

United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Report

Acknowledging Systemic Oppression of Afrikan Americans as a Crime Against Humanity: A Call for Justice and Reparation

Submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council
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I. Introduction:

For over 400 years, African Americans have endured systemic oppression, beginning with the transatlantic slave trade and continuing through post-slavery systemic discrimination. This proposal seeks to classify these acts as crimes against humanity and calls for global recognition, reparations, and systemic change.

The United States ratified the **Convention Against Torture** and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (**CAT**) in October 1994, and the convention entered into force for the US on November 20, 1994. **As a state party to the CAT, the United States is obligated to take measures to ensure that all acts of torture are offenses under its criminal law and to exercise proper jurisdiction over such offense**

What is a crime against humanity? The Rome Statute defines it as any act of systematic persecution, enslavement, or infliction of great suffering upon a group of people. By every measure, the transatlantic slave trade and the legacy of systemic oppression inflicted upon African Americans meet these criteria.

- Enslavement robbed millions of Africans of their freedom, families, culture and their dignity, fueling an economy built on human suffering.
- Post-slavery policies like Jim Crow laws institutionalized racial terror and denied African Americans their most basic human rights.
- Even today, the remnants of this system persist in the form of mass incarceration, economic inequality, and racialized violence.

These injustices are not confined to the past. They are woven into the fabric of our present, perpetuated by laws and practices that maintain inequality and deny African Americans the full dignity of their humanity.

Legal Basis

Under Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), crimes against humanity include:

- Enslavement.
- Persecution of a group based on racial identity.
- Acts causing great suffering or serious injury to mental or physical health.

The systematic dehumanization, violence, and economic exploitation of African Americans meet these criteria.

II. Historical Context:

1. The Transatlantic Slave Trade and Slavery (1619–1865):

- Over 12 million Africans were forcibly transported and enslaved.
- Brutal labor, family separation, and inhumane treatment defined this period, with state and economic systems benefiting directly.

2. Segregation and Racial Terror (1865–1965):

- Jim Crow laws institutionalized inequality, while acts of lynching and racial terror targeted African Americans, depriving them of fundamental human rights.

3. Modern-Day Oppression (1965–Present):

- Policies like mass incarceration, redlining, and the War on Drugs continue to disproportionately harm African Americans.
- Economic, healthcare, and educational disparities are legacies of systemic racism.

4. Economic Disparities

- **Wealth Gap:** African Americans have historically been denied access to wealth-building opportunities (e.g., land ownership, home loans, high-paying jobs). The racial wealth gap remains wide, with white families having significantly higher median wealth. In 2023, the
 - **median wealth** of white families was about **\$84,630**, compared to **\$54,490** for Black families.
- **Employment Discrimination:** Hiring discrimination, wage gaps, and workplace bias limit job opportunities and career advancement.

5. Education Inequality

- **Underfunded Schools:** Predominantly Black schools often receive less funding, leading to fewer resources, outdated materials, and lower teacher salaries.
- **School-to-Prison Pipeline:** Harsh disciplinary policies disproportionately affect Black students, increasing dropout rates and incarceration risks.

6. Criminal Justice System

- Mass Incarceration: Afrikan Americans are disproportionately incarcerated **due to biased policing, mandatory minimum sentences, the war on drugs; three strikes laws; truth in sentencing laws; punitive policing and rolling thunder**. In 2023 Blacks were **41.31% of the US population yet 37% of the prison and jail population**.
- Police Brutality: Racial profiling and excessive use of force contribute to higher rates of police violence against Black communities.

6. Health Disparities

- Medical Racism: Black patients often receive lower-quality healthcare, less pain management, and face higher maternal mortality rates. Black patients are often misdiagnosed or dismissed by medical professionals.
- About **12% of Black Americans** lack health insurance, compared to **7% of white Americans**.
- Environmental Racism: Black communities are more likely to live in areas with pollution, unsafe water, and poor infrastructure.

7. Mental and Emotional Toll

- Racial Trauma: Constant exposure to discrimination and violence leads to stress, anxiety, depression, and lower overall well-being.
 - Suicide rates among Black youth have risen significantly, yet mental health services remain underutilized due to stigma and lack of access.
- Stereotypes and Media Representation: Negative portrayals in the media reinforce biases and contribute to societal prejudices.

8. Housing Discrimination

- Redlining and Housing Segregation: Historic policies and discrimination prevented Black families from buying homes in certain areas, leading to generational poverty. In **2023, home ownership for Blacks was 45.9% and whites 73.8%**. Some of the barriers are student loan debt; denials for mortgage and unfavorable loan terms.
- Evictions and Gentrification: Black residents are disproportionately affected by eviction and displacement.

