

Testimony of Amelia Carter

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My name is Amelia Carter, I am a resident of 52nd Street which is located in the predominantly Black neighborhood of Cobbs Creek, in Philadelphia. On May 31, at about 3:30 PM, I returned to my home on Chancellor Street and was informed by neighbors that police were present en masse for an unknown reason. Suddenly I saw an elderly Black woman stumble onto the street who had been hit in the face by a rubber bullet. Dazed, she said she didn't understand why she had been shot. Still unclear about what was happening, I watched as residents maimed by rubber bullets, and others who struggled to breathe, emerged from the white smoke starting to gather.

Around 4:45 PM, I saw police officers fire tear gas and rubber bullets at people gathered on the 52nd Street corridor, which started a stampede. A tear gas canister flew over my head and landed one foot in front of me as I turned my back to run. As the gas billowed out and hit my face, seizing my lungs and stinging my eyes, I realized I couldn't breathe or see. Even in the midst of fearing for my safety from police use of excessive and indiscriminate force, I was worried about COVID-19 exposure, as I had to remove my now soiled mask and was being coughed on by people in the same condition.

As the police continued to shoot gas, I tried to run home to escape the scene, but, as I turned down my block., gas canisters were released on the residential street, thus hitting me with tear gas again. When I finally reached my home, it was full of tear gas, forcing me to go back outside. The PPD armored vehicles continued moving south on 52nd Street, firing tear gas onto other residential blocks.

Throughout the seven-hour police occupation, the police were relentless in their use of teargas, rubber bullets and brute force. It was clear that the Philadelphia Police Department believed they were at war with us. In the name of "protecting" us and our property, they were willing to create a battleground between unarmed residents and they, the militarized police force. Although they arrived on the scene before looting took place, they didn't prevent any destruction of property and only served to endanger human lives.

Just five months after this incident the police murdered Walter Wallace Jr, a Black man experiencing a mental health crisis, a few blocks away. When protesters marched in response to his murder later that day on 52nd St. I again watched as police officers escalated tension and manufacture chaos. The most damning incident was captured in a [video that surfaced](#) showing dozens of officers attacking an unsuspecting Black family's SUV on 52nd St. In the video police are seen busting the windows of the car and pulling [Rickia Young](#), her 16-year-old nephew and her two year old son from the vehicle. A gang of police are caught beating them mercilessly, resulting in injuries requiring surgery and documented emotional trauma for her toddler child who was exposed to the violence. This example is just one of many instances of senseless [police brutality experienced](#) by residents of Philadelphia caught in the cross-hairs of racial reckoning and what has become a [historic fight for equal treatment by law-enforcement](#) in 2020.

In short, from my window on 52nd St. I have watched the police fail us over and over again—too many times to catalogue in this testimony. From my perspective one thing is clear: They are among the greatest perpetrators of human rights abuse in the United States of America.

Today, I am requesting that the Philadelphia Police Department be investigated by an outside international body like the United Nations. We ask the UN to put pressure on our public officials to demilitarize the police, in part by implementing a FULL ban on the use of tear gas. I am deeply disturbed to see that, despite widespread protests demanding justice by way of defunding police, our elected officials continue to work towards maintaining bloated police budgets—undoubtedly because these very systems directly benefit such politicians. I ask that the United Nations aid the American public in our fight to defund the police and work towards the abolition of the prison industrial complex through the development of police free alternatives for addressing public safety. The UN's support for such grassroots demands as community control of police, the end of impunity for police who commit violent acts against civilians and the abolition of policing as we know it would be the most useful.