

# **The Report on Human Rights Violations in the United States in 2020**

The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China

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## **Foreword**

“I can’t breathe!”

-- George Floyd

“The scenes (the U.S. Capitol building violence) we have seen are the result of lies and more lies, of division and contempt for democracy, of hatred and rabble-rousing -- even from the very highest levels.”

-- German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc around the world, posing a major threat to human security. The virus respects no borders, nor does the epidemic distinguish between races. To defeat the epidemic requires mutual help, solidarity and cooperation among all countries. However, the United States, which has always considered itself an exception and superior, saw its own epidemic situation go out of control, accompanied by political disorder, inter-ethnic conflicts, and social division. It further added to the human rights violations in the country, the so-called “city upon a hill” and “beacon of democracy.”

-- The epidemic went out of control and turned into a human tragedy due to the government’s reckless response. By the end of February 2021, the United States, home to less than 5 percent of the world’s population, accounted for more than a quarter of the world’s confirmed COVID-19 cases and nearly one-fifth of the global deaths from the disease. More than 500,000 Americans lost their lives due to the virus.

-- Disorder in American democratic institutions led to political chaos, further tearing the fabric of society apart. Money-tainted politics distorted and suppressed public opinion, turning elections into a “one-man show” of the wealthy class and people’s confidence in the American democratic system dropped to the lowest level in 20 years. Amid increasing political polarization, hate politics evolved into a national plague, and the Capitol was stormed in post-election riots.

-- Ethnic minority groups suffered systematic racial discrimination and were in a difficult situation. People of color made up about one-third of all minors under the age of 18 in the United States but two-thirds of all of the country’s imprisoned minors. African Americans are three times as likely as whites to be infected with the coronavirus, twice as likely to die from COVID-19, and three times as likely to be killed by the police. One in four young Asian Americans has been the target of racial bullying.

-- Gun trade and shooting incidents hit a record high, and people’s confidence

in social order waned. Americans bought 23 million guns in 2020 against the background of an out-of-control epidemic, accompanied by racial justice protests and election-related conflicts, a surge of 64 percent compared with 2019. First-time gun buyers exceeded 8 million. More than 41,500 people were killed in shooting incidents across the United States in the year, an average of more than 110 a day, and there were 592 mass shootings nationwide, an average of more than 1.6 a day.

-- George Floyd, an African American, died after being brutally kneeled on his neck by a white police officer, sparking a national outcry. Widespread protests for racial justice erupted in 50 states. The U.S. government suppressed demonstrators by force, and more than 10,000 people were arrested. A large number of journalists were attacked and arrested for no reason.

-- The gap between the rich and the poor widened, with the people at the bottom of society living in misery. The epidemic led to mass unemployment. Tens of millions of people lost health insurance coverage. One in six Americans and one in four American children were at risk of hunger. Vulnerable groups became the biggest victims of the government's reckless response to the epidemic.

The U.S. government, instead of introspecting on its own terrible human rights record, kept making irresponsible remarks on the human rights situation in other countries, exposing its double standards and hypocrisy on human rights. Standing at a new crossroads, mankind is faced with new, grave challenges. It is hoped that the U.S. side will show humility and compassion for the suffering of its own people, drop hypocrisy, bullying, "Big Stick" and double standards, and work with the international community to build a community with a shared future for humanity.

## **I. Incompetent Pandemic Containment Leads to Tragic Outcome**

The United States claimed to be most abundant in medical resources and healthcare capacity, yet its response to the COVID-19 pandemic was chaotic, causing it to lead the world in the numbers of confirmed COVID-19 cases and related deaths.

**Incompetent pandemic response led to dire consequences.** A tally by Johns Hopkins University showed that as of the end of February 2021, the United States has registered more than 28 million confirmed COVID-19 cases, with related deaths exceeding 500,000. With a population of less than 5 percent of the world's total, the United States accounted for more than 25 percent of all the confirmed cases and nearly 20 percent of the deaths. On Dec. 20, 2020, CNN reported that the state of California alone had reported 1.845 million COVID-19 cases and 22,599 deaths, which translates to roughly 4,669 known cases and 57 deaths for every 100,000 residents. Even these numbers don't give the whole picture of the state, because many cases, including mild or asymptomatic infections, had not been diagnosed. Had the American authorities taken science-based measures to contain the pandemic, this could have been avoided. But since they had not, the pandemic, as epidemiologist and former head of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) William Foege had put it, is "a slaughter" to the United States.

National leaders ignored warnings from experts and downplayed the seriousness of the pandemic. According to the timeline of COVID-19 pandemic in the

United States released by media outlets including The New York Times and The Washington Post, the Trump administration had repeatedly ignored alarms regarding the risks of the pandemic. In early January 2020, a National Security Council office had already received intelligence reports predicting the spread of the virus to the United States. In a Jan. 29, 2020 memo, then White House trade adviser Peter Navarro projected that a coronavirus pandemic might lead to as many as half a million deaths and trillions of dollars in economic losses. A number of health officials, including then Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, and medical experts also warned of the possibility of a pandemic in the United States. None of the aforementioned warnings brought the imminent pandemic to the Trump administration's attention. Instead, the administration focused on controlling the message, and released misleading signals to the public by claiming "the risk of the virus to most Americans was very low," suggesting that the coronavirus is no worse than the common flu, and stating the virus will "miraculously go away" when the weather gets warmer. Thus, the country lost crucial weeks for pandemic prevention and control. An article published on the website of The New York Times on April 13, 2020 commented that, then American leader's "preference for following his gut rather than the data cost time, and perhaps lives."

