



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on April 22, 2021

DOJ to Investigate “Potentially Systemic Policing Issues in Minneapolis”

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) on Wednesday [launched](#) a civil-rights investigation into the Minneapolis Police Department, acting less than 24 hours after a jury convicted former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin on all counts in the death of George Floyd.

The investigation will determine whether the police department engages in patterns or practices of policing that violate the Constitution or federal civil-rights laws. U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland stated, “Yesterday’s verdict in the state criminal trial does not address potentially systemic policing issues in Minneapolis.” Garland informed that DOJ lawyers will look at whether Minneapolis police use excessive force, including during protests, or engage in discriminatory conduct. The department will also examine police treatment of people with behavioral health problems.

“Pattern or practice” civil investigations presumably allow the federal government to review “potentially systemic issues” broadly within a police department and are often precursors to consent decrees, which constitute deals between the DOJ and local jurisdictions. Such investigations allow the federal government to enact changes within departments found to engage in practices considered “unconstitutional, “abusive,” and/or “discriminatory,” and were widely used by the Obama administration to carry out the federalization of “progressive” policing, as part of Obama’s plan for [Criminal Justice Reform](#).

The Obama administration seemed to make a habit of exacerbating tensions created by policing incidents involving black men. Now, it appears that Attorney General Garland, an Obama pick for the Supreme Court, is eager to continue this part of the former president’s legacy.

Conversely, the Trump administration moved to ban such agreements, with then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions arguing they demoralized local police officers. But last Friday — less than a week before the announcement of the Minneapolis probe — Garland [restored](#) the use of consent decrees between the DOJ and state and local governments.

Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo, the city’s first black police chief and a star prosecution witness in Chauvin’s trial, [said](#) he welcomed the investigation and pledged his department’s full cooperation.



Attorney General Merrick Garland /AP Images



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While it is true that the [rate of police shootings](#) of African Americans is much higher than that of any other ethnicity, at 30 per million, it is not because police are targeting blacks, but rather that the number of crimes committed by black Americans are disproportionately greater than that of any other group.

Consider [FBI statistics](#) of arrests for violent crimes in 2019 (the most current data available). White Americans, who represent 61 percent of the U.S. population, committed 59.1 percent of violent crimes, while black Americans, representing 13 percent of the population, committed 36.4 percent of violent crimes. Moreover, black males, who represent just 5.5 percent of the population, constitute 54 percent of *all* arrests for robbery and 53 percent of arrests for murder. They also disproportionately possess and carry weapons illegally (41.8 percent).

[This disproportionality](#) is even higher in Minneapolis, where black people represent 18.6 percent of the city's population, yet constitute 79 percent of arrests for homicides with firearms, 86 percent for non-fatal shootings, and 69 percent for homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault combined. A simple calculation shows that blacks are *16 times* more likely than non-blacks to kill someone with a gun. Thus, if police are arresting black people more often, it means the police are arresting those who are committing the crimes.

Another piece of important data is that [according](#) to the Police Violence Report 2020, there were a total of 1,127 deadly use-of-force incidents nationwide. Of these incidents, 48 percent of suspects were white, and 27 percent black, with 93 percent of all suspects armed, and more than half in possession of a gun. Of the black suspects who [were killed](#), 68 percent were allegedly attacking the police. Among the 32 percent who were not attacking police were those who were either resisting arrest, holding weapons they wouldn't drop, or assaulting other people. George Floyd, Daunte Wright, Michael Brown, and many other black Americans would be alive if they had not resisted arrest or were not threatening police. Period.

One needs to be really biased to view these stone-cold numbers as racist. The DOJ's decision to move forward with these investigations is nothing but an attempt to neuter and demoralize police departments, which will inevitably result in officers leaving the force and a further rise in crime — just as it [happened under Obama](#).



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