

BANGKOK (Net) — Several thousand people marched in New Zealand's largest city on Monday to protest the killing of George Floyd in the U.S. as well as to stand up against police violence and racism in their own country.

Many people around the world have watched with growing unease at the civil unrest in the U.S. after the latest in a series of police killings of black men and women. Floyd died on May 25 in Minneapolis after a white police officer pressed his knee on Floyd's neck until he stopped breathing. The officer was fired and charged with murder.

The protesters in Auckland marched to the U.S. Consulate, where they kneeled. They held banners with slogans like "I can't breathe" and "The real virus is racism." Hundreds more joined the peaceful protests and vigils elsewhere in New Zealand, where Monday was a public holiday. In Iran, which has in the recent past violently put down nationwide demonstrations by killing hundreds, arresting thousands and disrupting internet access to the outside world, state television has repeatedly aired images of the U.S. unrest.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi urged the U.S. government and police to stop the violence.

"To American officials and police: Stop violence against your people and let them breathe," Mousavi said at a news conference in Tehran on Monday. He also told the American people that "the world is standing with you." He added that Iran is saddened to see "the violence the U.S. police have recently" set off.

At a gathering in central London on Sunday, thousands offered support for American demonstrators, chanting "No justice! No peace!" and waving placards with the words "How many more?"

In other places, too, demonstrators wove solidarity with the U.S. protesters with messages aimed at local authorities.

In Brazil, hundreds of people protested crimes committed by the police against black people in Rio de Janeiro's working-class neighborhoods, known as favelas. Police used tear gas to disperse them, with some demonstrators saying "I can't breathe," repeating Floyd's own words. In Canada, an anti-racism protest degenerated into clashes between Montreal police and some demonstrators. Police declared the gathering illegal after they say projectiles were thrown at officers who responded with pepper spray and tear gas. Some windows were smashed and some fires were set.

In authoritarian nations, the unrest became a chance to undermine U.S. criticism of their own situations. Iranian state television repeatedly aired images of the U.S. unrest. Russia said the United States had systemic human rights problems.

And state-controlled media in China saw the protests through the prism of American views on Hong Kong's anti-government demonstrations, which China has long said the U.S. encouraged. In a commentary, the ruling Communist Party newspaper Global Times said Chinese experts had noted that U.S. politicians might think twice before commenting again on Hong Kong, knowing "their words might backfire."

North Korea's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper on Monday reported about the demonstrations, saying that protesters "harshly condemned" a white policeman's "lawless and brutal murder" of a black citizen. Three large photos from the Minneapolis Star Tribune, Reuters news agency and Agence France-Presse showed protest scenes from recent days in the city where Floyd was killed.

The article said hundreds of protesters gathered in front of the White House chanting "No justice, no peace," and that demonstrations were occurring in other cities and were expected to grow. It did not make any direct comments about the Trump administration.