



# Global Afrikan Congress uk (GACuk)

**Submission June 2019**

**United Nations (UN) Thematic Report on Reparations, Racial Justice and Equality**

Global Afrikan Congress (GAC) is an international network of organisations formed after the work by Afrikans at the UN World Conference Against Racism 2001 who successfully encouraged nation states to recognise our enslavement as a crime against humanity. Our key objective is to achieve Reparations for these crimes which still continue today, including neo-colonialism, genocide and racism.

GAC organises from the grassroots offering local, regional and international community solidarity, co-operation and empowerment. It offers organisations and Afrikans across the world the opportunity to work together in a unified fashion to demand Reparations. We aim to mobilise the human, economic, political, spiritual and cultural resources of Afrika and the Afrikan Diaspora in the interest and to the benefit of Afrika and her people. GACuk is the UK Chapter of GAC.

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The term 'Afrikan' in this document refers to the indigenous people of Afrika and their descendants throughout the Diaspora in all corners of the world. We spell Afrika with a 'k' based on the following insights:

- it is a Pan-Afrikan spelling which relates both to the Afrikan continent and the Diaspora;
- it reflects the spelling of 'Afrika' in Afrikan languages and
- it includes the concept of 'ka', the vital energy which both sustains and creates life, as expressed in ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) teachings

## **Global Afrikan Congress uk (GACuk)**

### **Submission on the United Nations (UN) Thematic Report on Reparations, Racial Justice and Equality**

“Equality is not likely to be obtained without some form of reparations” David H. Swinton

Global Afrikan Congress uk (GACuk) welcomes the opportunity to make this submission on the specific issues we can see in pursuing Reparations, racial justice and equality for Afrikan people.

One of our first concerns is the need to remember the specific differences in the racism faced by Afrikans which requires Reparations. Our starting points must be that “slavery and the slave trade are a crime against humanity and should always have been so, especially the transatlantic slave trade”,<sup>1</sup> that “colonialism has led to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance”<sup>2</sup> and that Afrikan people were and continue to be victims of their consequences.

Discussions about Reparations for Afrikan people must take account of the different circumstances needing to be addressed that did not exist for others who have received Reparations. If we take 1440 as the beginning of enslavement then we are looking at Reparations for at least 579 years of racism, colonialism and related abuses. These things did not take place in one country and were not carried out by one member state. “But our own search for reparations must, of necessity, be tailored to our peculiar condition, to our peculiar experience.”<sup>3</sup> Our experiences and so what needs to be repaired will be different on the African continent; in former colonies which are now predominantly Afrikan populated countries; in so called dependent territories and in countries where Afrikans are a minority in the population.

"All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident." attributed to Arthur Schopenhauer

GACuk is not surprised at “current challenges in implementation, which include States’ political unwillingness to implement existing obligations using questionable economic arguments.”<sup>4</sup> We would suggest, like many others, that it would be an insult to try to put a monetary value on Reparations for murder, rape, torture, maiming, exploitation, family separation and the loss of name, history, faith, etc.

GACuk believes that at this stage we need more spaces where Afrikans can discuss what Reparations should look like for us on the continent and in the Diaspora. Such spaces and attendance need to be provided by the UN and member states at national, regional and international levels.<sup>5</sup>

There are many forms of Reparations that these fora could discuss. The Abuja Proclamation of 1993 “Urges those countries which were enriched by slavery and the Slave Trade to give total relief from foreign debt and allow the debtor countries of the diaspora to become free for self-development and from immediate and direct economic domination”.<sup>6</sup>

The GAC founding Conference recommended the creation of an International Front of Afrikans for Reparations (IFAR) whose first initiative would be the campaign for “immediate return of Reparations money paid to France by Haiti, following her successful revolution and independence from France.”<sup>7</sup> GACuk has an annual Lobby of the UK House of Commons. One of its demands has been the decriminalisation of the names of our Freedom Fighters.<sup>8</sup> We believe this may be a common demand for any country where Afrikans were enslaved, colonised or resisted these abuses.

