

Data on profiling a step, but more could be done

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1999.

"There should be some data that should be included, but wasn't," Jones said. "Even the way they pronounced it, there were more African American males stopped than the norm."

Stop statistics used in the study, which covered more than 77,000 vehicles and 5,500 pedestrians in 2002, was provided by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department. Other data includes accident reports from the N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles and U.S. Census Bureau. The researchers acknowledge the possibility of incomplete information, which ultimately led to descriptions and estimates of the divide among ethnic groups. The citizens group wasn't consulted on the final report's contents, which

went directly to the police.

"Our task as researchers is to provide an empirical assessment, within the limits of the data available to us, of the degree of racial and other disparities in the stops and searches of vehicles," the report stated. "Whether a specific level of disparity is excessive ultimately depends on what is deemed appropriate levels of enforcement by the CMPD the citizen advisory board of this project, and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community."

Charlotte Mayor Pro Tem Patrick Cannon said the study's findings were a step forward in building confidence, but more should be done.

"This certainly doesn't, in my opinion, close the books on what we need to do to monitor the possibility of profiling," he said. "The second thing is continuing to

make sure there is no arbitrary profiling going on.

While the report indicates there's no arbitrary profiling going on, there is always the potential for it to occur."

Including more pertinent data would help give a clearer picture, Jones argues, something the researchers didn't have when the report was submitted to the police.

"We knew they needed to capture additional data, but they never captured it," he said. "We're still working, we haven't closed the door yet."

Adds Cannon: "I think information like that is essential for us to know about it. There are questions



Cannon

that need to be answered as far as why stops were made."

Racial profiling has been a hot-button issue for African Americans locally and nationally after some departments acknowledged the practice. It even resulted in a new term: Driving While Black.

Cannon, chairman of the city council's Public Safety Committee, said motorists and pedestrians have an obligation to report their suspicions and concerns.

"There's no real way to know what is going on unless the public opens their mouths," he said. "The report can only be but so thorough. Then there's the reality of what's going on in the streets."

Jones, who spent 29 years with Charlotte-Mecklenburg police, said additional data

would help answer question he has.

"I'm not sure the door will ever be closed on this issue," Jones said. "There's some further discussion that needs to take place. If the

police department expects me to take this at face value, I'm not going to do it.

"We have a great police department, but it isn't perfect. We need to work on the problems."

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United Nations: Central African Republic in crisis

By Jonathan Fowler
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GENEVA — Central African Republic faces a "humanitarian catastrophe" caused by political instability and a collapsing health service unless nations meet a U.N. appeal for nearly \$17 million in aid, an envoy for the world body said Wednesday.

So far, the United Nations has collected just \$700,000 of the \$16.8 million it asked for in November, said Ramiro Lopes da Silva, a special envoy for the troubled nation. That shows a "lack of serious engagement by the international community," he said.

The money is needed to battle HIV/AIDS, malaria, cholera, measles and meningitis and to tackle malnutrition, which affects at least 14 percent of the nation's children, he said.

"With the current situation in the Central African Republic, this is our last opportunity before real anarchy and a humanitarian catastrophe," Lopes da Silva said.

Central African Republic is rich in gold, dia-

monds and uranium, but 95 percent of the country's 3.6 million people live on less than \$1 a day.

Since gaining independence from France in 1960, the country has been one of the most turbulent in Africa, with numerous coups and uprisings. Current President Francois Bozize led an army of insurgents that took the capital, Bangui, last year, toppling the elected Ange-Felix Patasse.

Fighting before then prompted tens of thousands of refugees to flee into neighboring Chad.

"Unless we take steps to provide a little bit of normality ...people will start moving again," he said.

Lopes da Silva also said the number of international peacekeepers in Central African Republic should be tripled and the force deployed nationwide. The Economic and Monetary Community of Central African States currently has 350 soldiers based in Bangui.

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