

## **US not yet cured of racism: Barack Obama**

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**Washington:** President Barack Obama used the politically incorrect n-word during an interview to assert that racism persists in the US, including many forms that are not overt, and the nation was not "cured of it".

"Racism, we are not cured of it. And It's not just a matter of it not being polite to say nigger in public," he said in a podcast interview with comedian Marc Maron released Monday. "That's not the measure of whether racism still exists or not. It's not just a matter of overt discrimination. Societies don't, overnight, completely erase everything that happened 200 to 300 years prior," he said.

The White House insisted that Obama didn't set out to shock or provoke. His spokesman Josh Earnest said the President's use of the taboo word was not part of a premeditated strategy to talk about race in a more challenging and overt way.

"I would acknowledge it is understandably notable that the President chose to use this word," he said. "But the argument that the President is making is one that is familiar to those who have been listening."

Obama said there has been progress on race relations over the decades, citing his own experience as a young man who was born to a white mother and an African father.

"I always tell young people, in particular, do not say that nothing has changed when it comes to race in America, unless you've lived through being a black man in the 1950s or '60s or '70s.

"It is incontrovertible that race relations have improved significantly during my lifetime and yours," Obama said.

But he added that "the legacy of slavery, Jim Crow, discrimination" exists in institutions and casts "a long shadow and that's still part of our DNA that's passed on."

The White House later released a statement saying that this is not the first time the President has used the N-word.

"Truth is he uses the term about a dozen times in Dreams from my Father," White House Deputy Press Secretary Eric Schultz said.

Echoing comments he made in the immediate aftermath of last week's horrific massacre at a historic black church in Charleston, South Carolina, Obama also lamented Congress's lack of action on gun control in the face of a powerful gun lobby.

"It's not enough just to feel bad. There are actions that could be taken to make events like this less likely. One of those actions we could take would be to enhance some basic common sense gun safety laws," he said.

"Unfortunately, the grip of the NRA (National Rifle Association) on Congress is extremely strong. I don't foresee any legislative action being taken in this Congress."

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