US racism on the rise, UN experts warn in wake of Charlottesville violence

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Racism and xenophobia are on the rise across the USA, a group of United Nations human rights experts\* has warned in the wake of the far-right demonstrations and violence in Charlottesville, Virginia.

“We are outraged by the violence in Charlottesville and the racial hatred displayed by right-wing extremists, white supremacists and neo-Nazi groups,” said the experts in a joint statement.

“We view these events as the latest examples of increasing racism, racial discrimination, Afrophobia, racist violence and xenophobia observed in demonstrations across the USA.

“We are deeply concerned at the proliferation and increasing prominence of organized hate and racist groups. Acts of hatred and racist hate speech must be unequivocally condemned. Hate crimes must be investigated and the perpetrators prosecuted.”

The human rights experts made an urgent renewed call to the US authorities to step up its work to tackle the issue.

“We call upon the US Government and State authorities to adopt effective policies as a matter of priority, to urgently tackle the manifestations of incitement to racial violence, and to understand how they affect social cohesion,” the experts said.

“The government must be vigilant in combating all acts of racism, xenophobia and racist violence, wherever they occur. Recent incidents in California, Oregon, New Orleans and Kentucky, as well as Charlottesville, demonstrate the geographical spread of the problem.”

The experts noted that the Charlottesville far-right demonstrators had chanted anti-Black, anti-Semitic, and anti-immigrant slogans, and said it was of critical importance for those who had committed racist crimes or violence to be held to account.

“We call for the prosecution and adequate punishment of all perpetrators and the prompt establishment of an independent investigation into the events,” they noted.

The experts condemned the “horrific” act of a car being driven into a crowd of protesters, killing one and injuring others. They also noted with sadness that two Virginia State Police officers were also killed in a helicopter crash while monitoring the ongoing situation in Charlottesville.

**(\*)** The experts: **Mr. Sabelo Gumedze**, Chairperson of the [Working Group of Experts on People of African](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Racism/WGAfricanDescent/Pages/WGEPADIndex.aspx) Descent; **Mr. Mutuma Ruteere**, Special Rapporteur on [contemporary forms of racism](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Racism/SRRacism/Pages/IndexSRRacism.aspx), racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; and **Ms. Anastasia Crickley**, Chairperson of the [Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CERD/Pages/CERDIndex.aspx).