**Government inaction led to uncontrolled pandemic spread.** "There's no need for that many to have died. We chose, as a country, to take our foot off the gas pedal. We chose to, and that's the tragedy." So commented David Hayes-Bautista, a professor of medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles, after the pandemic death toll hit 300,000 in the United States. Disease modelers with the Columbia University also estimated that, if the United States had begun locking down cities and limiting social contact on March 1, 2020, two weeks earlier than most people started staying home, about 83 percent of the nation's pandemic-related deaths would have been avoided. An editorial from the website of medical journal The Lancet, published on May 17, 2020, commented that the U.S. government was obsessed with magic bullets -- vaccines, new medicines, or a hope that the virus will simply disappear. At the same time, it noted that only a steadfast reliance on basic public health principles, like testing, tracing, and isolation, would see the emergency brought to an end. Even when the pandemic is spreading in a vast area in the United States, the administration was hasty to restart the economy due to political concerns. According to news website Vox on Aug. 11, 2020, in April and May last year, several states rushed to reopen and caused the virus to shift to the South, West and eventually the rest of the United States. In addition, despite that experts had recommended people wear masks in public, the then American leader and some state officials had been extremely reluctant to issue any decree to make wearing masks mandatory.

**Chaotic pandemic control and prevention measures caused confusion among the public.** An article published by CNN on May 9, 2020 called the U.S. response to the pandemic "consistently inconsistent," and noted that there were no national guidelines and no organized efforts to reopen the country beyond what measures states had taken. The article also said that in terms of pandemic control and prevention, public health officials say one thing while governors say another and the

national leader says something else entirely. In addition, after the experts called for federal leadership, the then American leader left it to cities and states to solve national problems with testing and hospital supplies by themselves. When the federal government released a phased plan for reopening, the leader called on states to reopen faster. After the CDC recommended that people wear masks in public, the leader refused to do so for months. Even more ridiculously, the leader at one point advocated injecting bleach as a treatment.

**National leaders shirked their responsibility out of arrogance.** Despite one ludicrous idea after another, the then American leader refused to admit any fault. Instead, the leader invented all sorts of excuses to gloss over his mistakes while shirking from responsibilities. For one, the then leader insisted that the U.S. leads the world in COVID-19 cases because it tested more than any other country in the world. When asked about testing problems and rising deaths, the leader claimed he “doesn’t take responsibility at all.” However, White House adviser and National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases director Anthony Fauci admitted that the numbers didn’t lie and the United States had the worst coronavirus outbreak in the world.

**Senior citizens fell victims to the government’s incompetent response to COVID-19.** Senior citizens are a group more susceptible to the pandemic, yet they have been further marginalized in the U.S. pandemic prevention and control chaos, with their lives becoming valueless and their dignity trampled upon. On March 23 and April 20, 2020, Dan Patrick, the lieutenant governor of Texas, told Fox News that he would rather die than see public health measures damage the U.S. economy and there are more important things than living. Furthermore, an Aug. 18, 2020 report published on The San Diego Union-Tribune website found that residents in long-term care facilities account for less than 1 percent of the U.S. population but more than 40 percent of COVID-19 deaths. A May 9, 2020 article from The Washington Post website called the U.S. pandemic control efforts “state-sanctioned killing,” where “the old, factory workers, and black and Hispanic Americans” were deliberately sacrificed.

**The poor faced greater threat of infection.** Researchers found that the Gini Index, an economic barometer that ranks income inequality from 0 (total equality) to 1 (total inequality), was a strong predictor of COVID-19 deaths. New York State, which had one of the highest Gini Index numbers also had the highest number of fatalities in the nation by a margin. The Guardian website reported on March 21, 2020 that in the wake of the epidemic, it’s the wealthy and powerful first get coronavirus tests, while low-paid workers, most of whom have no paid sick leave and can’t do their work from home, put themselves at greater risk of contracting the virus in order to earn a living. Public health officials said, in Los Angeles County, residents of low-income communities are three times more likely to die of COVID-19 than those in wealthier neighborhoods, according to a report published on the Los Angeles Times website on May 8, 2020. A Gallup survey revealed that one in seven American adults said that if they or their family members developed symptoms related to COVID-19, they would probably give up medical treatment because they were worried that they could not afford the costs. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Philip Alston, also pointed out that the poor in the United States

were being hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. Low-income and poor people face far higher risks from the coronavirus due to chronic neglect and discrimination, and a muddled, corporate-driven federal response has failed them, he observed.

**The handicapped and the homeless were in dire straits.** A study released in November 2020 by the nonprofit FAIR Health found that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are three times more likely to die of COVID-19, compared to the general population. The website of the Los Angeles Times reported on May 14, 2020 that with the coronavirus-induced shock to the economy crippling businesses of all sizes and leaving millions of Americans out of work, homelessness in the United States could grow as much as 45 percent in a year. Many of the homeless Americans are elderly or disabled people. Given their originally poor physical health and bad living and hygienic conditions, they are susceptible to the virus. During the pandemic, the homeless were evicted and pushed into makeshift shelters. The website of Reuters reported on April 23, 2020 that the crowded shelters across the United States made it impossible for the homeless who lived there to maintain social distance, which made it easier for the virus to spread. The New York Times website reported on April 13, 2020 that in the New York City, a crisis has taken hold in homeless shelters, as more than 17,000 men and women are sleeping in group or “congregate” shelters for single adults, with beds close enough for people sleeping in them to hold hands. The Boston Globe website reported on May 4, 2020 that, about one-third of the homeless people who were tested have tested positive for the novel coronavirus.

**Outbreak in jails threatened lives of inmates.** ABC News reported on Dec. 19, 2020 that at least 275,000 prisoners have been infected, of whom more than 1,700 have died, and nearly every prison system in the country has seen infection rates significantly higher than the communities around them. One of every five prisoners in facilities run by the federal Bureau of Prisons has had coronavirus, according to data collected by The Associated Press and The Marshall Project, a nonprofit news organization covering the criminal justice system. They also found that 24 state prison systems have had even higher infection rates. Half of the prisoners in Kansas have been infected with COVID-19 — eight times the rate of cases among the state’s overall population. In Arkansas, four of every seven have had the virus.

