

**Program on Human Rights and the Global Economy (PHRGE)
Northeastern University School of Law**

**Statement on Human Rights and Racial Murders
June 8, 2020**

The persistence of systemic police violence against Black people in the United States, exemplified by the unredressed killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Ahmaud Arbery, and state-sanctioned murders of many others, is inexorably linked to the permanence of racist structural inequality and human rights violations reflected in the food deserts, lead-tainted water, substandard housing and homelessness, double-prevalence of almost every infectious and non-infectious disease, including COVID-19, chronic unemployment, and “cancer” alleys and other environmental degradations imposed on African-Americans and others of African descent. Generational poverty, generational burdens of poor health and inadequate health care, and generational segregation of where and when Black people can be for housing, education, work, recreation, and even traveling are legacies of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the Jim-Crow era, and all their modern equivalents: mass incarceration, chronic un- and under-employment, political disenfranchisement, heightened vulnerability to COVID-19 and other diseases, and exploitation and oppression in almost all social spheres.

State power and police violence have been critical tools in the suppression of Black people’s human and civil rights. The long history of public and private lynching in the U.S. has always been embedded with police collusion and participation, sometimes by whole departments, other times by rogue, but tolerated rogue, elements. Now, we see these public spectacles on video instead of in the public square and on postcards, but the evidence has long been placed before us.

PHRGE exists to promote positive, substantive human rights and to secure the dignity of all people everywhere and the rights of all people to the prerequisites of human flourishing. We commit to working with BLSA, our Black students and students-of-color more broadly, and with all others bent on promoting racial justice, and to working on how to dismantle the structural racial inequality and systemic violence that is such an affront to the world we want to build.

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