9. Political Disenfranchisement

- Voter Suppression: Tactics such as ID laws, gerrymandering, and felony disenfranchisement disproportionately affect Black voters.
- Lack of Representation: Systemic barriers limit political power and leadership opportunities.

III. Why This is a Crime Against Humanity:

- **Systematic Nature:** These injustices are not isolated incidents but are systemic, sustained, and intentionally maintained to the present.
- **Widespread Impact:** The collective suffering of African Americans has affected every generation since slavery, creating cycles of trauma and poverty that is experienced by current generations.
- **Institutional Backing:** Governments, corporations, and other entities have historically upheld these systems for profit and control

IV. Proposed Actions:

1. Recognition and Accountability

- **U.S. Government Acknowledgment:** Issue a formal apology for slavery and systemic racism, similar to precedents set for Japanese-American internment.
- **Global Recognition:** Advocate for the United Nations to classify the transatlantic slave trade and systemic racism as crimes against humanity

2. Reparations and Redress

- **Financial Compensation:** Direct payments or investments in African American communities to address generational economic harm.
- **Resource Redistribution:** Provide land, housing, and educational opportunities to repair inequities.
- **Systemic Reform:** Ensure access to equitable healthcare, education, and employment.

3. Truth and Reconciliation Commission

- Modeled after South Africa's post-apartheid efforts, this commission would:
 - Investigate systemic racism's impacts.
 - Provide a platform for survivors and descendants to share their experiences.
 - Recommend pathways for healing and justice.

4. Advocacy and Education

- **Public Campaigns:** Launch global awareness campaigns highlighting the history and legacy of systemic racism.
- **Curriculum Reform:** Introduce Afrocentric education in schools to educate future generations about these crimes

5. Target Audiences

- **The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC):** Submit the proposal for consideration as a global initiative.

- **The U.S. Congress:** Advocate for domestic legislation acknowledging systemic racism as a crime against humanity.
- **Global Activists and NGOs:** Partner with organizations that address racial equity and historical injustices.

V. Demands for Justice and Redress:

A call for a **global reckoning**, recognizing these crimes and taking meaningful action to address them. These steps must include:

1. Formal Recognition of Systemic Oppression as a Crime Against Humanity

- The **United Nations** must formally recognize the systemic oppression of African Americans as a crime against humanity, similar to the recognition of the **Transatlantic Slave Trade** and **Apartheid in South Africa**.

2. Reparations for African American Communities

- **Financial Reparations:** Direct compensation to African Americans or the descendants of enslaved individuals, as well as investments in economic, educational, and healthcare initiatives within African American communities.
- **Land and Resources:** Provide land, homeownership programs, and equitable access to education and healthcare.
- **Cultural Reparations:** Implement programs that preserve African American history, culture, and contributions, including Afrocentric educational curricula and public monuments that celebrate Black history.

3. Truth and Reconciliation Commission

- Establish a **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** modeled after South Africa's post-apartheid efforts to investigate the historical and ongoing impacts of slavery and systemic racism. This commission would:
 - Document and publicly acknowledge the systemic harm inflicted on African Americans.
 - Offer a platform for the voices of descendants, survivors, and communities to be heard and honored.
 - Propose restorative policies to promote healing and unity.

4. Systemic Reform and Policy Change

- **Criminal Justice Reform:** End mass incarceration through the abolition of practices such as cash bail and the War on Drugs, ensuring equal treatment under the law.
- **Education Equity:** Ensure equal access to quality education by addressing funding disparities, integrating African American history into the curriculum, and expanding access to higher education.

- **Economic Justice:** Create pathways for entrepreneurship, business ownership, and equitable access to capital for African Americans.

VI. Global Responsibility and Accountability:

The oppression of African Americans was perpetuated not just by the United States but through a global system of trade, colonialism, and exploitation. As such, the world bears collective responsibility for the continued suffering. Governments, corporations, and institutions that benefited from slavery and racial oppression must also be held accountable.

A Global Call to Action:

- **International Advocacy:** Call upon the United Nations to sponsor resolutions addressing the systemic racism that persists today.
- **Civil Society Mobilization:** We encourage global organizations, activists, and human rights advocates to join forces and support this cause, building solidarity across borders for racial equity.
- **Support for Affected Communities:** Collaborate on initiatives that support African Americans and the broader African diaspora in healing and economic empowerment.

VII. Conclusion:

Acknowledging the systemic oppression of African Americans as a crime against humanity is not only a moral imperative but also a critical step toward justice and healing. This proposal calls for collective action to redress the harms of the past and create a more equitable future. **The United States with support of a global system that benefited from and continues to benefit from slavery and supports systemic racism must be held accountable.**