**Out-of-control pandemic brought Americans psychological pressure.** The Trump administration’s reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected Americans more than the virus itself, which has left people stressed and isolated. In a study published by the CDC on Aug. 14, 2020, due to stay-at-home orders, 40.9 percent of adults reported at least one adverse mental or behavioral health condition, 30.9 percent reported either anxiety or depression and those numbers are just the tip of the iceberg. The same CDC study showed that 13 percent of people surveyed by the CDC during the same time said that they started or increased their substance use and 11 percent seriously considered suicide. A separate study released in June 2020 showed calls to suicide hotlines went up 47 percent nationwide during the COVID-19 pandemic with some crisis lines experiencing a 300-percent increase.

## **II. American Democracy Disorder Triggers Political Chaos**

Touting itself as the beacon of democracy, the United States has wantonly leveled criticism against and oppressed many other countries under the guise of upholding democracy, freedom and human rights. However, the U.S. society has been plagued by deep-rooted money politics, unchecked public opinion manipulation and rampant lies, and American democracy has further aggravated social division instead of bridging the increasingly polarized political differences. As a result, the American people enjoy their civil and political rights in name only.

**Influence of money in electoral politics essentially makes it a money-led election.** Money is the driving force of American politics. America's money politics has distorted public opinion, turning elections into a "one-man show" for the rich. The amount spent on the 2020 U.S. presidential and congressional campaigns hit nearly 14 billion U.S. dollars, more than double what was spent in the 2016 election. The presidential campaign saw a record high of 6.6 billion U.S. dollars in total spending, while congressional races finished with over 7 billion U.S. dollars. According to a Nov. 1, 2020 report on the website of CNBC, the top 10 donors in the 2020 U.S. election cycle contributed over 640 million U.S. dollars. In addition to publicly registered election donations, a large amount of secret funds and dark money flooded the 2020 U.S. elections. According to an analysis by the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University, dark money groups poured more than 750 million U.S. dollars into 2020 elections through ad spending and record-breaking contributions to political committees such as super political action committees.

**Public trust in U.S. elections was in crisis.** According to Gallup's figures released on Oct. 8, 2020, only 19 percent of Americans say they are "very confident" about the accuracy of the presidential election, the lowest Gallup has recorded in its trend dating back to 2004. According to a commentary carried by the Wall Street Journal on Nov. 9, 2020, the 2020 U.S. election can be seen as the culmination of a two-decade period of decline in faith in the basic building blocks of democracy.

**Political polarization grew.** Disagreement between Democrats and Republicans has gradually changed from policy differences to identity battles with increasingly obvious political tribalism. The two parties have ended in deadlocks on many major public issues, thus leading to inefficient and incompetent state governance. Power plays between rival politicians in dogfights have become the hallmark of American politics, which saw a variety of shows featuring ugly attacks and vulgar smears. Voters supporting different parties are at loggerheads under the instigation of extreme politicians. Dominated by growing political fanaticism, the two camps are increasingly harder to talk to each other. Hate politics raged through the country and became the root cause of constant social unrest and division. According to a Nov. 13, 2020 report by Pew Research Center, America is exceptional in the nature of its political divide. There has been an increasingly stark disagreement between Democrats and Republicans on economy, racial justice, climate change, law enforcement, international engagement and a long list of other issues. The 2020 presidential election exacerbated these deep-seated divides. A month before the election, roughly 80 percent of the registered voters in both camps said their differences with the other side were about more than just politics and policies, but

also about core American values, and about 90 percent in both camps worried that a victory by the other would lead to “lasting harm” to the United States.

**Power checks and balances have mutated into veto politics.** The bipartisan divides intensified the veto practices inherent in the American system. The separation, check and balance of power have turned into vetoing each other. The two parties engaged in ferocious battles, paralyzing the Congress and deadlocking the decision-making. While the outbreak of COVID-19 went out of control, the two parties not only brawled with each other on multiple issues, but also took the bill for the second round of COVID-19 relief measures as their campaigning tool for election. The two parties filibustered and stalled each other for votes, leaving millions of grassroots people in livelihood predicament. The veto politics has caused acute confrontations between the Congress and the administrative system, as well as between the federal and state authorities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, frequent contradictions have taken place between the Republican president and the Democrats-dominated House of Representatives, and between the federal government and Democratic “blue states.” The federal government competed with the states in the scramble for anti-virus supplies, and was often at odds with the “blue states” in epidemic response policies, thus causing people to be at a loss. Massachusetts once arranged to buy 3 million N95 masks for urgent needs, but federal authorities seized them at the Port of New York.

**The post-election riots highlighted the American democracy crisis.** The election did not resolve the political differences in the United States, but heated up social confrontation. A Nov. 4, 2020 report on the website of the Guardian noted that whoever won the 2020 election, America would remain a country bitterly divided and the politics of anger and hatred would be the legacy. Claiming that the election was tainted by fraud, the defeated Republican camp refused to accept the presidential election results and filed lawsuits in Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Georgia, calling for a recount of ballots to overturn the election by pressuring and intimidating local election officials. Donald Trump repeatedly insisted that he would never accept the election defeat, calling on his supporters to protest against the congressional certification of the election result in Washington, D.C. The election dispute eventually turned into riots.

