

African Union, International Community Condemns United States President Donald Trump for Racist Slurs

Statement distorts actual role of African people in building capitalism and imperialism

By [Abayomi Azikiwe](#)

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Featured image: African Union spokesperson Ebba Kalondo

*Each week another controversy unfolds in the United States over the character of the administration of **President Donald Trump**.*

At a White House meeting of Congresspersons on January 11, Trump reportedly described the nations of Africa, El Salvador and Haiti as “shithole countries.” He also said that more people from Norway should be immigrating to the U.S. and not from places where there are dark skinned people.

The meeting was centered on working out a legislative response to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program where millions of undocumented residents are facing deportations to the countries where they were born. Trump has built up his political base by appealing to reactionary and racist elements within U.S. society.

Later Trump claimed that he did not use those particular words. However, on January 14, he tweeted that he wanted people coming into the U.S. which would make America great again, and presumably these individuals would be of European origin.

The African Union (AU), a continental organization which has representatives from 55 member-states, issued a statement condemning Trump’s utterances saying they were an insult to not only Africans on the continent notwithstanding those of African descent in the U.S. Officials in Haiti, a majority African state in the Caribbean, harshly criticized Trump as well.

AU spokeswoman **Ebba Kalondo** said of Trump’s remarks that:

“Given the historical reality of how many Africans arrived in the United States as slaves, this statement flies in the face of all accepted behavior and practice. This is particularly surprising as the United States of America remains a global example of how migration gave birth to a nation built on strong values of diversity and opportunity. We believe that a statement like this hurts our shared global values on diversity, human rights and reciprocal understanding”.

The Washington, D.C. offices of the AU said it was “shocked and dismayed” at the U.S. head-of-state’s remarks. Despite Trump’s denial, Illinois Democratic **Senator Richard Durbin**, who was present at the meeting, said publically that these were the words used and the president had repeatedly referred to Africans, Haitians, among others, in such derogatory terms.

This response from the AU noted the:

“remarks dishonor the celebrated American creed and respect for diversity and human dignity. While expressing our shock, dismay and outrage, the African Union strongly believes that there is a huge misunderstanding of the African continent and its people by the current Administration. There is a serious need for dialogue between the U.S. Administration and the African countries.”

A media advisory issued by the Republic of Botswana in Southern Africa asked for clarification as to whether its citizens fall into the category Trump described. Botswana, a diamond-rich nation with a history of post-colonial stability and a multi-party democratic political system, has cooperated with the U.S. for several decades. The country is a member of the regional Southern African Development Community (SADC), which includes 16 member-states.

The Botswana press release circulated on January 12 said:

“The Government of Botswana is wondering why President Trump must use this descriptor and derogatory word, when talking about countries with whom the U.S. has had cordial and mutually beneficial bilateral relations for so many years. Botswana has accepted U.S. citizens within her borders over the years and continues to host U.S. guests and senior government officials, including a Congressional delegation that will come to Botswana at the end of this month. That is why we view the utterances by the current American President as highly irresponsible, reprehensible and racist.”

The African National Congress (ANC), the ruling party of the Republic of South Africa, which celebrated its 106th anniversary on January 8, came to power as all African states through a struggle against racism, colonialism and imperialist domination. The ANC condemned Trump’s racist remarks saying they were an insult to Africans throughout the world.



ANC Deputy Secretary General Jesse Duarte condemns Trump’s racist remarks

Jesse Duarte, the Deputy Secretary General of the ANC, in response to Trump's language stressed:

"Ours is not a shithole country, neither is Haiti or any other country in distress. It's not as if the United States doesn't have problems. There is unemployment in the U.S. and there are people who don't have healthcare services. We would not deign to make comments as derogatory as that about any country that has any kind of socioeconomic or other difficulties."

South African **President Jacob Zuma** has summoned the U.S. ambassador to his country in order to provide clarification on the racist statements by Trump. The former apartheid system in South Africa was based on the same ideology of white supremacy which still permeates the U.S.

Africa Was Underdeveloped by Europe and the U.S. amid Racist Immigration Policy

The characterization by Trump of states in Africa, the Caribbean and Central America in such negative terms misleadingly ignores the centuries-long exploitation and oppression of these territories. Historians have documented that the enslavement, colonization and modern-day dominance of the world system by imperialism, which Washington and Wall Street controls, served to propel the West in economic development resulting in turn with the underdevelopment of oppressed nations.

Guyanese historian **Dr. Walter Rodney** wrote in his pioneering work entitled "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa", published in 1972, noting that the:

"Mistaken interpretations of the causes of underdevelopment usually stem either from prejudiced thinking or from the error of believing that one can learn the answers by looking inside the underdeveloped economy. The true explanation lies in seeking out the relationship between Africa and certain developed countries and in recognizing that it is a relationship of exploitation."
(p. 22)

Haiti is a nation born in revolutionary struggle against slavery and colonialism. The country was the first in history to transform itself immediately from a slave state to a republic. Nonetheless, the declaration of independence in 1804 after a twelve year war against France was met by decades of sanctions from Paris and the lack of recognition by the U.S. until the Civil War. Even today, Haitian workers are exploited through low-wage labor and are subjected to national discrimination as immigrants in the U.S.



Haitians demonstrate against United States President Donald Trump's racist remarks

The much anticipated aid from the U.S. in the wake of the earthquake of 2010 never materialized. Even the Democratic Party stalwart and former U.S. **President Bill Clinton** failed to account for the hundreds of millions of dollars which were collected for relief and development assistance which never took place.

Haiti has been occupied on numerous occasions by the U.S. where during 1915-1934 the country was a de facto colony of Washington subjected to segregation and lynching. Another two invasions were carried out by the U.S. in 1994 as well as 2004, coinciding with the bicentennial of their independence.

U.S. immigration policy has always been slanted in favor of persons from Europe in order to ensure the dominance of the majority white population. Nevertheless, rapidly shifting demographic changes will bring into existence a majority people of color nation by the middle of the 21st century. These social variables are fueling the racist state in its efforts to curb immigration from Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America, along with the reversal of bourgeois democratic rights for the oppressed nations and national minorities inside the U.S.

These actions by Trump although atrocious provide opportunities for solidarity among the impacted peoples. The combined efforts of the peoples of the U.S. and the world can defeat racism and capitalist exploitation paving the way for mutual cooperation and genuine equality in relations among nations throughout the planet.

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Articles by: **Abayomi
Azikiwe**

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