



United States Mission to the OSCE

Allegations of Police Misconduct in Chicago

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
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Events in the United States involving police conduct in Ferguson, Missouri, Baltimore, New York, Chicago, and elsewhere continue to have a major effect on relations among minority groups, law enforcement, and government. These are issues that have confronted the American people for much of our history. Building trust between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve is one of the U.S. government's highest priorities. The U.S. Department of Justice strives to foster those bonds and create safer communities across the country.

Recent allegations of police misconduct in Chicago led the Justice Department to announce on December 7 that it has opened a civil investigation of the Chicago Police Department that will seek to determine whether there are systemic violations of the Constitution or federal law by Chicago police officers. The investigation will focus on the Chicago Police Department's use of force, including racial, ethnic and other disparities in the use of force, and the police department's systems of accountability. The Justice Department will consider all relevant information, particularly the Chicago Police Department's policies, training, and practices related to using, reporting, investigating, and reviewing the use of force. The Justice Department will also look into the Chicago Police Department's practices related to disciplinary and other corrective action against police officers, and its handling of allegations of misconduct. The Justice Department will gather information directly from Chicago city residents, law enforcement officers, and other public officials.

This investigation, referred to as a civil pattern or practice investigation, is similar to others the Justice Department has carried out regarding the conduct of police departments in other parts of the United States. Details on these investigations and the other activities of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division were provided to OSCE delegations during the October 19 briefing given in the Hofburg by a Justice Department official. He explained, in detail, how the Justice Department works to ensure policing in the United States is carried out in accordance with the Constitution, and how it addresses complaints of racism and excessive force by law enforcement.

The United States is committed to upholding the highest standards of law enforcement. Every American deserves law enforcement that is fair, effective, responsive, respectful, and constitutional. This is why the Justice Department has opened its investigation into the Chicago Police Department. I will report again to the Permanent Council on this issue, and the broader issue of policing in the United States, as additional information becomes available.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.