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<sup>1</sup> Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), paragraph 13

<sup>2</sup> DDPA, paragraph 14

<sup>3</sup> Professor Chinweizu, *Reparations and A New Global Order: A Comparative Overview*, page 2

<sup>4</sup> UN A/69/518, Summary

<sup>5</sup> UN A/69/518, paragraph 80

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.africanconstitution.org/home/abuja-proclamation>

<sup>7</sup> Global Afrikan Congress, *The Bridgetown Protocol*, page 44

<sup>8</sup> GACuk Lobby Booklet

At the UN International Decade for People of African Descent (IDPAD) Regional meeting for Europe, Central Asia and North America November 2017 and the Consultation on the Permanent African Forum May 2019 it was suggested that Reparations could include mechanisms to ensure Afrikans controlled the newly legitimised marijuana trade as so many of our people had been penalised for its use for so long.

The University of Glasgow has researched the source of its funding and identified enslavers who made financial donation or sent their children to be educated there.<sup>9</sup> They are working with the University of the West Indies on Reparations which could include £200 million in academic scholarships. Afrikan civil society has asked that other Universities carry out this research and that they all look at wider Reparations that benefit those not academically minded by supporting, eg Saturday Schools; Reparations Networks and community advocacy and empowerment organisations. The UK's UCL has also researched those who received money for releasing enslaved people.<sup>10</sup> We believe that these initiative would be relevant to other countries.

Any discussion needs to take account of existing work such as the CARICOM 10 Point Action Plan<sup>11</sup> and the Afrikan civil society 12 Point Reparations Action Plan coming out of work at the annual Emancipation Festival in Trinidad in 2018. We also need to look at differences in collecting and using data so we can not only identify how many Afrikans there are in each member state but their socio economic situation and levels of political participation. GAC engagement at Afrikan activities and initiatives around the world and anecdotal information from our members and colleagues indicate that we suffer the same problems but do not all have the mechanisms to prove this and so address them.

This is key for maximising UN work through such things as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), Durban Review Conference and International Decade for People of African Descent (IDPAD).

“the most important aspect of reparation is not the money the campaign may or may not bring: the most important part of reparation is our self-repair; the change it will bring about in our understanding of our history, of ourselves, and of our destiny; the chance it will bring about in our place in the world.”<sup>12</sup>

Afrikans do not speak one language and do not use the same terms for the issues that affect us. Part of our discussions have to be to agree terms that we as Afrikans wish to be used. Terms such as ‘enslavement’ rather than ‘slavery’; ‘enslavers’ rather than ‘slave owners’ are more commonly in use. We note the recent ‘European Parliament resolution on fundamental rights of people of African descent in Europe’ used the terms “Afrophobia’, ‘Afri-phobia’ and ‘anti-black racism’”.<sup>13</sup> GACuk believes that we will progress further towards Reparations and more quickly as Afrikans if we can agree how we refer to ourselves and how we expect non-Afrikans to refer to us.

“To end this dreadful condition and to make all the appropriate repairs, i.e. reparations, we need to move from this old global order, where holocaust happened to us, to a different global order where holocaust will never happen to us. We need to move from this old global order, which sucks resources out of our veins and piles debt upon our heads, to a different global order in which our enormous resources shall serve our own prosperity. We need to move from this old global order, which is permeated with negrophobia, to a new global order that is cleansed of negrophobia, one where we would live in dignity and equality with all the other races of humanity.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/sep/17/glasgow-university-to-make-amends-over-slavery-profits-of-past>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://caricomreparations.org/caricom/caricoms-10-point-reparation-plan/>

<sup>12</sup> Reparations and A New Global Order: A Comparative Overview, Professor Chinweizu, page 4

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/B-8-2019-0212\\_EN.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/B-8-2019-0212_EN.html)

<sup>14</sup> Reparations and A New Global Order: A Comparative Overview, Professor Chinweizu, page 3