

**The below piece from Commissioner Cressida Dick was included in the Evening Standard on Monday, 8 June.**

Most of those seeking to make their voices heard will be as appalled as I was by the scenes of violence in central London this weekend.

Deep pain and anguish has been brought to the surface by the death of George Floyd on a street in Minneapolis. Feelings are running high, including in our communities, on universal issues of equality, justice and dignity. Thousands of officers were on duty to ensure the safety of protesters.

These demonstrations came at a time of great change and challenge across society, with the easing of lockdown restrictions and fears about health, jobs and the economy.

We in the police must listen to our communities, especially at a time when some have been disproportionately affected by this pandemic. We know that in some communities trust in the police is lower than we would like, and we must build on that.

A minority of protesters sought confrontation with police, leading to 49 officers being injured, several seriously. These were in addition to the 13 hurt in protests earlier last week.

Among those injured was a mounted branch officer seen to fall from her horse. She was taken to hospital and underwent surgery. We arrested more than 60 people for offences including assaulting police and criminal damage this weekend.

The violent criminality we saw is disgraceful and will have been frightening.

Unfortunately some statues and iconic sites have been damaged and we will investigate and seek to identify those responsible. It will never be acceptable to attack police officers, damage property and leave others in fear of their safety. Furthermore, those attending mass gatherings risk exposing themselves and others to this deadly virus.

Policing is always complex and challenging, and right now that is the case more than ever. Our officers are trained to use force proportionately, lawfully and only when absolutely necessary. We have changed and improved enormously in the last 20 years, and we will continue to do so. We welcome scrutiny.

The policing models here and in the US are very different.

Our principle is long-established and it is based on policing by consent, working as closely as possible with communities to build understanding and support. That vital work will continue with renewed vigour and energy.

We will listen and as fellow citizens we share the concerns for justice and fairness. We will tackle bias, racism or discrimination wherever we find it.

I am very proud of the work my officers are carrying out to reassure our communities and to keep the streets of our capital safe and calm.