

George Floyd: Five powerful anti-racism speeches in response to his death

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/52917648>



Over the last couple of weeks, there have been lots of protests against racism in the United States, and elsewhere in the world.

They started following the death of an African-American man called George Floyd after he was stopped by police in the US.

Racism has been - and continues to be - a big problem in the United States and here in the United Kingdom, too.

Here are parts of five powerful speeches in response to what happened.

What is racism?

Racism is when words or actions are used to discriminate or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin.



"Knowing how the world enjoys Blackness and seeing what happened to George, we Black people, get the feeling that people want our culture but they do not want us."

Radio 1 DJ Clara Amfo

Clara is a DJ for BBC Radio 1. On Tuesday she gave an emotional speech to her audience during her programme.

She said: "There is a false idea that racism and in this case anti-Blackness is just name calling and physical violence, when it is so much more... than that.

"One of my favourite thinkers is a woman called Amanda Seales, and she says 'You cannot enjoy the rhythm and ignore the blues.' And I say that with my chest.

"I want to say to our Black listeners, I hope you feel seen and heard today. And to those of you that already let me know that you are doing the work and are committed to doing better, I see you.

"So let's do this. Let's all be anti-racist."



Tennis player Coco Gauff

US tennis player [Coco Gauff](#) was only 15 years old when she beat tennis superstar Venus Williams at Wimbledon last year.

She's now 16 and recently gave a speech at a Black Lives Matter rally in Florida.

"We must first love each other, no matter what.

"I have spent all week having tough conversations and trying to educate my non-black friends about how they can help the movement.

"Second, we need to take action.

"I am not of the age to vote - it is in your hands to vote for my future, my brothers' future and for your future so that is one way to make change.

"Third, you need to use your voice no matter how big or small your platform is, you need to use your voice.

"I saw a Dr [Martin Luther] King quote that said; 'The silence of the good people is worse than the brutality of the bad people'."



We must first love each other, no matter what.

Coco Gauff



Former US President Barack Obama

The first and only black president of the United States, [Barack Obama](#), went online to give a speech directed to people of colour.

"When I go home and I look at the faces of my daughters, Sasha and Malia, and I look at my nephews and nieces, I see limitless potential that deserves to flourish and thrive...

"And you should be able to learn and make mistakes and live a life of joy without having to worry about what's going to happen when you walk to the store, or go for a jog, or are driving down the street, or looking at some bird in a park.

"So I hope that you also feel hopeful even as you may feel angry because you have the potential to make things better and you have helped to make the entire country feel as if this is something that's gotta change."



I want you to know that you matter, I want you to know that your lives matter, that your dreams matter.

Barack Obama, Former US President



George Floyd's brother Terrence Floyd

At a memorial for his brother George - whose death started the US protests - Terrence spoke to the crowd. He asked them to use their vote to make a difference. Some of the protests in America have seen violence and looting - he asked people to stop.

"In every case of police brutality, the same thing has been happening: Y'all protest; y'all destroy stuff, and they don't move.

"You know why they don't move? Because it's not their stuff. It's our stuff, so they want us to destroy our stuff. So let's do this another way.

"Let's stop thinking that our voice don't matter and vote.

"Let's switch it up, y'all. Let's switch it up and do this peacefully, please. I know [George] would not want y'all to be doing this."



Duchess of Sussex Meghan Markle

Meghan Markle was asked to give a virtual speech to her old senior school ahead of their graduation.

She spoke about her experience of the LA riots in 1992 when she was younger and the impact that had on her.

"So the first thing I want to say to you is that I'm sorry. I'm so sorry that you have to grow up in a world where [racism] is still present.

"I was 11 or 12 years old when I was just about to start Immaculate Heart middle school in the [autumn], and it was the LA riots, which were also triggered by a senseless act of racism.

"And those memories don't go away.

"The other thing though, that I do remember about that time, was how people came together.

"We are seeing people stand in solidarity. We are seeing communities come together and to uplift. And you are going to be part of this movement.

"You are going to lead with love, you are going to lead with compassion, you are going to use your voice."