

FORUM ON MINORITY ISSUES

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During this forum, my colleague Lecia Brooks is speaking about urgent threats posed by the rise in and mainstreaming of hate and extremist ideologies, especially those based on the notion of the white superiority. These threats exist in many countries around the world. I want to briefly highlight one aspect of this threat – the persistent presence of those holding and practicing such ideologies in law enforcement. In the US, where 65% of law enforcement officers are white, police have killed 1054 people so far this year, half of them non-white. Black people, in particular, are more than three times more likely to be killed by police and are more likely to have been unarmed when they were killed. Migrants, mostly non-white, continue to die in US immigration custody. More than half of US immigration enforcement officers are white.

US intelligence and federal law enforcement agencies have long recognized that domestic extremists pose the greatest threat of violent attacks, and earlier this year Congress passed the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act to try to address that threat. Although the law contains requirements for federal law enforcement agencies to conduct internal investigations to identify and address the presence of members of white supremacist and other extremist organizations in their ranks, far right conservatives in the Senate have opposed providing funding for these investigations, contending that there's no problem to investigate. But investigations by civil society organizations and journalists have found that a significant number of police officers have ties to extremist groups. SPLC has documented militia groups patrolling the southern US border and capturing and interrogating migrants, sometimes with the knowledge and even cooperation of federal border agents.

Now, the threat posed by racism and extremism in law enforcement is further exacerbated by a frightening movement to use lethal remote technology – killer robots – in policing. Just this week, San Francisco California's board of supervisors voted to allow the city's

police force to use robots to kill in certain circumstances. We know that people who are allowed to deliver lethal force remotely do so more easily, and that the effects of racial bias are heightened. When combined with a law enforcement culture in which white supremacy is allowed to go unchecked, this is a chilling development that will inevitably expand and have quite deadly results for members of non-white minority groups. Those who adhere to white supremacist and hateful ideologies against minority groups must not be permitted the authority to use force against them.

Thank you.