Kamala Harris appeals directly to Black voters

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Democratic vice presidential hopeful Kamala Harris made a direct appeal to Black men Friday, defending her record as a prosecutor, blasting President Donald Trump as "racist" and vouching for Joe Biden as a man capable of addressing systemic racism and leading a diverse

"I'm not going to tell anybody, including Black men, that they're supposed to vote for us. We need to earn that vote," Harris told a roundtable of Black men in one of

several stops across Atlanta, the Democratic base of Georgia, an emerging battleground state.

The California senator warned that Trump wants to "turn 20% of Black men in favor of him," a mark that could tilt a range of battleground states in the South and Upper Midwest to the president. But Harris, the first Black woman on a major party's national ticket, said Trump's pitch is rooted in "spinning" and misrepresenting her record and the Democratic ticket's proposals.

"Joe Biden has the ability to say the words 'Black Lives Matter,' unlike that other fella," Harris told a group of students from Atlanta's historically Black college campuses.

Her Georgia itinerary — small events with Black audiences, a stop at an iconic Black-owned restaurant near Atlanta's HBCU campuses and a drive-in rally at Morehouse College, whose alumni include Martin Luther King Jr. — highlighted how critical the Biden campaign sees Harris in its efforts to urge Black turnout.

"We're not going to let anyone mess with our right to vote," she said at Morehouse, calling voting a way "to honor the ancestors."

The drop-off in Black votes from president Barack Obama's reelection in 2012 to the 2016 election was a critical factor in Trump managing narrow victories over Democrat Hillary Clinton in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania, a trio of Great Lakes states that gave the president his Electoral College majority.

Higher Black turnout also could push North Carolina, Georgia and Florida into the Democratic column.

Harris visited Georgia a day after the final presidential debate, which Trump used to claim that "nobody has

done what I've done" for Black Americans, with the exception of Abraham Lincoln – possible exception." The president blamed Biden for the mass incarceration of "young Black men" via a sweeping 1994 federal crime bill when Biden was a senator representing Delaware.

Citing her time as a local district attorney and state attorney general, Harris said she learned that the "war on drugs was, by every measure, a failure, and Black men were hit

the hardest.' She told the group of Black men that Trump is "spinning" her record and Biden's to obscure his own priorities on race and ethnicity, from his "birtherism" lies about Obama's birthplace to his insults of certain political opponents and entire nations.

Trump, Harris said, pushed "the theme that the first Black man to be president of the United States was illegitimately there" and referred "to countries on the continent as 'shithole' countries" and "refused to condemn white supremacists.





Joe Biden speaks about his plan to beat Covid-19 in Delaware and Donald Trump addresses a rally in Florida.

Trump effect: EU-US ties 'on life support'

US election: Electoral Vote map (Projected)

Leans Biden 56

TOSS UPS 181

AFP, Frankfurt am Main

Back in 2016, German Chancellor Angela Merkel greeted Donald Trump's victory with an extraordinary warning: that she would work with the US president on the condition that he respect democratic values. Things did not improve from there.

Four years later, Trump's abrasive foreign policy moves, often unveiled in all-caps tweets, have alienated not just Germany but much of Europe.

"The transatlantic relationship is practically on life support," said Sudha David-Wilp, a senior transatlantic fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. Even if Democratic challenger Joe

Biden wins the November 3 election, experts said there will be no magical healing of the EU-US rift.

Recent surveys by the Pew Research Center found that America's image among Europeans has plummeted to record lows, with just 26 percent of Germans now holding a favourable view of the superpower.

Climate Agreement and the Iran allies," said David-Wilp.

Likely Biden 58 nuclear deal to slapping tariffs on EU steel and aluminium, and defanging the World Trade Organization, Trump has dealt blow after blow

to multilateralism, a much-valued

European approach to global

BIDEN 232

Solid Biden 118

challenges. He stunned allies by describing the European Union as a foe on trade, and "scared people" by cosying up to Russia, said Bruce Stokes, an associate fellow at Chatham House, a British think-tank.

Trump also regularly targeted European allies its failure to meet Nato's defence spending targets.

Should Biden win, he "will see the From pulling out of the Paris need to revitalise relationships with

Expect the former vice president to make a trip to Europe early on, rejoin the climate pact and restart nuclear talks with Iran, experts say. But areas of friction will remain on military spending, Nord Stream 2, and Washington's campaign against Chinese tech giant Huawei.

TRUMP 125

Likely Trump 35

Solid Trump 57 Leans Trump 33

SOURCE: REALCLEARPOLITICS

Faced with a Covid-19 battered economy, Biden will probably eschew Trump's more protectionist tendencies but some sort of "America First" vision for sensitive industries will likely live on.