On Jan. 6, 2021, tens of thousands of protesters who refused to accept the election defeat staged a “Save America” rally in Washington, D.C. A large number of protesters breached security and stormed into the Capitol building, where they tussled with police officers. Members of the U.S. Congress were hurriedly evacuated wearing their gas masks, as the police fired tear gas and shot to disperse the protesters. Protesters acted recklessly after occupying the venue. The riots resulted in multiple injuries and an interruption of the congressional certification of the electoral victory. Washington, D.C. imposed curfew and entered a state of emergency. On Jan. 7, 2021, U.S. Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund said that thousands of individuals involved in violent riotous actions attacked officers with metal pipes, chemical irritants and other weapons, injuring more than 50 police officers. The police arrested more than 100 people in total. On Jan. 7, 2021, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle

Bachelet said in a statement that the attack on the U.S. Capitol demonstrated clearly the destructive impact of sustained, deliberate distortion of facts, and incitement to violence and hatred by political leaders.

**The political chaos in Washington shocked the world.** American media called it the first time in modern American history that the power transfer has turned into a real combat in the Washington corridor of power. They blamed that violence, chaos and vandalism had shaken the American democracy to the core, dealing a heavy blow to America's image as a democratic beacon. The French daily Le Figaro commented that the violent incident stoked up the resentment and distrust among different camps in American society, plunging America into an unknown situation. The Foreign Policy said in a commentary that the United States has become what its leaders used to condemn: being unable to avoid violence and bloody destruction during transfer of power. Lebanese diplomat Mohamad Safa commented via social media, "If the United States saw what the United States is doing in the United States, the United States would invade the United States to liberate the United States from the tyranny of the United States."

### **III. Ethnic minorities devastated by racial discrimination**

In the United States, racism exists in a comprehensive, systematic and continuous manner. Former U.S. President Barack Obama said helplessly that "for millions of Americans, being treated differently on account of race is tragically, painfully, maddeningly 'normal'." In June 2020, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet made two consecutive media statements, emphasizing that the protests triggered by the death of George Floyd, an African American, highlighted not only the issue of police brutality against people of color, but also inequality and racial discrimination in health, education, and employment in the United States. The grievances need to be heard and addressed if the country is to move on from its tragic history of racism and violence. On June 17, 2020, the 43rd session of the UN Human Rights Council held an urgent debate on racism. This was the first time in the history of the Human Rights Council that an urgent meeting on the human rights issues of the United States was held. On Nov. 9, 2020, the United States was severely criticized by the international community for racial discrimination when it was in the third cycle of Universal Periodic Review by the United Nations Human Rights Council. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination of the United Nations and other institutions pointed out that racism in the United States is horrific. The white nationalists, neo-Nazis, and the Ku Klux Klan overtly use racist slogans, chants and salutes to promote white supremacy and incite racial discrimination and hatred. Political figures increasingly use divisive language in attempts to marginalize racial, ethnic and religious minorities, which amounts to inciting and fueling violence, intolerance and bigotry. Tendayi Achiume, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, believes that for black people in the United States, the domestic legal system has utterly failed to acknowledge and confront the racial injustice and discrimination that are so deeply entrenched in law enforcement.



**Rights of the American Indians were violated.** The United States has carried out systematic ethnic cleansing and massacres of Indians in history, and committed countless crimes against humanity and genocides. American Indians still live a life like a second-class citizen and their rights have been trampled over. Many indigenous peoples, such as the American Indians, who live in low-income communities in the United States, suffer from higher rates of cancer and heart diseases from toxic radioactive environments. Many indigenous people live near hazardous waste disposal sites and have an abnormally high rate of birth defects. On Aug. 5, 2020, the report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes, submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 36/15, decried the situation of indigenous peoples in the United States. They are exposed to toxic pollutants, including nuclear waste, released or produced by extractive industries, agriculture and manufacturing. The soil and lead dust pollution from mining waste poses a more significant health threat for indigenous peoples in the United States than other groups. The report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief in accordance with General Assembly resolution 74/145 found out that the United States had opened up the lands of indigenous communities, including the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, to investment without the communities' consent or in contravention of their customary and collective land ownership. The report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, released in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 43/14, said that some of the most devastating effects of COVID-19 had been felt by racial and ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples. The hospitalization rate of Native Americans was five times that of non-Hispanic white Americans. The death rate of Native Americans also far exceeded that of white Americans.

**Bullying against Asian Americans escalated.** Since the pandemic began, the incidents of Asian Americans being humiliated and even assaulted in public have been found everywhere, and some American politicians have misled the public on purpose. "It's very lonely to be Asians in the United States during the raging pandemic," said a report published on the website of the New York Times on April 16, 2020. A survey of young Asian Americans showed that in the past year, a quarter of young Asian Americans became targets of racial bullying; fueled by the racist remarks of the then American leader, nearly half of the respondents expressed pessimism about their situation, and a quarter of the respondents expressed fear about the situation of themselves and their families, according to a report published on the website of the National Broadcasting Corporation on Sept. 17, 2020. Tendayi Achiume, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, said on March 23 and April 21, 2020, that politicians of relevant countries took the initiative to make open or suggestive xenophobic remarks, adopting alternative names with ulterior motives for the novel coronavirus. Their remarks that associated a specific disease with a specific country or ethnicity were irresponsible and disturbing, according to the Special Rapporteur. U.S. government officials openly incited, induced, and condoned racial discrimination,

which was tantamount to humiliating modern human rights concepts.

**The high level of hate crimes highlighted the deterioration of race relations.** An FBI report released in 2020 showed that 57.6 percent of the 8,302 single-bias hate crime offenses reported by law enforcement agencies in 2019 were motivated by race/ethnicity/ancestry. Of these offenses, 48.4 percent were motivated by anti-black or African American bias; 15.8 percent stemmed from anti-white bias; 14.1 percent were classified as anti-Hispanic or Latino bias; 4.3 percent resulted from anti-Asian bias. Among the 4,930 victims of racial hate crimes, as many as 2,391 were of African descent. Some Americans blamed the outbreak of the pandemic on Asian Americans, and there had been an increase in the number of hate crimes and incidents of harassment and discrimination against Asian Americans, according to a report published on the website of USA Today on May 20. Statistics from the civil rights organization Stop AAPI Hate showed there were over 2,300 anti-Asian hate crimes in the U.S. during the first seven months of 2020.

