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Peoples Rights Group Expresses Solidarity With the Black Lives Matter Movement and Condemns Systemic Racism in the US and all over the world

Peoples Rights Group (PRG), a rights based advocacy and lobbying group based in the UK particularly dealing with human rights violations in Sri Lanka, expresses its solidarity with the Black Lives Matter Movement in the US and around the world and shares the collective grief arising from the recent brutal killing of George Floyd, an abhorrent act of excessive force and police brutality. The killing of George Floyd is however only the latest chapter in a shameful history of unequal treatment of black people in the U.S. PRG thus strongly denounces this continuous epidemic of racism and Police brutality against people of colour, which unfortunately cut short the precious lives of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Sandra Bland, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and many others in recent times.

It is abhorrent that these most recent acts of violence have been occurring at a time when communities of colour are disproportionately experiencing severe health, social, and economic harms from the COVID-19 pandemic, including high rates of death and serious illness. Compounding this suffering, disproportionate and excessive use of force by law enforcement against people of colour has thus been violating the right to life, dignity, security and bodily integrity.

Floyd's murder serves as yet another painful reminder of just how deeply entrenched prejudice and racism are in the US., from the highest levels of government to local law enforcement. However, although the racism in the US is indeed unique in both its depth and ferocity, systemic racism is not merely confined to the US, but a continuing global issue, including in the UK and Sri Lanka too. The ubiquity of racism has been brought to stark and sudden global attention by the killing of Floyd and the unprecedented wave of public protests, demonstrations and rioting that followed.

Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, these protests led by young people and involving people of all ethnicities, have now morphed into a worldwide anti-racist movement, going beyond the narrow confines of Police violence or the American borders. Both online and on the streets, it is calling out racism, wherever it exists and in whatever forms it is found. Thereby Floyd killing has transformed into a defining moment of change.

PRG fervently believes that Racism takes many forms – including far subtler forms that keep Black and people of colour out of the room and silence their voices. There is also the racism that sees people discriminated against, and subjected to violence and degrading treatment because of the colour of their skin, religion or ethnicity as we have repeatedly seen in many countries including Sri Lanka. Thus, as a Human Rights advocacy and lobbying group, PRG will consistently team up and work with like-minded organizations to fight against social injustice, racism, bigotry, and/or mistreatment of all forms, plaguing the world. It will also stand by and support the victims of gross violations of human dignity and rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Charter, dedicating itself to a longer-term commitment in achieving justice in practice.

PRG thus calls for a firm commitment from UN allied Human Rights bodies, all governments, State organizations, law enforcement authorities, Non-governmental organizations as well as public activists to unite in their resolve to in combating racism in our societies. It also urges them to initiate the much needed process to work towards changing the systems, norms, and biases that create and sustain inequality and injustice for people of colour as well as in fostering an accessible and inclusive environment where diversity and equality thrives. There is much to be done, and the time to act is now.