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President Obama: Trayvon Martin case a 'tragedy'

President Barack Obama spoke out Friday on the Trayvon Martin shooting for the first time, calling the incident a "tragedy" and invoking his own children.

"I can only imagine what these parents are going through," the president said, adding that he couldn't help but think about his daughters. "I think every parent in America should be able to understand why it is absolutely imperative that we investigate every aspect of this.

"My main message is to the parents of Trayvon Martin," he added. "If I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon. I think they are right to expect that all of us as Americans are going to take this with the seriousness it deserves and we're going to get to the bottom of exactly what happened."

The president said he was pleased to hear that Florida Gov. Rick Scott has appointed a task force to look into the incident.



“I think all of us have to do some soul searching to figure out how does something like this happen,”

Noting that his attorney general is looking into the case, the president prefaced his remarks by saying it was important he was not “impairing any investigation that’s taking place right now.”

Obama’s remarks came as he stood in the Rose Garden to introduce his new choice for the president of the World Bank.

They were his first remarks on the incident. The White House earlier in the week noted it was a “local” event.

Trayvon’s parents, Tracy Martin and Sybrina Fulton, issued a statement after the Obama spoke, saying it was “humbling” that the president had taken time to talk about their son.

“The president's personal comments touched us deeply and made us wonder: If his son looked like Trayvon and wore a hoodie, would he be suspicious too?” the statement said. “We'd like to thank the president and the millions of people from around the world who have shown their support for Trayvon by participating in hoodie marches, rallies or through social media. We are all working together to not only get justice for Trayvon, but also to ensure that this kind of senseless tragedy doesn't happen to another child.”

GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney also issued a statement Friday about the case.

“What happened to Trayvon Martin is a tragedy,” Romney said “There needs to be a thorough investigation that reassures the public that justice is carried out with impartiality and integrity.”