

Donald Trump's Arts Council Members Quit Over Charlottesville Remarks



Washington, August 19 (RHC)-- All the 17 members of U.S. President Donald Trump's arts council have resigned over his remarks about a violent white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia last weekend. Actor Kal Penn, artist Chuck Close and the entire membership of the Trump's Committee on the Arts and Humanities wrote a letter on Friday, announcing their resignations.

The letter signed by 16 of the members cited the "false equivalence" of Trump's comments about Saturday's event in Charlottesville where hundreds of torch-carrying white nationalists were confronted by a group of anti-racism protesters. The encounter soon turned bloody when a 20-year-old suspected Nazi sympathizer smashed his car into the counter-protesters, killing 32-year-old Heather Heyer and injuring some 20 others.

Trump has blamed both sides for the violence. The Republican president, who has a strong following among white nationalists, has even called the far-right elements partaking in the demonstration as "very fine people."

"We cannot sit idly by, the way that your West Wing advisers have, without speaking out against your words and actions," Trump's art committee members said in their letter. "Ignoring your hateful rhetoric would have made us complicit in your words and actions." The letter went on to say: "Supremacy, discrimination, and vitriol are not American values. Your values are not American values. We must be better than this. We are better than this. If this is not clear to you, then we call on you to resign your office, too."

The only member who did not sign the letter was Broadway director George C. Wolfe, but according to representatives for Wolfe at Creative Arts Agency, he was also resigning and that his name would be added to the letter.

Donald Trump has been criticized both in the country and abroad over his response to the violence in Charlottesville. In the U.S., many lawmakers, including members of his own party as well as business executives have distanced themselves from him. Also, officials in Britain, Germany, the United Nations and elsewhere have denounced his remarks.

"I see no equivalence between those who propound fascist views and those who oppose them. I think it is important for all those in positions of responsibility to condemn far-right views wherever we hear them," UK Prime Minister Theresa May said in Portsmouth at a ceremony to mark the arrival of the new aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth.

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