

4. عبد / Abd (Slave)

Other spellings and related references: *shomfak* (racial slur based on facial features); *kahla* (English translation: *black*); *zol / tlees* (references to physically strong slaves); أزرق / *azraq* (English translation: *blue*); أحرق / *ahraq* (English translation: *burnt*); فحم / *fahm* (English translation: *charcoal*); زنجي / *zenji* (English translation: *n-word*); خادم / *khadem* (English translation: *servant*)

Sample Posts:



The screenshot shows a tweet from a user with a profile picture of a globe. The text of the tweet is in Arabic and contains a racial slur. The tweet includes a 'Follow' button and a dropdown arrow.

English translation: “Slaves of UAE and slaves of Egypt and traitors of the state and you sold it to France, you lost, O bastard, o Qarmatians and your way to your master prisoner Haftar, say to Haftar we have men in Libya”



The screenshot shows a tweet from a user with a profile picture of a globe. The text of the tweet is in Arabic and contains a racial slur. The tweet includes a 'Follow' button and a dropdown arrow. It is a reply to another user.

English translation: “You are happy with this despicable accomplishment O slave of the Sultans... We in Libya adore freedom and see that slaves like you are not our equals... But history has witnessed where slaves dared to liberate... But in the end they only made a mob state...”

Definition: This term—“abd” (عبد) being singular and “abed” (عبيد) being plural—is a racial slur used against people perceived to be of sub-Saharan African descent. The use of this word is closely tied to historical and social contexts in Libya: the influx of sub-Saharan African migrants into the country, the association of some sub-Saharan nationalities with Gaddafi’s military forces, and the historical discrimination against certain Libyan ethnic groups with typically darker skin, such as the Tebu. Focus group participants in Tripoli indicated that use of the term is likely to be triggered by discussions of the issue of illegal immigration, the needs of unemployed black workers, and interracial marriage. It is also used in reference to someone who is viewed as being beholden to a certain group or leader (e.g., “slave of Haftar”).