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UPR-INFO Pre-session of the
United States of America

We the peoples. We the peoples are the human rights defenders. Historically, it's been a sliver of society brave enough to stand up for fundamental freedoms so we can all appreciate human rights in our constitution and codified international human rights law from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is customary law, to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the law of the land.

Today, I am addressing you in the dusk of August on two significant anniversaries in America — the brutal lynching of Emmett Till and Martin Luther King Jr "I Have a Dream" speech at the March on Washington.

I could fill the entire time allocated saying the names of we the peoples murdered at the hands of law enforcement and growing number of racist vigilantes. However, I would rather dedicate the time to sharing recommendations so we can avoid additional atrocities of we the peoples into the future. We humble request you to deliver these recommendations in November to deliver a rebuke of the recent dereliction of duty as a former and founding chair of the August body of the UN Commission on Human Rights that drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The current human rights record is reprehensible. You, UN member states, have a moral imperative to illuminate the real rights record and speak truth to power in peace through recommendations rooted in experience of directly impacted people.

The pathology of raw racism is prevalent in the populism from the presidency enabling segments of society to return with their prejudice armed with violence. That along with historic systemic racism creates extra violations to human rights defenders in our nation and weakens our position in the world to stand in solidarity with defenders everywhere on earth

The current conditions are absolutely catastrophic for our country and global civil society. On the domestic front, there is deception and a denial of dignity in daily discourse. National norms are being stripped systematically from the inside of the institutions created for checks and balance and protecting the human rights enshrined in the Constitution. On the global diplomacy fora, there is an unraveling of universal rights through an inalienable commission weakening world rules . You, UN member states, must stand in solidarity for moral standards. We ask your recommendations to address the current deplorable actions by the administration. We also ask you to balance your recommendations with the immediate issues while also looking to larger systemic challenges that deserve recommendations to realize human rights.

Disproportionate and despicable deeds have increased with two major pandemics flaring in the nation. COVID-19 has exposed the existing conditions related to economic, social and cultural rights relating to right to health, water and housing. Racism is the preexisting condition that has also received great deal of attention with police murdering black Americans. Unfortunately, we could spend entire allocated time reading the numerous names of people killed by authorities with no accountability. However, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and just this week Jacob Blake have sparked the greatest number of human rights defenders going into the streets consistently facing increased militarized police and now militia.

The brutal murder of George Floyd shocked the quarantined nation under COVID-19. For nearly 9 minutes, an officer kept his knee on the neck while Floyd said what we have heard before, "I can't breathe." More and more human rights defenders went into the streets. For the first time, hundreds of thousands, in every city and state, people of all ethnic backgrounds, became human rights defenders. From the death of Floyd some reforms were initiated in Minnesota and across the country. It's important to create a human rights report card and followup every year and especially around elections with candidates seeking leadership seats. The UN began with an Urgent Debate at the 44th session, there must be followup and if reforms lag, a call for a \Special Session with a resolution including a Commission of Inquiry.

Minnesota is significant for many reasons beyond Floyd's murder. The American Indian Movement (AIM) was born there due to police brutality historically. The indigenous peoples were denied rights on the reservations and youth were forced to flee seeking opportunities in urban areas. In the 1970s, indigenous peoples rights were violated. Indigenous rights defenders continue to be targeted. Our recommendation, we call for the immediate and unconditional release of Leonard Peltier, a Chippewa, Lakota and Dakota elder. We also note a pattern of brutal force that continues to escalate with increased militarization of the local police forces. This administration has also signed executive orders in partnership with multinational corporations and not the we the peoples. We the peoples have suffered many abuses with no accountability for water defenders. We recommend a full examination along with Truth and Reconciliation Commission covering the Lakota people

treaty and recent violations by law enforcement. Starting with Standing Rock, the land and water rights must be protected. Mni Wiconi must be respected in law of the land.

Regarding human rights defenders of police brutality, Mumia Abu-Jamal continues to fight for his innocence. In 2001, his death sentence was overturned. However, Mumia remains behind bars. The core concerns from decades ago persist and are highlighted with the Black Lives Matter movement exposing the multiple killings and murders of black and brown people at the hands of law enforcement responsible to uphold the human rights persistently violated. For recommendations, we call on the U.S. to accept and act upon recommendations from the UN human rights charter and treaty bodies consistently raised by UN Human Rights Council special procedure visits including the Working Group on African Descent and the UN Human Rights Committee and CERD Committee. We recommend the U.S. Senate ratify the remaining core human rights covenants and conventions.

While the people rise up utilizing their human rights. The government obligated to guarantee fundamental freedoms are instead arresting and hauling off human rights defenders in unmarked vans. Perhaps more unsettling, however, is the treatment of protestors as they are being released from federal custody. After jailing protestors on charges of “failing to obey,” unmarked federal agents are prohibiting released offenders from returning to protests as they await misdemeanor trials. Recent release documents are found to require that freed protesters to avoid “protests, rallies, assemblies, or public gatherings in the state of Oregon.”

For those who have complied with orders to avoid rallies, they feel as if they had no other choice. As detained protester Bailey Dreibelbis put it, “It was pretty cut-and-dried, just, ‘These are your conditions for [getting out] of here.’ If I didn’t take it, I would still be in holding. It wasn’t really an option, in my eyes.” Constitutional scholars have found that conditioning one’s release on pledge to avoid further protests is in direct violation of the First Amendment’s right to free assembly. We recommend immediate cessation of these actions and independent inquiry providing oversight on these violations and also dropping criminal charges against human rights defenders.

