

UN says racism is systemic in United States; fight against discrimination at critical juncture

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The file photo shows people protesting in the US against racism.

United Nations, November 15 (RHC)-- A United Nations special rapporteur has expressed shock at the “mutually reinforcing manifestations of systemic racism” in the United States, saying the country is at a “critical juncture” in the fight against racism.

Ashwini K.P., the UN special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, xenophobia, and related intolerance, made the remarks during an interview with UN News on Tuesday, following her 14-day fact-finding mission on systematic racism in the US.

“These manifestations of racism impacted those from racially marginalized groups at every stage of their lives, historically, systematically, and institutionally”, she said. The independent expert went on to say that “selective amnesia” was an issue in some states when it comes to reckoning with race.

Ashwini further noted that mainstream America is now more aware of systemic racism following the large-scale racial protests of 2020 and the positive response from the Biden administration “to improve racial equality”.

However, she said, racism very much persists in the US and has manifested in different forms, adding that she was “disheartened” and “disappointed” by how systemic racism can impact the lives of individuals.

Ashwini also stressed that “one of the major worries is the dissemination of misinformation and disinformation, which further escalates racism, racial discrimination, hate crimes, xenophobia.” “I think the moment and the space to take this challenge forward - to eliminate and eradicate racism or racial discrimination - should be taken very positively, in a mindful manner,” she said.

Ashwini traveled across the US between 31 October and 14 November, from Detroit in Michigan to the Louisiana coast, also visiting Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Washington DC. She explained that the fact-finding mission in the US was her first official country mission, and the purpose was majorly to assess the country’s situation, and her mandate covered racism, racial discrimination, and xenophobia.

The UN special rapporteur further stated that she will surely elaborate on her findings in the report that will be presented next year at the Human Rights Council.

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