

GPM stands united with US Mayors

Statement on Protest Against Police Brutality and Discrimination

10 June 2020 – The world is watching the nation-wide demonstrations in the United States. Citizens across the country are standing up against violent acts of injustice. The demonstrations and unified acts of protests stem from the history of systemic economic inequality, political exclusion and the erosion of hope that have found expression in protests at race-based violence. All compounded by acts of violence against African American citizens. George Floyd is the latest, before him there were more this year alone, Breonna Taylor (Kentucky), Tony McDade (Florida), and Ahmaud Arbery (Georgia).

The world has equally responded with protests and demonstrations against racism in the streets of Amsterdam, Bristol, Berlin, London, Mannheim to capitals in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. In Syria artists have painted a mural of George Floyd.

The GPM Mayors are against every act and expression allowing racism and discrimination. The reality of ending systemic racism, discrimination and exclusion is a collective responsibility at every level of government, throughout our economic processes and social cultures.

At its conference "Safer Cities For All" organized jointly with UN-Habitat two weeks ago, the GPM emphasized the indispensable connection between social justice, trust and social cohesion as a basis for peace in cities. In the current climate these efforts are undermined by all those who are fragmenting cohesive efforts and pouring oil on the fire.

The GPM supports the statement from USCM President Bryan Barnett, Mayor of Rochester Hills and GPM member: "Mayors are united in the condemnation of the brutality and discrimination that black Americans continue to experience day after day, year after year in this country. We are also united in support of peaceful expression. Our cities need healing and our people need to be heard. This must be done however, without bringing greater pain and destruction to our cities."

The GPM stands united with US Mayors in their efforts to overcome mistakes made at higher level of government, and to establish the peace that the US Constitution grants all people. If the state level government fails, the mayors, as the legitimate level of government, are obliged and entitled to intervene and do everything in their power to create unity rather than conflict.

The GPM supports the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights statement condemning the killing of George Floyd and other unarmed civiliansⁱ, and stands in support of the United Nation's call for adequate training of police and investment in the social and psychological support for police to do their jobs properly and to protect communities.ⁱⁱ

The catalyst for this worldwide collective support does not come from one unjust death alone. It is a painful cycle that is institutionalized and widespread. This gaping inequity has become even more visible during a pandemic that has shown African Americans are twice as likely to die from Covid-19. The risk for black and brown people in the United Kingdom are between 10% and 50% more likely to die if they contract the virus. The Corona crisis pandemic has proven to take a disproportionate toll on the most vulnerable groups in our cities.

The GPM has made a commitment to halve violence in cities in all of its forms, and to strengthen solidarity among city leaders in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16, "to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development". This month the GPM together with Peace in Our Cities are joining forces to accelerate action on 50% violence reduction by engaging mayors

worldwide along with global city networks to sign a common declaration and join a set of evidence-based actions to achieve this vision. The final declaration will be presented to the UN Secretary General at the General Assembly in September 2020. The GPM calls all mayors around the world for action to join the plea to half all forms of violence and to give their online support on the GPM Virtual Parliament.

Mayor Peter Kurz
GPM Chair Executive Committee Global Parliament of Mayors
Mayor of Mannheim, Germany

ⁱ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/05/1065042>

ⁱⁱ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/06/1065262>