The recent example of human rights defenders added to the community of human rights enforcers is those standing up against gun violence destroying our families and nations. The USA has both the highest absolute and per capita rates of gun ownership in the world. The U.S. government is failing to protect individuals from persistent gun violence subsequently denying people their civil and political rights under the ICCPR including the right to life, to security of person and to be free from discrimination. Youth have led the way highlighted in the Parkland movement demanding a new direction and responsibility among the nation to protect innocent people. We recommend national laws to end gun violence immediately. We must honor the youth survivors of gun violence with laws rooted in human rights.

Another dimension is the climate of encouraging people to go into the streets armed is alarming under this administration. The Republican National Convention began with a couple that pointed guns at human rights defenders being on the main bill in prime time. By the time, it concluded, two people were killed and one injured by Kyle Howard Rittenhouse—the 17-year-old domestic terrorist, who drove across state lines and shot three people and killed two of them during Kenosha protests. Kyle was seen earlier in 2020 in the front row of a rally for the current president.

Vigilante violence is now added to militarized police violating the rights of human rights defenders. In Kenosha, the police shared waters to self-declared militia. Throughout this presidency, vigilantes have been a constant, menacing presence at protests against police brutality. They have shot protesters, attacked them with cars, and beaten them while police often looked the other way. A stunning statistic is 497 times this year, vigilantes have violated human rights of those expressing and exercising fundamental freedoms. A staggering amount of violence directed at human rights defenders by the far-right has been documented, including 64 cases of simple assault, 38 incidents of vigilantes driving cars into demonstrators, and nine times shots were fired at protesters. This summer, six protesters were hit by vigilante bullets; three died from their wounds. The dataset also includes 387 incidents of intimidation, such as people using racist slurs, making threats, and brandishing firearms.

Illustrating all human rights are indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, since our last UPR, the right to life is denied and situation demands attention. From January 2015 - June 2020, 5,442 people were shot and killed by police.

We ask states to make recommendations to deal with these seeds of fascism in the United States with strong, SMART recommendations to protect human rights defenders.

A snapshot and systemic analysis share an alarming increase of actions by the administration. The U.S. federal government has executed more people this summer than in the last 57 years.

The Death Penalty is racist, arbitrary and proven error-prone. The U.S. should ratify the two optional protocols of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The U.S. must invite UN Human Rights Council special procedures to an official country visit reversing the recent trend not even responding to official OHCHR letters.

However, we live in unprecedented times today. We do. We have to organize with the fierce urgency of now balancing historical and holistic understanding of what previous generations of human rights defenders endured to forge a nation of dignity and freedom.

The current president has fomented fear. Then he doesn't condemn violence and racism. It illustrates a pattern of prejudice and pain toward people of color riding the racist rails.

Anyone raising concerns are treated under this administration as an enemy. It's unhealthy and undemocratic tearing away at our constitutional and International human rights.

We the peoples, human rights defenders, will continue to memorialize, mobilize and march. We will demand dignity and all rights under the Constitution and all international human rights instruments from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We have the capacity to contribute. We will exercise with efficacy for equality and equity.

There is stamina and strength in the streets. We also note there are strong societal institutions being tested and weakened by the White House from the inside. Yet, the checks and balances continue to challenge the authoritarian actions by the administration.

In conclusion, another historical point, on August 28, there was the Black National Convention as well as the historical March on Washington. This year, there were 50,000 people marching in Washington D.C., the day after the close of the Republican National Convention, creating their own fireworks at the Commitment march. Family survivors of those murdered spoke in the shadows of Abraham Lincoln. The broken promises demanded racial reckoning rooted in rights.

We ask you to make a commitment to the people of the U.S. Consider the choice and create a recommendation that will realize human rights in our nation and partner with we the peoples.

We recommend the immediate arrest of those officers that have violated right to life of our black and brown brothers and sisters. We call for justice. We demand demilitarization of police force. We call upon national and state action on statutes that authorize use of lethal force.

We also recommend there must be immediate investigation around the actions in front of the Episcopal Church in Washington D.C. across from the White House in the aftermath of George Floyd and other examples of extreme force against human rights defenders and media across the country.

We recommend release of all prisoners of conscience and human rights defenders behind bars. From Leonard Peltier to Mumia Abu Jamal, there must be immediate release. The current campaigns of land and water rights defenders from Mauna Kea to Standing Rock must have all charges dropped and the historical treaties honored.

We recommend human rights education curriculum in early education through high school. We recommend more colleges and universities offer four year degrees through higher education beyond the current limited law school courses.

We recommend the creation of a United States Commission on Human Rights rooted in the Paris Principles with an independent body committed to culture of human rights and explore truth and reconciliation. We call for the Commission to create studies addressing major issues illuminated in this plea and propose potential legislation to realize human rights in the U.S. We also call for completion of UN National Action Plans.

On that note, we reject the findings from Commission on Unalienable Rights as they undermine universal human rights and narrow categories of rights protection. We recommend abolition of this body and instead creating a permanent national body to implement all UN recommendations with human rights based approach with civil society.

We recommend immediate ratification of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to combat the current COVID-19 crisis. It is an invaluable instrument to create national policies beginning with right to health, water and housing. There must also be immediate ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to launch a new future of rights and fundamental freedoms for all. The current record of 3 ratifications out of 10 demand the more must be ratified immediately.

The U.S. must also implement recommendations from previous UN Human Rights Council special procedures instead of insulting the independent experts. The standing invitation must also return allowing for the 44 themed special procedures to assist today and in the aftermath of COVID-19.

Our recommendations we share today and your recommendations at the UPR of the USA will create a blueprint for a better future rooted in human rights and fundamental freedoms.

America has spoken, "I can't breathe. I can't breathe." At the upcoming UPR, please be the breath for we the peoples human rights defenders in the U.S.