

# **RACISM, AN ISSUE TO BE TACKLED**

**BY**

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Racism is one of the striking and horrible ideologies denying human equality. After seeing the list of persons who had died as a result of racism, I was sad that fellow humans kill people because of their colour. This evening a video surfaced online and after watching a video of a man named George Floyd exclaiming “I can’t breathe”, the Minneapolis officer pinned him to the ground beside the police car and put his knee on the man’s neck, the man eventually died, the death of George Floyd is also similar to the death of Eric Garner in the year 2014. In Eric Garner’s case, the officer Pantaleo placed his arms around his neck and wrestled him to the ground, until he was unconscious and eventually died, the medical examiner ruled Garner’s death as a homicide, a Richmond County Grand Jury did not indict Officer Pantaleo and he did not face any federal charges. After seeing the video that surfaced, I have to speak up in this little way I can, by writing this little piece.

Racism is defined as the belief that one race of people is superior to another. Racism can also be defined as the belief of superiority of one race over another based on the belief that a group of persons possesses behavioural traits corresponding to physical appearance. This racism has existed in the hearts of people around the world and it is very lethal.

South Africa Apartheid era (1948-1994), is a racism-related conflict, in this era racism touched every aspect of social life, non-whites could not marry whites, allowing “white only” jobs, blacks had to carry their passbook to access non-black areas, blacks were restricted to vote until Nelson Mandela, South Africa’s first black president led the fight against South Africa’s Apartheid regime until 1993 when a new constitution was drafted to eradicate racism in South Africa. One of Nelson’s Mandela quote on

racism, “No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than hate its opposite”. Let us work together and teach or preach this love to one another and remove this racist ideology totally from our lives and learn to live as one.

Martin Luther King Jr. said, “I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character”. Racists view blacks as criminally minded and violent, you do not judge a book by its cover, rather we should judge people not by their colour but by their character. Racists commit a fallacy of generalization, that a particular race is inferior. All races are superior, they are of equal status, and no race is superior to the other.

Racism is an issue that has dominated the news with reports of struggles of civil rights, the brutality of the police, demands for equality, protests on the issue of racism. We see on headlines, white supremacist guilty of killing 2 who came to aid of black teens, white supremacist pleads guilty to killing a black man as practice for a racist plot, a white officer charged with murder in the shooting of black women, a cop who killed a black man in his home sent racist text and many more killings as a result of racism, when will all this end? It will end when the world starts seeing each other as one when people do not judge people by their race.

For this issue of racism to be tackled, we all have a role to play, we have to love ourselves, remove that racist ideology and think of each other as one. For example, racist jokes or statements should be reported to the appropriate authorities and should not be tolerated. The famous South African reggae musician, Lucky Dube has these lyrics in one of his songs “Different colours, one people”, we should view each other as one people regardless of the race.

Law also has a role to play to tackle racism; racism is against natural justice, equity, and good conscience. The legislature can enact laws to help eradicate racism in the world and the executive should help in enforcing these laws. For example, on October 9, 2018, Tunisia's parliament passed the "Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination" Act, the law criminalizes all forms of racial discrimination.

The judiciary is not left out of this. The judiciary is the branch of government that administers justice according to the law. The judiciary must punish these racists according to the racism law of a particular country irrespective of the office of the person involved in the crime to serve as a deterrent to other racists. Using Eric Garner's case as a case study, the judge did not indict the police officer and the police officer didn't face federal charges, this is very wrong, the judiciary is the temple of justice, a wrongdoer is supposed to be punished according to the law of a particular geographical area.

Public awareness campaigns should be set up. What is a public awareness campaign? It is an effort to build public recognition of a problem through social media, messaging, and an organized set of communication tactics. These campaigns should be set up to make people know the adverse effect of their racist ideologies and make them aware of the punishment for racist activities. This public awareness campaign should reach out to the public regularly, measuring the outreach accurately and motivating the public to take action.

Irrespective of the colour, we are one people; we should abhor the idea of superiority or inferiority of a particular race. I commiserate with the families, who have lost their loved ones as a result of racism.