

UN Envoy Says Trump and Republicans Turning U.S. into Champion of Extreme Inequality



United Nations, December 16 (RHC)-- U.S. President Donald Trump and the Republican leadership in Congress are turning the country into the "world champion of extreme inequality," warns the United Nations monitor on poverty and human rights.

The warning by Philip Alston, UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, came in a devastating report on the condition of America following his two-week fact-finding visit to the country.

"The U.S. Congress is trying desperately to pass a tax bill that, if adopted, would represent the single most dramatic increase in inequality that could be imagined," Alston told reporters on Friday.

The UN expert said that the tax reform bill backed by Trump will "shred crucial dimensions of a safety net that is already full of holes." The Trump administration has maintained that the tax overhaul would increase growth in the country and create more jobs and wealth.

Alston, however, said the proposed cuts to social welfare programs will further increase the already wide disparities "between the richest one percent and the poorest 50 percent of Americans." He said that "the social safety net that currently exists is riddled with holes, with a partially and poorly funded approach to

social protection. If the cuts are made, it will essentially be blown apart." He also said that poverty has an impact on democracy, noting that people cannot have equal "civil and political rights if there is massive inequality."

"The result is that people living in poverty, minorities and other disfavored groups are being systematically deprived of their voting rights."

According to Census Bureau figures, over 40 million people live in poverty in the US, which is equal to 12.7 percent of the population, with poverty levels being particularly high among minorities.

The figures show that 8.8 percent of whites, 22 percent of African-Americans and 18.4 percent of Hispanics live below the poverty level.

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