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Expresiones de Kilómetro Cero en el panel de Rendición de cuentas y reparaciones durante la Consulta de la Oficina de Derechos Humanos de la ONU con la sociedad civil: en vista de la preparación del Informe del Alto Comisionado para los Derechos Humanos en virtud de la [Resolución 43/1 del Consejo de Derechos Humanos](#)

Good evening. We thank the UN Human Rights Office for the opportunity to bring to the High Commissioner's attention the situation of impunity regarding Police violence and racism in Puerto Rico, a colony of the United States with a 3.5 million population, a country with a unique Caribbean culture, where the language spoken is Spanish, and where a great part of our population is brown and Afro Caribbean.

In the last five years, due to extreme austerity measures imposed by the US Congress PROMESA Law, and also after experiencing consecutive crises after Hurricanes, a series of earthquakes and more recently the COVID pandemic, the situation of impunity of state violence has become even more precarious.

- Of at least 23 people that the Police have killed in Puerto Rico since 2019:
 - 14 did NOT carry firearms
 - 3 were going through mental health crisis
 - 11 were 25 years or younger
 - All of them belonged to impoverished or vulnerable communities, and poverty in our country is inextricably linked with brown or Afro Caribbean ancestry.
- Not even one of these officers have been presented with criminal charges and neither has been expelled or even suspended from the Police Bureau.
- Contrary to the United States, in Puerto Rico there are NO external independent entities that supervise or investigate excessive actions of the Police. The Police

investigate itself and People must complain against police officers in the Police Bureau, which does not offer a fair, reliable and neutral process.

- The Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice has been dismantled in the last decade and there is no specialized prosecution division to investigate cases of officer-involved killings or excessive use of force. First line district prosecutors usually investigate these cases. Oftentimes, families of people killed by Police tell us that prosecutors act as if they were the officer's defense attorneys.
- Civil judicial claims against the State have been extraordinarily limited with the approval of the PROMESA bill, even being suspended for a time period as this bill protects the State against plaintiffs who seek financial compensation.
- Potential Civil Rights violation plaintiffs in PR must also comply with a 90 day term notification of claim which has proven exhausting and very hard to comply with for victims of police violence who usually have not yet consulted with a lawyer 90 days after their traumatic incident.
- These and other restrictions have disincentivized most private lawyers from even pursuing these cases. On the other hand, the extreme austerity measures have reduced and even eliminated access to justice or pro bono law projects destined for impoverished communities. We at Km0 experience every day the hardships, frustrations, and impotence that victims of police abuse or the families of those killed by Police officers encounter in order to seek answers, reparations, and a minimum promise of systemic change.

As we all watched the Police response to George Floyd's protests in the United States last year, we Puerto Ricans definitely related. Because that's how violent the Police normally acts everytime we have mass protests: even children and elderly are tear gassed, people are fired rubber-coated metal bullets from shotguns at close range, they are hit with clubs, massively arrested without cause, put in unmarked cars, threatened to death by police officers and no disciplinary actions are taken against these agents.

We ask that Puerto Rico be included when the High Commissioner visits the United States, as we have neither representation in the US Congress that holds political power over our country, nor sovereign representation in international forums.

State violence victims in PR are in a dehumanizing, unsustainable situation, with no real options of reparations under the political rule of a country that takes such great pride in its democratic values.

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