to the Interior Minister, leaked to the media,

found that technical problems meant that over 15,000 stops were not filmed.⁵ The report also asserted that filming identity checks

does not constitute a means of verifying whether the stop is abusive: in particular, it does not make it possible to check whether the person has been subjected to repeated stops and, as its recording is in practice triggered once the decision to make a stop has been taken, it makes it difficult to check the basis [for the stop.]⁶

Despite these uninspiring results, President Macron said in July 2020 that he wanted to enforce the use of body cams by the police by the end of his term in 2022. Following several high-profile incidents of excessive use of force by the police, including the violent beating of a Black music producer in November 2020, President Macron acknowledged ethnic profiling as a problem. He announced the creation of a new platform for reporting discrimination in all fields, not specifically policing, and the launch of a national consultation on the police – the ‘Beauvau de la sécurité’ – that has not, to date, included the participation of nongovernmental organizations or a specific focus on police stops. Isolated measures have long proven insufficient to address the persistent problem of ethnic profiling by the police in France.

For more information, please see:

- [Body Cameras Along Won't Stop Discriminatory Policing in France](#)
A dispatch on why one single measure is insufficient and the need for comprehensive reform.

OHCHR has requested information “concerning Government responses to anti-racism peaceful protests, within the meaning of resolution 43/1, including the alleged use of excessive force against protesters, bystanders and journalists, as well as applicable laws, regulations, policies, practices and other measures, and their impact and effectiveness.”

Human Rights Watch draws OHCHR’s attention to our recent investigation into the New York City police department’s (NYPD) planned assault and mass arrests of peaceful protesters in the Mott Haven neighborhood of the South Bronx, a low-income Black and brown community that has long faced systemic racism and police brutality. As we have reported, the Mott Haven:

“[O]peration was among the most aggressive police responses to protests across the United States following the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota on May 25.

⁵ Alexandre Léchenet, “Dans la lutte contre les contrôles au faciès le fiasco des caméras-piétons,” May 12, 2019, *Mediapart*, <https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/120519/dans-la-lutte-contre-les-contrôles-au-faciès-le-fiasco-des-cameras-pietons> (accessed February 2, 2020).

⁶ Ibid.

About 10 minutes before the 8 p.m. curfew, scores of police officers surrounded and trapped the roughly 300 protesters, not allowing them to disperse. Just after 8 p.m., the police, unprovoked and without warning, advanced on the protesters, whaling their batons, beating people from car tops, and firing pepper spray into people's faces before rounding up about 250 of them for arrest. Clearly identifiable legal observers and street medics were also targeted.

Our investigation, based on interviews or written accounts from 81 protesters and observers and analysis of 155 videos recorded during the protest, reveals how the police action in Mott Haven was deliberate, planned and in violation of international human rights law. The operation illustrates a culture within the New York police force, modeled by top commanders, that encourages and condones violence and abuse. The report describes the government's ineffective accountability mechanisms that protect police officers, shows the shortcomings of incremental reforms, and makes the case for structural change."⁷

For more information, please see:

- [“Kettling” Protesters in the Bronx: Systemic Police Brutality and Its Costs in the United States](#)
In this investigation, Human Rights Watch describes a planned attack by the NYPD against protestors seeking racial justice in New York City's South Bronx neighborhood.
- [Kenosha Police Turned a Blind Eye to US Vigilantes](#)
Commentary discussing the links between responses to protestors in the US, white supremacy, and abusive policing.

OHCHR has requested information “regarding systems of collection by State authorities of disaggregated data based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin, and processes for the analysis of such data. In relation to the above-mentioned areas, please provide data disaggregated by race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin; as well as additionally by sex, age, economic and social situation, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, incarceration, and other status, where available. Where such information is not available, please indicate reasons why.”

Human Rights Watch is concerned that the French state does not collect data useful for detecting patterns of discrimination against certain groups. French authorities do not record or publish data on the use of identity checks by police or track the ethnicity of those stopped. We have reported:

⁷ Human Rights Watch, “Kettling” Protesters in the Bronx: Systemic Police Brutality and Its Costs in the United States (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2020), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/30/us-new-york-police-planned-assault-bronx-protesters>.

If ethnic data is collected, the systematic use of stop forms enables data collection that can identify broad trends, such as disproportionate stops of particular minorities, as well as provide evidence of specific cases of discrimination.

Effective anti-discrimination policies require reliable information to determine whether there are patterns of particular groups being affected in a disparate or disproportionate way. This is why adequate, disaggregated statistics by ethnicity are so important. The United Kingdom is the only country in Western Europe that systematically collects and publishes police data on stops, including voluntary, self-identified information on ethnicity. This has allowed detailed analysis of patterns of discriminatory behavior, in particular with respect to stop and search powers under UK counterterrorism legislation, which does not require a reasonable suspicion of wrongdoing.