Should Trump be reelected, expect 'a great sucking in of breath" across European capitals, Stokes said, and "another four years of a very rocky

But even under Trump 2.0, it is "entirely possible" for the US and EU to form a united front when it's in their self-interest on issues such as the coronavirus or China policy,

Stokes said. Peter Beyer, Merkel's transatlantic coordinator, recently told AFP that a "new Cold War" between Washington and Beijing had already begun, and that Europe should "stand shoulder-to-shoulder" with

the US to face a rising China. An unintended side effect of the Trump turbulence has been the growing realisation that Europe must

The bloc's successful negotiation of a huge coronavirus stimulus package, spearheaded, suggests a new impetus for closer cooperation and a reinvigorated German-Franco

There are plenty of obstacles ahead for the 27-member club with its disparate interests.

half-full, the Trump presidency may have helped accelerate European unity," Stokes said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Trump suggests Egypt may 'blow up' Ethiopia dam

US President Donald Trump on Friday voiced anger at Ethiopia over its construction of a huge dam on the Nile River and appeared to suggest that Egypt may destroy it. Trump made the remarks as he announced a breakthrough normalization deal between US ally Israel and Sudan, which like Egypt fears that Ethiopia will use up scarce water resources. "It's a very dangerous situation because Egypt is not going to be able to live that way," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office with leaders of Sudan and Israel on speakerphone. "They'll end up blowing up the dam. And I said it and I say it loud and clear -- they'll blow up that dam. And they have to do something,"Trump said. Ethiopia says that the \$4 billion project is indispensible for its electrification and development needs and has voiced hope of beginning operations in early 2021.

Israel will not oppose US sale of F-35 to UAE

Israel said on Friday it will not oppose US sales of "specific weapons systems" to the United Arab Emirates, in an apparent reference to the F-35 warplanes sought by Abu Dhabi, Under a principle of preserving Israel's "qualitative military edge", the United States consults with it on proposed sales of advanced arms to other countries in the region. Israel has reiterated a need to maintain its military superiority even since forging official ties with the UAE and its fellow Gulf Arab state Bahrain under deals brokered by US President Donald Trump last month. Washington agreed to consider allowing the UAE to buy F-35 stealth jets in a side deal to a normalisation agreement between Israel and the UAE.

Erdogan says Macron needs 'mental checks'

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday slammed his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron, over his policies toward Muslims, saying that he needed "mental checks." "What can one say about a head of state who treats millions of members from different faith groups this way: first of all, have mental checks," Erdogan said in a televised address. Macron's proposal to defend his country's secular values against radical Islam has angered the Turkish government, adding to a growing list of disputes between the French leader and Erdogan. Macron this month described Islam as a religion "in crisis" worldwide and said the government would present a bill in December to strengthen a 1905 law that officially separated church and

funding of mosques.

state in France. He announced stricter oversight

of schooling and better control over foreign



Members of the 'Red Angels' cheering squad shout slogans of support for countries battling the covid-19 novel coronavirus pandemic, at an event organised to coincide with United Nations Day, at the **Olympic Park in** Seoul, South Korea, vesterdav.

NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

New clashes after Washington talks

New clashes broke out between Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenian forces over Nagorno-Karabakh a day after talks in Washington to try to end the deadliest fighting in the enclave in more than a quarter of a century.

Azerbaijan's defence ministry reported fighting in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, a mountainous part of Azerbaijan populated and controlled by ethnic

It said the areas of Lachin and Gubadli had come under rocket and artillery fire from inside Armenian terrritory. In Nagorno-Karabakh, local officials accused Azerbaijan's forces of firing Smerch missiles into residential buildings

in Stepanakert, the largest city in the region, which Baku US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had met separately with the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia on Friday in a new attempt to end nearly a month of

bloodshed that Russian President Vladimir Putin said may have killed 5,000 people. The collapse of two Russia-brokered ceasefires had

already dimmed the prospect of a quick end to fighting that broke out on Sept 27 over Nagorno-Karabakh.

AstraZeneca, J&J vaccine trials back on track in US

Two major clinical trials for experimental Covid-19 vaccines got back on track in the United States -- providing a glimmer of hope as the number of cases skyrocket across the country.

Covid-19 has now killed more than 223,000 Americans, and the health crisis is a top issue in the presidential election pitting incumbent Donald Trump against Joe Biden. AstraZeneca announced that the

trial of its vaccine candidate, developed with Britain's University of Oxford, has resumed in the US, the only country where it remained suspended following a participant's illness six weeks ago. The trial was suspended worldwide

on September 6, but resumed shortly thereafter in Britain, and in the following weeks in South Africa, Brazil and Japan, with authorities determining the illness was not apparently linked to the vaccine.

AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine project is one of the most promising and advanced in the world to combat the global

pandemic, which has now claimed the lives of 1.1 million people. Many countries are counting on using the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine to inoculate their populations.

It is one of 10 vaccine candidates being tested on tens of thousands of people in socalled phase 3 trials.

In the United States, the two top candidates vying to get a green light from the FDA are those made by Pfizer and Moderna. Both expect to request approval

The drugmaker pre-sold hundreds of millions of doses on several continents, and signed partnership deals with other producers to ensure the doses could be made locally.

