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Africans See U.S. Ugly That America Ignores



Damaged window in one of the rooms in the U.S. Capitol. Photograph Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security – Public Domain

Like many across the African continent and around the world, noted author Patrick Gathara had “an epiphany” about America after President Donald Trump delivered an incendiary speech on January 6, 2021 that incited a violent mob attack on the U.S. Capitol.

When that mob invaded the Capitol building members of the Congress, the Senate and the Vice-President were inside. America’s top legislative leaders were inside the Capitol for the certification of the Electoral College vote – a certification Trump urged mob members to disrupt. Video shows mob members threatening to kill Vice President Pence, who Trump had castigated during his speech that sparked the riot. Mob members trashed the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a frequent target of Trump’s criticism.

That deadly Capitol Hill rampage by an overwhelmingly white mob of rabid Trump supporters that included far-right extremists, Nazi sympathizers and rancid racists, came a little less than three-years after Trump slandered nations in Africa as “shithole countries” during a White House meeting on January 11, 2018.

“I experienced an epiphany,” widely published journalist/cartoonist Gathara wrote in a commentary published in the [Guardian](#) of London.

“America was not a first world country behaving like a third world “shithole country” – it was a first world shithole country,” wrote Gathara, who is from Kenya in East Africa.

News about Africa, particularly viewpoints from Africans, are rarely referenced in America despite the fact, for example, that three of the top ten recipients of U.S. foreign aid in 2019 and five of the top ten in 2018 were countries in Africa.

Comments from persons across the African continent indicate the riot on Capitol Hill did more lasting damage than endanger the lives of members of Congress. That mob onslaught intended to assist Trump overturn the presidential election that he lost in a landslide resulted in five deaths. Those deaths included a rioter shot by police and a policeman bludgeoned to death by rioters.

Reactions from Africa and elsewhere indicate that riot coupled with other corrupt/objectionable machinations from Trump and his enablers crippled America’s image as the exemplar of democracy.

“The attack on America’s legislative cornerstone was unprecedented,” stated an editorial in the [Sowetan](#) newspaper of South Africa.

The Capitol Hill riot “showed that the US has no moral right to punish another nation under the guise of upholding democracy,” Zimbabwe President Emmerson Mnangagwa tweeted, according to coverage on the [France24.com](#) news site.

That France24.com article also included observations from Bienvenu Matumo of the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s Struggle for Change (Lucha) pro-democracy movement. According to Matumo “we must stop saying that it’s only Africans who don’t want democracy. We have proof that the refusal to leave power after an electoral defeat is not only the prerogative of Africans.”

Many Africans acknowledge that too many leaders on that continent are more despotic than democratic. What riles is the constant condescension from America – political leaders to the press. That sentiment is captured in the headline on that France24.com article: “Often-lectured Africa sees irony in US political violence.”

This tarnish on America’s image exists despite the fact that hours after the riot the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives reconvened to successfully complete certification of the 2020 presidential election.

However, a number of GOP Senators and one-third of GOP House members still tried to derail certification of the presidential election during deliberations just hours after that deadly

riot. Nearly all of the 50+ lawsuits Trump filed challenging election results were dismissed for lack of evidence. Even federal judges appointed by Trump indignantly rejected his lawsuits.

Authorities across America placating Trump's bigotry and his delusions did not begin with Trump's false claims that he won the 2020 presidential election.

A prime example of enablers giving Trump cover is evident when Trump unleashed that racist January 2018 rant about African "shit hole countries." That rant came during a White House meeting on immigration policy. While ranking Democratic Senators who attended that meeting scored Trump for his 'shit hole' slander, none of the GOP Senators and Trump Administration attendees would confirm that Trump said what he said.

Seven months before that slander about 'shit hole' countries, Trump made derogatory comments about Nigerian immigrants in America. In the wake of that Capitol Hill riot Nigerians had choice words for Trump and the historic arrogance driving America's foreign policy, according to coverage on the website of the Washington DC based Council on Foreign Relations.

John Campbell, Senior Fellow for Africa Policy Studies at the Council of Foreign Relations included quotes he gleaned from tweets by Nigerians in an [article](#) posted on the Council's website. Campbell stated many of the tweets cited "American hypocrisy in presuming to criticize Nigeria's poor governance...and the collapse of the American pretense (from their perspective) of American moral leadership."

Tweet quotes listed in Campbell's article include: "Before you start to fix the problems overseas please fix the problems in your home first" and "At this point I think Americans should keep quiet about all happenings in the world."

That Capitol Hill riot by U.S. domestic terrorists that diminished America's moral authority abroad also dramatized the deep-seated racism in America particularly in law enforcement. That Sowetan editorial highlighted the disparity in the often-harsh law enforcement treatment directed at protesters against police brutality compared to the 'kid-glove' treatment accorded by many police to most of the Capitol Hill rioters who broke into the Capitol, ransacked it and were able to walk away without arrest.

"Perhaps right on script, the treatment by law enforcement of the white rioters was markedly different to the brutality usually meted out to black protesters when they take to the streets to remind authorities that they too matter."

That Sowetan editorial contained an accurate assessment of Trump's tainted legacy.

"His most enduring legacy can perhaps be seen in the society he leaves behind, one whose fabric is even more corrupted by racism, hate and intolerance; a society where those who are fighting to preserve white supremacy are emboldened enough to equate their anarchy to a moral revolution."

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