**Unchecked police violence led to frequent deaths of African Americans.** On March 13, 2020, Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old African-American woman, was shot eight times and killed by police in her own home. On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a 46-year-old African American was killed after a white policeman knelt on his neck in the street. On Aug. 23, 2020, Jacob Blake, a 29-year-old African American, was severely injured after police officers shot him seven times in the back when Blake was getting into a car. At the time, Blake's three kids were in the car, witnessing the horrible act. American police shot and killed a total of 1,127 people in 2020, with no killing reported in just 18 days, according to Mapping Police Violence. African Americans made up 13 percent of the U.S. population, but accounted for 28 percent of the people killed by the police. African Americans were approximately three times more likely than white people to be killed by police. From 2013 to 2020, about 98 percent of the police involved in shooting cases were not charged with a crime, and the number of convicted was even smaller.

**People of color were more harmed by the epidemic.** The infection rate and death rate of COVID-19 in the United States showed significant racial differences, with the infection rate, hospitalization rate and death rate of African Americans being three times, five times and twice that of white people respectively, according to a report delivered by the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent to the UN Human Rights Council on Aug. 21, 2020. "Nothing brings into sharper relief America's color disparities than life and death in the Great Lockdown," said a report published on the website of the Financial Times on May 15, 2020. Racial disparities in the epidemic extend to children, according to a report released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Aug. 7, 2020. Latino and black children were hospitalized with COVID-19 at a rate nine times and six times that of white kids, respectively. Barbara Ferrer, director of public health for Los Angeles County, said the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus on black and Latino residents is rooted in the impact of racism and discrimination on the access to the resources and opportunities that are needed to good health, according to the website of the Los Angeles Times on July 10, 2020. COVID-19 kills far more people of color than white

Americans, which could be attributed to America's unequal education and economic systems that disproportionately leave people of color out of higher-wage jobs, discrimination in housing that corralled people of color into tightly packed neighborhoods, and environmental policies designed by white power brokers at the expense of the poor, an article by USA Today said. Of the 10 U.S. counties with the highest death rates from COVID-19, seven have populations where people of color make up the majority, according to data compiled by USA Today. Of the top 50 counties with the highest death rates, 31 are populated mostly by people of color.

**People of color faced an even greater threat of unemployment.** The Guardian commented in an article on April 28, 2020 that the "last hired, first fired" phenomenon was the most frustrating reality for African Americans. A report released by the U.S. Department of Labor on May 8, 2020 revealed the unemployment rate of African Americans and Latinos soared to 16.7 percent and 18.9 percent respectively in April, both the highest on record. The Washington Post reported on June 4, 2020 that after the Great Lockdown in spring, fewer than half of all black adults had a job. Figures released by the U.S. Department of Labor in September showed the jobless rate for the black people almost doubled that for the white. The Christian Science Monitor reported on July 20, 2020 that trade union leaders called for a national workers strike in more than two dozen U.S. cities to protest systemic racism and economic inequality that had only worsened during the novel coronavirus pandemic.

**Systemic racial discrimination existed in law enforcement and justice.** The Courier Journal reported on its website on Dec. 17, 2020 that although black people make up about 20 percent of Louisville's driving-age population, they accounted for 57 percent of police searches, even though the police were far more likely to find contraband in searches of white people than black people. In the past three years, black people made up 43.5 percent of arrests by the Louisville Metro Police Department. African Americans made up around 13 percent of the U.S. population, but represented almost a third of the country's prison population, which meant that there were more than 1,000 African-American prisoners for every 100,000 African American population. People of color constitute approximately one-third of the U.S. population under 18, but two-thirds of incarcerated minors, according to a report by the National Conference of State Legislatures on July 15, 2020. Iowa Public Radio News reported on Dec. 18, 2020 that in Iowa's prisons, black Iowans were imprisoned at a rate 11 times that of white Iowans. Black people were probably sentenced to a longer jail term for the same offense. The Los Angeles Times reported on Sept. 15, 2020 that black people have been over-represented on death rows across the United States and killers of black people are less likely to face the death penalty than people who kill white people. Davis Vanguard reported on Dec. 4, 2020 that people of color account for a disproportionate 43 percent of executions in the U.S. since 1976, and 55 percent of defendants currently awaiting execution are people of color. "We live in a country where our criminal justice system is defined by the size of your wallet and the color of your skin," said an article published by the Miami Herald on Dec. 18, 2020.

**Workplace racial discrimination was deeply rooted.** According to a CBS News report on Oct. 7, 2020, over 20 current and former black agents interviewed all

described some sort of racial discrimination while in the FBI. Of the top 10 leadership positions in the FBI, all are currently held by white men. Currently, only 4 percent of the 13,000 FBI agents around the world are black, and black women only account for 1 percent, a number that has stayed virtually the same for decades. There were long-standing problems at the FBI such as the disproportionate weeding out of black applicants during the training process. As head of the FBI's Black Affairs Diversity Committee, Eric Jackson called it "institutionalized racism." According to a report by the Los Angeles Times on July 2, 2020, Facebook Inc. was accused of systemic discrimination in hiring, compensation and promotion of black people. Facebook's own figures showed just 1.5 percent of employees in technical roles in the U.S. were black in 2019, and 3.1 percent were black among senior leadership. Those percentages have barely budged even as the company's employees grew by 400 percent over the past five years.