While there has been significant debate over the issue in recent years, the French government resists any kind of data collection with reference to race or ethnicity. Official arguments rest on the “republican ideal” enshrined in article 1 of the Constitution declaring France an indivisible republic guaranteeing equality without distinction based on origin, race, or religion. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has encouraged French authorities develop a “comprehensive, consistent system for collecting data...to assess the situation regarding the various minority groups in France and to determine the extent of...direct or indirect racial discrimination in different fields of life.”⁸ The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has made similar recommendations.⁹

For more information, please see:

- [“The Root of Humiliation”: Abusive Identity Checks in France.](#)
A January 2012 report on ethnic profiling by the French police based on more than 65 interviews in three cities with people about their experiences of identity checks as well as community activists and police officers.

OHCHR has requested information on “mechanisms in place to ensure that Africans and people of African descent and their representatives are appropriately, adequately and sufficiently represented in processes to identify, remove and reform any structures, policies and practices of racial discrimination in institutions of law enforcement and the related administration of criminal justice.”

Human Rights Watch has not compiled information responsive to this category of inquiry.

OHCHR has requested information on, “good practices, challenges and lessons learned regarding measures taken to: (i) combat systemic racism at the national, state/regional and local levels, including as informed by structural and institutional factors; (ii) prevent and

⁸ ECRI report on France, 2010, p. 45.

⁹ CERD Concluding Observations, 2010, para. 12.

address alleged human rights violations against Africans and people of African descent by law enforcement officials; (iii) ensure accountability for human rights violations against Africans and people of African descent and access to effective remedies and redress for such victims of contemporary and associated historical human rights violations; and (iv) ensure appropriate Government responses to anti-racism peaceful protests. Please also identify or include related public reports in this regard.”

Human Rights Watch has not compiled information responsive to this category of inquiry.

OHCHR has requested information on, “specific information pertaining to all other aspects of the mandate set out in resolution 43/1, including regarding the situation and perspectives of African women and children and of women and children of African descent, as well as other relevant gender and intersectional dimensions, including discrimination based on colour, sex/gender, economic and social status, disability, or other status”.

Human Rights Watch has testified to the US Congress that women of African descent in the United States:

“[A]re more likely to live in poverty and face multiple barriers to health, including lack of access to health insurance, adequate housing, water and sanitation services, transportation, and employment. Implicit bias and structural racism in the medical field also impact the quality of care and responsiveness to health concerns that women of color receive, contributing to racial disparities in health. Black women are more than three times as likely to die from pregnancy-related complications as white women in the US. Research has also shown that low-income women and women of color are more likely to die from cervical cancer than white women.”¹⁰

For more information, please see:

- [“It Should Not Happen” Alabama’s Failure to Prevent Cervical Cancer and Death in the Black Belt](#)

A Human Rights Watch report explaining that the federal and many state governments, including Alabama, are not doing enough to address the ways in which discrimination and poverty lead to cervical cancer deaths, which are largely preventable. Approximately 4,200 women a year die in the United States from cervical cancer, and mortality rates are disproportionately high for women of African descent.

- [Covid-19 Disparities Reflect Structural Racism, Abuse](#)

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, “Testimony to US House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee: Covid-19 Disparities Reflect Structural Racism, Abuses,” Congressional testimony, June 10, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/10/human-rights-watch-testimony-us-house-representatives-ways-and-means-committee>.

Human Rights Watch testimony to the US House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee on the ways in which Covid-19 racial disparities reflect structural racism and racial discrimination in the United States.

- [US: Heat Emergency Plans Missing Pregnancy, Racial Justice](#)
Report by Human Rights Watch showing that efforts by US federal and local authorities to address increasing heat in the US because of the climate crisis largely fail to include pregnancy health and birth outcomes, and racial disparities in the same as areas of concern. Our concern, shared by partners, is that this failure in climate justice will worsen already-existing health disparities including between Black and white women in the US.
- [US: US Structural Racism Shapes Access to Water During Covid-19](#)
A report explaining that discontinuing water services for inability to pay in any context is incompatible with human rights and is particularly harmful in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2020, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. and the ACLU of Michigan Lawyers filed a class action lawsuit alleging that these shutoffs reflect long-existing structural racism in the state. The lawsuit included statistical analyses showing that Black Detroiters are more likely to be impacted by water shutoffs. We the People of Detroit, an organization committed to community research and the human right to water, released findings in July 2020 that in Detroit, more water shutoffs correlated with more Covid-19 cases.