

Not Just “A Few Bad Apples”: U.S. Police Kill Civilians at Much Higher Rates than Other Countries

Police violence is a systemic problem in the U.S., not simply incidental, and it happens on a scale far greater than other wealthy nations.

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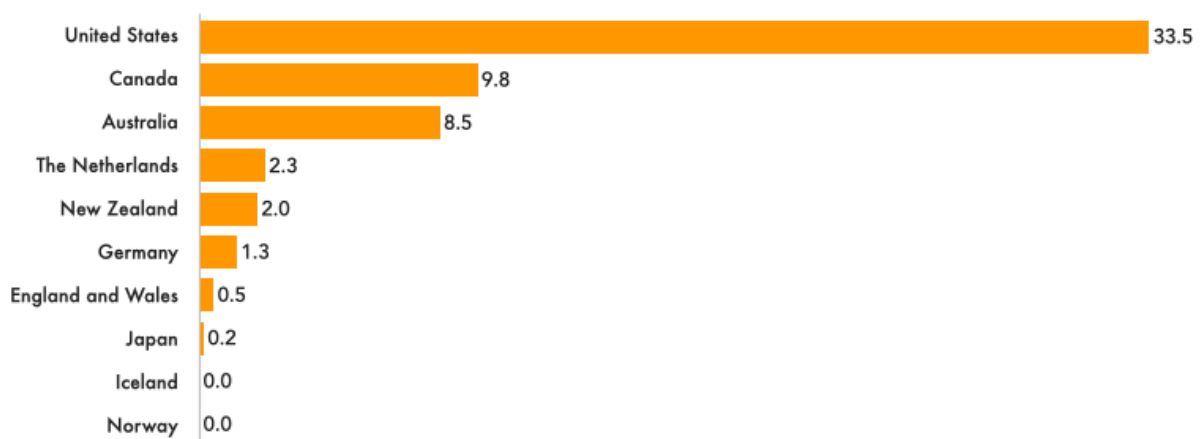
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There is no question that the number of police killings of civilians in the U.S. – who are disproportionately Black and other people of color – are the result of policies and practices that enable and even encourage police violence. Compared to police in other wealthy democracies, American police kill civilians at incredibly high rates:

U.S. POLICE KILL CIVILIANS AT A MUCH HIGHER RATE THAN POLICE IN OTHER WEALTHY COUNTRIES

Number of people killed by law enforcement per 10 million population in the most recent year with available data



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Sources: Data compiled by the Prison Policy Initiative from news sources, government reports, and advocacy groups. Data from the U.S., the Netherlands, England and Wales, and Iceland are from 2019. Data from Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Japan, and Norway are from 2018, and data from Canada are from 2017. For details, see: www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2020/06/05/policekillings/

The chart above compares the annual *rates* of police killings in each country, accounting for differences in population size. This is the most apples-to-apples comparison we can make. But the *total* number of deaths at the hands of police is also worth seeing in comparison with other countries:

U.S. POLICE KILL FAR MORE CIVILIANS ANNUALLY THAN ANY OTHER WEALTHY COUNTRY

Total number of people killed by law enforcement in the most recent year with available data



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The sources for these charts are listed in the table below:

Country	Annual number of law enforcement killings	Total population	Law enforcement killings per 10 million people	Source for number of law enforcement killings	Data year	Source for total population
United States	1,099	328,239,523	33.5	Mapping Police Violence	2019	U.S. Census Population Clock (population as of July 1, 2019)
Canada	36	36,708,083	9.8	CBC News, Deadly force: Fatal encounters with police in Canada: 2000-2017	2017	Statistics Canada (population estimate as of July 1, 2017)
Australia	21	24,770,700	8.5	National Deaths in Custody Program, Deaths in custody in Australia 2017-18 . This includes deaths that occurred in police custody and custody-related operations (i.e. motor vehicle pursuit deaths).	2017-2018 (1 year of data)	Australian Demographic Statistics December 2017 (Year-end 2017 population estimate)
The Netherlands	4	17,282,163	2.3	Public Prosecution Service , (translated from Dutch by Google here)	2019	Statistics Netherlands (CBS) Population key figures (2019 population estimate)
New Zealand	1	4,840,600	2.1	NZ Police Tactical Options Research Report, 2018	2018	New Zealand Government Statistics (Year-end 2018 estimate)
Germany	11	82,905,782	1.3	DPA news agency, as cited by Deutsche Welle in German police kill sword-wielding man in front of his mother (2019)	2018	The World Bank , population data (2018 population estimate)
England and Wales	3	59,439,840	0.5	INQUEST , Fatal police shootings	2019	UK Office for National Statistics , Estimates of the population for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (see link to Excel file; we used mid-2019 population estimate for England and Wales only)
Japan	2	126,529,100	0.2	Axios, Police kill far more people in the U.S. than in most rich countries (2020)	2018	The World Bank , population data (2018 population estimate)
Iceland	0	352,721	0	NBC News, Iceland is a gun-loving country with no shooting murders since 2007 (2018)	Every year except 2013, when the police shot and killed someone for the first and only time.	The World Bank , population data (2018 population estimate)
Norway	0	5,311,916	0	Norwegian Bureau for the Investigation of Police Affairs, Annual Report 2018 (reporting no fatal shootings that year)	2018	The World Bank , population data (2018 population estimate)

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