**Social discrimination against ethnic minorities was widespread.** A poll conducted by the Wall Street Journal and NBC News on July 9, 2020 found that 56 percent of the U.S. voters believe American society is racist and blacks and Hispanics are discriminated against. The Los Angeles Times reported on July 14, 2020 that after the death of George Floyd, more white Americans recognized the serious racial discrimination in the United States. A July 2020 survey showed that compared with February, white respondents are 18 percentage points more likely to believe black Americans are discriminated against frequently (from 22 percent to 40 percent), 10 percentage points more likely to believe Latinos are discriminated against frequently (from 22 percent to 32 percent), and 13 percentage points more likely to believe Asians are discriminated against frequently (from 7 percent to 20 percent).

**Inequality between races worsened.** According to researchers from the University of Chicago and University of Notre Dame, the U.S. poverty rate jumped by 2.4 percentage points from June to November 2020, while the poverty rate among black Americans went up by 3.1 percentage points. Statistics showed the median white household has 41 times more wealth (measured as the sum of assets held by a family minus total household debt) than the median black family and 22 times more than the median Latino family. Citing data released by the Federal Reserve, the Associated Press reported on Oct. 13, 2020 that only 33.5 percent of black households owned stocks in 2019, compared with 61 percent for white households. USA Today reported on Oct. 23, 2020 that in the first quarter of 2020, the national homeownership rate for white households was 73.7 percent, but only 44 percent of black households owned a home. The Washington Post reported on June 4, 2020 that more than one in five black families now report they often or sometimes do not have enough food -- more than three times the rate for white families. ABC News reported on Oct. 11, 2020 that 15.7 percent of Latinos lived in poverty in 2019, a percentage more than double that of the white people.

#### **IV. Continuous Social Unrest Threatens Public Safety**

The government failed to maintain proper law and order, and shootings and

violent crimes, which were already high in incidence, recorded new highs during the COVID-19 pandemic, causing panic among members of the public. The police's unrestrained use of violence in law enforcement triggered waves of protests that swept across the country. The police had abused their force to suppress protesters, and attacked and arrested journalists on a large scale, further fueling public anger and continuous social unrest.

**Crime rates were on the rise amid the pandemic.** While outdoor activities were down drastically as a result of various epidemic response measures, the crime rates were up in large cities amid the pandemic. According to the FBI's Preliminary Uniform Crime Report released in September 2020, in the first half of 2020, the number of murder and nonnegligent manslaughter offenses increased 14.8 percent year on year, with cities with populations of 250,000 to 500,000 reporting an increase of 26 percent. During the same period, the number of arson offenses increased 19 percent year on year, while such offenses rose 52 percent in cities with populations of 1 million and over. Murders in Chicago spiked by 37 percent, while arson in the city was up 52.9 percent. New York City recorded an increase of 23 percent in homicides, while Los Angeles saw murders rise by 14 percent.

**The number of violent crimes remained high.** According to FBI reports released in 2020, more than 1.2 million violent crimes occurred in the United States in 2019, including 16,425 murders, 139,815 rapes, 267,988 robberies, and 821,182 aggravated assaults, translating to five murders, over 40 rapes, 80 robberies and 250 aggravated assaults per 100,000 inhabitants.

**Gun sales and shootings hit record high.** A study from the University of California, Davis found a significant increase in firearm violence in the United States associated with the coronavirus-related surge in firearm purchasing. A new destabilizing sense as virus fears spread had been motivating even people who had considered themselves anti-gun to buy weapons for the first time. The Washington Post reported on its website on Jan. 19, 2021 that, COVID-19 lockdowns, anti-racism protests and election strife had led to record gun sales of about 23 million in 2020, a 64 percent increase over 2019 sales. The 2020 numbers include purchases by more than 8 million first-time buyers, according to the National Shooting Sports Foundation. USA Today reported on its website on Dec. 18, 2020 that, with regard to gun homicides, the United States has historically reported a rate about 25 times higher than other wealthy nations. According to data from Gun Violence Archive, more than 41,500 people died by gun violence in 2020 nationwide, an average of more than 110 a day, which is a record. There had been 592 mass shootings nationwide, an average of more than 1.6 a day. Shootings in Chatham County of North Carolina, Riverside County of California, and Morgan County of Alabama each claimed seven lives. A deadly weekend in Chicago came at the end of May, when 85 people were shot, 24 fatally. In the afternoon of Jan. 9, 2021, 32-year-old Jason Nightengale went on a random shooting rampage in Chicago, leaving three people killed and four others wounded.

**George Floyd's death from police brutality sparked unrest.** On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a 46-year-old African-American man from Minnesota, died after

a white police officer knelt on his neck for eight minutes during an arrest for forgery. Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey said what he saw was “wrong on every level,” noting, “Being black in America should not be a death sentence.” Civil rights attorney Ben Crump said in a statement, “This abusive, excessive and inhumane use of force cost the life of a man who was being detained by the police for questioning about a non-violent charge.” Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of the National Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, said, “The depths of despair are enormous right now for black people in this country. You pile on unchecked police violence and it makes for a perfect storm.” The police brutality sparked visceral outrage, leading to protests in support of Black Lives Matter throughout the United States, as well as in other countries. The unrest escalated across the nation, with protesters blocking the streets and building barricades to confront the police. A large number of police stations, public institutions and shopping malls were looted. The Guardian reported on its website on June 8, 2020 that, since George Floyd’s death at the hands of police, about 140 cities in all 50 states throughout the United States have seen protests and demonstrations in response to the killing.