Shortly after AstraZeneca's announcement, Johnson & Johnson said it was preparing to resume recruitment for its parallel trial, which was suspended last week after a volunteer fell ill.

Just before Friday's announcements, a top US official involved with Operation Warp Speed, the government's vaccine initiative, said he expected the J&J trial to resume quickly.

speak and act more as one.

partnership.

"But if one wants to say the glass is

ISRAEL-SUDAN DEAL

WORLD REACTION

Sudan and Israel agreed Friday to normalise relations, in a US-brokered deal to end decades of hostility that was widely welcomed but stirred Palestinian anger. The announcement makes Sudan, technically at war with Israel since its 1948 foundation, the fifth Arab country to forge diplomatic

relations with the Jewish state. **'HUGE WIN FOR UNITED STATES'**

"HUGE win today for the United States and for peace in the world," tweeted US President Donald Trump, who faces a November 3 election in which he is trailing in the polls. "Sudan has agreed to a peace and normalisation agreement with Israel! With the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, that's THREE Arab countries to have done so in only a matter of weeks. More will follow!"

POLITICAL SIN: PALESTINIANS

Palestinian leaders strongly condemned the deal. "No one has the right to speak on behalf of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause," president Mahmoud Abbas's office said in a statement. The Islamist movement Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, said the deal was a "political sin" that benefited only the Israeli premier.

DEAL SECURED BY RANSOM: IRAN

Iran, which has been a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause since the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and remains on the US blacklist of state sponsors of terrorism, said Sudan had paid a "shameful" price to be removed from the "phony" blacklist. "Pay enough ransom, close your eyes on the crimes against Palestinians, then you'll be taken off the so-called 'terrorism' blacklist. Obviously the list is as phony as the U.S. fight against terrorism. Shameful!" its

foreign ministry said. **IMPORTANT STEP: GERMANY**

Germany welcomed the deal as a boost to stability in the Middle East and paid tribute to the US role in brokering it. "Following Israel's normalisation agreements with Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, this is another important step towards greater stability and a more peaceful relationship between Israel and its Arab neighbours," the foreign ministry said. "The US has played a crucial role in mediating these agreements, for which it deserves thanks and recognition."

'HISTORIC' DEAL: UAE, BAHRAIN

The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, which signed normalisation deals with Israel in September, welcomed Sudan's decision to establish relations too as "historic" and hoped it will expand the scope of economic, trade, scientific and diplomatic cooperation between the countries

Myanmar vote ban dashes | EU adopts crucial hope for ethnic minorities

For many marginalised ethnic minority groups in conflictplagued regions of Myanmar, next month's national elections had at least offered a glimmer of hope for empowerment.

But a decision to exclude swathes of their homelands from the vote -- ostensibly over security concerns

-- has instead filled them with anger and despair, with nearly two million people now disenfranchised. Aung San Suu Kyi's ruling National

League for Democracy (NLD) is widely expected to be returned to power in the November 8 polls -- only the second since the country emerged from outright military

Last week the election commission announced a long list of constituencies where voting will not take place, leaving more than a million disenfranchised



in Rakhine and hundreds of thousands more elsewhere.

One community in Rakhine state was notably unaffected by this latest decision, but only because they were already disenfranchised. Myanmar's Rohingya Muslims have had their citizenship and rights stripped away over decades.

In total nearly two million people of voting age will now be unable to cast a ballot -- about five percent of the electorate.

Other states across the country -- notably in Shan, Kachin and Karen -- have also been left reeling by the announcement.

Kachin State People's Party MP Dwe Bu

accused the government of letting down ethnic minorities. "We believed the NLD government would strive for democracy and work for

the public," she said. "But now, I feel they're even worse."

biodiversity plan

AFP, Brussels

EU environment ministers on Friday adopted a biodiversity strategy aimed at protecting ecosystems, a move deemed essential to tackling climate change and reducing the risk of future pandemics.

Meeting in Luxembourg, the 27 national ministers backed the EU Commission's strategy of placing at least 30 percent of the EU's land maritime areas under special protection. The European governments now expect the EU commission - the bloc's executive arm -- to integrate the biodiversity policy

objectives in relevant future legislative proposals. A Monday report by the European Environment Agency (EEA) warned that more than 80 percent of the European

Union's natural habitats were in poor or bad condition. The European Parliament also easily passed a massive farm subsidy bill on Friday, to the fury of environmental activists who say it fell well short of EU commitments to fight climate change.

"It's five minutes to midnight on the climate emergency clock, but our governments are stalling," said Greenpeace EU climate policy adviser Sebastian Mang. "Meanwhile, the gas industry, the industrial farming lobby, airlines and carmakers are shooting holes in the EU Green Deal, and our chance of a safe climate for people and nature is fading."



A man feeds seagulls as he stands on the banks of Yamuna river, on a smoggy morning in New Delhi, India yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS