

UN Chief Slams Libya Slave Auctions as ‘Crime Against Humanity’



United Nations, November 21 (RHC)-- UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres says the reported auctions of African refugees in Libya as slaves amount to “crimes against humanity,” calling for an immediate investigation into the matter. U.S. television network CNN aired footage of a live auction in Libya where Black men were being sold for as little as 400 dollars to North African buyers as farmhands.

"Slavery has no place in our world and these actions are among the most egregious abuses of human rights and may amount to crimes against humanity," Guterres told reporters. "I am horrified at news reports and video footage showing African migrants in Libya reportedly being sold as slaves," the UN chief said. "I abhor these appalling acts."

Guterres called on "all competent authorities" to investigate the slave auctions without delay, requesting relevant UN bodies "to actively pursue this matter" and bring perpetrators to justice.

The reported sale of Black youth as farmhands in Libya has drawn an angry rebuke from the African Union and prompted angry protests in Paris. In a statement posted on Facebook, Libyan Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Metig vowed that his UN-backed Government of National Accord would investigate the

“slave market” allegations in the North African country.

The CNN investigation comes after the United Nations warned the EU over its support for Libya's coast guard, as it turns back migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean and forces them into migrant camps, where they face “appalling” conditions.

The video footage -- featuring a man's voice off-screen, with promises of "big strong boys for farm work" -- triggered outrage from the African Union and calls for inquiry. Guinean President Alpha Conde, who is also the head of the AU, called for an inquiry and prosecutions relating to what he described as a "despicable trade ... from another era."

Senegal's government expressed "outrage at the sale of Sub-Saharan African migrants on Libyan soil" that constituted "a blight on the conscience of humanity." Nigerian President Mahamadou Issoufou said the footage had made him "deeply angry," calling on Libyan officials and international organizations to do "everything possible to stop this practice."

A protest rally was also staged in the French capital of Paris against the practice of slavery in Libya.

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