**The demonstrators were suppressed by force.** In the face of visceral public grievances, the then U.S. administration leader added fuel to the fire by deploying a large number of National Guard soldiers across the country and calling for shooting. Targeted with flying rubber bullets and tear gas on site, the public were horrified and the society fell into chaos. U.S. federal agents had been grabbing protesters seemingly without cause. More than 10,000 individuals had been arrested, including many innocent people. The disclosure of the shooting death of Breonna Taylor, an African-American woman, during a police raid fueled a renewed wave of Black Lives Matter protests in 2020, with the city of Louisville alone reporting arrests of 435 individuals during the movement. The Guardian reported on its website on Oct. 29, 2020 that, at least 950 instances of police brutality against civilians and journalists during anti-racism protests had occurred since May 2020. The police had used rubber bullets, tear gas and “unlawful lethal force” against protesters.

**Journalists had been subject to unparalleled attacks by law enforcement.** There were at least 117 cases of journalists being arrested or detained while on the job covering anti-racism protests in the United States in 2020, a 1,200-percent increase from the figure in 2019. The Guardian reported on its website on June 5, 2020 that, reporters were beaten, pepper-sprayed and arrested by police in numbers never before documented in the United States. There were 148 arrests or attacks on journalists in the country within one week after the George Floyd incident, which was more than what was recorded during the previous three years combined. The Committee to Protect Journalists said in a statement on Dec. 14, 2020 that, U.S. journalists faced unprecedented attacks in 2020, the majority by law enforcement.

## **V. Growing Polarization Between Rich and Poor Aggravates Social Inequality**

The COVID-19 epidemic plunged the United States into the worst economic downturn since World War II. A large number of businesses shut down, workers lost

their jobs, the gap between rich and poor widened, and the lives of the people at the bottom of society were miserable.

**The rich-poor divide further widened.** The website of Bloomberg reported on Oct. 8, 2020 that the 50 richest Americans now hold almost as much wealth as the poorest 165 million people in the country. The richest 1 percent of Americans have a combined net worth that is 16.4 times that of the poorest 50 percent. The epidemic has aggravated wealth inequality. The website of Forbes reported on Dec. 11, 2020 that over the past months of the pandemic, the collective net worth of America's 614 billionaires has increased by 931 billion U.S. dollars. America's poverty rate jumped to 11.7 percent in November 2020, up from 9.3 percent in June, according to researchers from the University of Chicago and University of Notre Dame.

**Out-of-control epidemic led to mass unemployment.** The speed and magnitude of business closures and job losses defied comparison, according to a report on the website of The Washington Post on May 9, 2020. Some 20.5 million people abruptly lost their jobs, which was roughly double what the nation experienced during the entire financial crisis from 2007 to 2009. In April 2020, the unemployment rate soared to 21.2 percent for people with less than a high school degree, surpassing the previous all-time high set in the aftermath of the Great Recession. The website of USA Today reported on Aug. 8, 2020 that 33 U.S. metro areas had a jobless rate of over 15 percent in June 2020. About 11.5 million American women lost their jobs between February and May 2020.

**Tens of millions of people were in food crisis in the epidemic.** More than 50 million people -- one in six Americans, including one in four children -- could experience food insecurity in 2020, according to an analysis report updated in October 2020 by Feeding America. The website of the Guardian reported on Nov. 25, 2020 that nationwide, demand for food aid has plateaued at about 60 percent higher than pre-pandemic times. Millions of Americans must rely on charity to put Thanksgiving dinner on the table in 2020.

**Health insurance coverage plummeted.** America has no universal health insurance because of political polarization and the number of people enjoying health insurance has shrunk sharply due to the epidemic. From March to May 2020, an estimated 27 million Americans have lost health insurance coverage in the pandemic. In Texas alone, the number of uninsured jumped from about 4.3 million to nearly 4.9 million, which means that three out of every 10 Texans are uninsured.

**The digital divide aggravated educational inequality.** In 2018, nearly 17 million children lived in homes without internet connection, and more than 7 million did not have computers at home, according to a report that analyzed census data for that year. The website of Politico reported on Sept. 23, 2020 that one in three students in Baltimore city, which is only an hour's drive from the U.S. Capitol, has no computers. One in three African American, Latino or American Indian families do not have home internet. Virtual learning became a mainstream education pattern during the epidemic. Compared with their wealthier peers, low-income and minority children are less likely to have appropriate technology and home environments for independent study because of their family backgrounds and therefore are at a disadvantage in

e-learning, further aggravating the educational divide caused by poverty and racial inequality.

## **VI. Trampling on International Rules Results in Humanitarian Disasters**

At a time when global unity is needed to fight the pandemic, the United States, however, persists in pursuing an agenda of “America first,” isolationism, and unilateralism, imposing sanctions wantonly, bullying and threatening international organizations, and treating asylum seekers cruelly, thus becoming the biggest troublemaker to global security and stability.

**The United States withdrew from WHO.** In order to shirk its responsibility for its disastrous anti-pandemic measures, the Trump administration tried every means to scapegoat the World Health Organization (WHO) by fabricating false charges against the organization. On April 14, 2020, the U.S. government announced its suspension of paying dues to the WHO, which was widely criticized by the international community. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued a statement on April 14, 2020, saying that when the world was fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, it was inappropriate to reduce the resources required by the WHO or any other humanitarian organization for operations. President of the American Medical Association, Patrice Harris, stated on April 15, 2020 that combating the pandemic required international cooperation and halting funding to the WHO at this critical moment was a dangerous step in the wrong direction. On April 15, 2020, an online article of the Guardian commented that when the world desperately needed to jointly overcome this threat that the world had never experienced before, the suspension of the WHO dues by the U.S. government was an act that lacked morality and disrupted the international order, and was a horrible betrayal to global solidarity. In July 2020, the U.S. government brazenly announced its withdrawal from the WHO despite the opposition of the international community.

