

Charleston Shooting: Such violence does not happen in other advanced nations, says Obama

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Washington: A dejected US President Barack Obama yesterday strongly condemned the “senseless murders” of nine Americans by a white gunman inside a historic black church, saying such type of mass violence does not happen in other advanced countries.

Members at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in downtown Charleston, South Carolina, had gathered for a prayer meeting when gunfire erupted in the 19th century building, raising racial tensions in the country that has recently witnessed a spate of killings of unarmed black men by white police officers.

Charleston Police identified the gunman as Dylann Roof of Lexington, South Carolina. He was later captured in North Carolina after a massive manhunt.

In the wake of the killings, Obama told reporters, “Any death of this sort is a tragedy. Any shooting involving multiple victims is a tragedy. There is something particularly heartbreaking about a death happening in a place in which we seek solace and we seek peace, in a place of worship.”

“This is a place of worship that was founded by African Americans seeking liberty. This is a church that was burned to the ground because its worshippers worked to end slavery,” he said.

The gunman stayed at the prayer meeting for nearly an hour before shooting the victims—six females and three males. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is conducting an investigation into it.

Obama dubbed the killings as “senseless murders.” “We don’t have all the facts, but we do know that once again, innocent people were killed in part because someone who wanted to inflict harm had no trouble getting their hand on a gun,” Obama said.

“Now is the time for mourning and for healing. But let’s be clear. At some point, we as a country will have to reckon with the fact that this type of mass violence does not happen in other advanced countries. It doesn’t happen in other places with this kind of frequency,” he said.

The fact that this shooting took place in a black church raises questions about a dark part of American history, Obama said.

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