# Racial Unrest in the U.S

## Why in news?

The United States is witnessing widespread protests against the recent death of George Floyd, a black man, by the action of police.

## What led to the protests?

- Floyd, an unarmed black man, died in the hands of Minneapolis police.
- Derek Chauvin, the police officer filmed kneeling on Floyd's neck, was arrested soon after.
- He was charged with murder and manslaughter.
- Demonstrations erupted in cities across the U.S. in response to the death of George Floyd.
- Another such issue took place in 2014 with the shooting death of a black 18-year-old, Michael Brown, by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri.

## How prevalent were the protests?

- The anger in response to Floyd's killing descended into rioting and looting in several cities.
- Protests have erupted in at least 140 cities across the U.S. in the days after Floyd's death.
- Violence spread overnight despite curfews in several major cities rocked by civil unrest in recent days.
- The sight of protesters flooding streets fuelled a sense of crisis in the U.S. after weeks of lockdowns due to the coronavirus pandemic.
- The closely packed crowds and many demonstrators not wearing masks sparked fears of a resurgence of COVID-19.
- Police fired rubber bullets and tear gas in many cities.
- In London too, hundreds of protesters took to Trafalgar Square chanting "no justice, no peace."
- A crowd descended on the U.S. Embassy in Berlin too, calling for the police officers to face justice.

## What controversy did Trump trigger?

- Besides protests, President Donald Trump let himself into the controversy.
- He triggered a broader debate on censorship of posts by social media platforms.
- The Twitter masked and attached a caution note to a tweet by Mr. Trump for "glorifying violence".
- In the tweet, he had labelled protesters calling for action against police for Floyd's death "THUGS".
- He added, "when the looting starts, the shooting starts."
- [This comes as a reference to a threat by a police chief, who in 1967 declared "war" and vowed violent revenge on African-Americans in Miami Beach.]
- This is hardly the first time that the U.S. President has spread messages of hatred.
- He has said, among other things, that Mexicans were rapists and drug dealers.
- In early 2017, he banned visitors from certain Muslim-majority countries.

## What does this demand?

- The situation calls for far-reaching legislative reforms on -

i. the use of excessive force by police against minorities
ii. punishment for all hate crimes
iii. workplace discrimination
iv. inhumane treatment of migrants at the border

- Such an agenda, focused on the complete reform of government institutions toward supporting a pluralist ethos is crucial now.

**Source: The Hindu**

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