**The United States walked away from its commitments to and withdrew from the Paris Agreement.** The United States, as the largest cumulative emitter of greenhouse gases in the world, should bear the greatest share of emission reduction based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. However, the United States ran counter to the trend of the times and officially withdrew from the Paris Agreement on Nov. 4, 2020, becoming the only country among the nearly 200 contracting parties to quit the treaty. The international community generally believed that the U.S. move was politically short-sighted, unscientific, and morally irresponsible. “Having the U.S. pull out of Paris is likely to reduce efforts to mitigate, and therefore increase the number of people who are put into a life-or-death situation because of the impacts of climate change,” said Cornell University climate scientist Natalie Mahowald, a coauthor of UN science reports on global warming.

**Bullying actions threatened international organizations.** On June 11, 2020, the U.S. government authorized economic sanctions and travel restrictions against workers of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and their family members for investigating American troops and intelligence officials for possible war crimes in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The U.S. sanctions targeting ICC staff were “a direct



attack on the institution's judicial independence," according to an article on the website of UN NEWS on June 25, 2020. On June 19, 2020, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a resolution strongly condemning police brutality that led to the death of African American George Floyd. Citing remarks from human rights groups, the AFP said that the final version of the resolution removed the call for further investigations and stripped away any mention of the racism and police brutality in the United States due to "hard lobbying." By bullying other countries, the United States watered down the text of the resolution, escaped from international probes for another time, and ran counter to the African descent in the United States and victims of police violence, said the American Civil Liberties Union.

**Unilateral sanctions aggravated humanitarian crisis.** At a critical time when COVID-19 spread globally and endangered human life, health, and wellbeing, all countries should work together to respond to the pandemic and maintain global public health security. However, during this pandemic, the U.S. government still imposed unilateral sanctions on countries such as Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, and Syria, which made it difficult for the sanctioned countries to obtain needed anti-pandemic medical supplies in a timely manner. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said on March 24, 2020, that in the case of a global pandemic, sanctions would hinder medical work and increase risks for everyone. She argued that to maintain global public health security and protect the rights and lives of millions of people in sanctioned countries, sanctions should be relaxed or suspended in certain sectors. A group of 24 senior diplomats from various countries urged the U.S. government to ease medical and humanitarian sanctions on Iran, noting that such move "could potentially save the lives of hundreds of thousands of ordinary Iranians," according to a report on the website of the Guardian on April 6, 2020. On April 30, 2020, UN human rights experts said that the U.S. embargo on Cuba and sanctions on other countries seriously undermined international cooperation to curb the pandemic and save lives. The experts called on the United States to implement UN resolutions, lift its economic and financial embargo on Cuba and withdraw measures that prevent Cuba from financing the purchase of medicine, medical equipment, food and other essential goods. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, the Special Rapporteur on human rights for safe drinking water and sanitation, and the Special Rapporteur on the right to education issued a joint statement on May 6, 2020, saying that the U.S. sanctions on Venezuela were seriously harming the human rights of the people in the country. They urged the United States to immediately lift sanctions that exacerbated the suffering of the people when the pandemic raged in the country. On Dec. 29, 2020, Alena Douhan, United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights, called on the United States to remove unilateral sanctions against Syria, noting that the sanctions would exacerbate the already dire humanitarian crisis in Syria and run roughshod over the Syrian people's rights to live, health, and development.

**Asylum seekers were treated cruelly.** According to a report of CNN on Sept. 30, 2020, in the 2020 fiscal year, 21 people died in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody, which was more than double the number of deaths in the

fiscal year 2019 and marked the highest annual death toll since 2005. A report published on the website of the Los Angeles Times on Oct. 30, 2020 noted that a huge number of migrant children were stranded in custody for the long haul. Data showed that of the 266,000 migrant children held in government custody in recent years, over 25,000 had been detained for longer than 100 days, close to 1,000 migrant children had spent more than a year in refugee shelters, and some of them had spent more than five years in custody. As reported by multiple U.S. media outlets, dozens of women from Latin American and Caribbean states have filed a class action lawsuit in federal court in Georgia, claiming that they were subjected to unnecessary gynecological surgeries without their consent while in ICE custody, including uterus removal in some cases. They said these unwanted surgeries caused severe harm to their physical and mental health. The Guardian website reported on Oct. 22, 2020 that Cameroonian asylum seekers were threatened and forced to sign their own deportation orders. Those who refused to sign were choked, beaten, and pepper-sprayed, with some put in handcuffs to have their fingerprints forcibly taken in place of a signature on orders of removal, by which the asylum seekers waive their rights to further immigration hearings and accept deportation.

**Forced deportation of immigrant children continued during the COVID-19 pandemic.** According to data tallied by the ICE, as of Jan. 14, 2021, a total of 8,848 detainees had been confirmed as COVID-19 cases. According to a report on the website of the Los Angeles Times on Nov. 18, 2020, the U.S. government had expelled at least 8,800 unaccompanied immigrant children despite serious protection risks during the COVID-19 outbreak. According to UNICEF, migrant children who returned from the United States to Mexico and Central America were facing danger and discrimination.

**The United States pardoned criminals slaughtering civilians in other countries.** On Dec. 30, 2020, the Working Group on the use of mercenaries, a mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council, issued a statement, saying that the then U.S. President's pardon of four Blackwater contractors convicted of war crimes in Iraq violated U.S. obligations under international law. The statement called on all states to the Geneva Conventions to condemn the U.S. action. The four Blackwater contractors were found to have committed a massacre at Nisour Square in Baghdad in 2007, which left 14 unarmed civilians dead and at least 17 people wounded, according to the statement. Pardoning the Blackwater contractors was an affront to justice and the victims of the Nisour Square massacre and their families, said the Chair of the Working Group. Pardoning them "contributes to impunity and has the effect of emboldening others to commit such crimes in the future," said Marta Hurtado, a spokesperson with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.