

## **Report (1) : ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT**

By: Amb. Dr. HAISSAM BOU\_SAID (IHRC Ambassador / Special Representative Envoy to Geneva)

This report of the International Human Rights Council (IHRC) is primarily focused on the human rights solutions to address environmental injustice, racial disparities, unequal protection and the unique impact of the climate crisis and environmental racism on people of African descent. H.E Ambassador Dr. Haissam Bou-Said Special Representative Envoy to Geneva with the collaboration of his advisor Dr. Tivlumun Innocent Ahure undertook the editing of the report following the guidelines for preliminary concise report productions, records, length and clarity.

Racism remains deeply embedded in world affairs and it is as present in matters of the environment as in other aspects of life. Africa's historical and contemporary stories have clear evidences of injustices in environmental health hazards, racial and economic inequities together with climate change. It is an established fact that there is a direct line from slavery and the rapacious exploitation of natural resources to the current issues of environmental justice on the people of African descent. The glaring issues to first understand is that the African people in the slavery era had meager and inadequate food, inappropriate health care, indecent treatment, and then when freed, were given lands that were eventually surrounded by things like petrochemical industries.

It is very easy to try to position the fights against climate change and racial injustice as deeply intertwined, because the transition to a low-carbon future is connected to “workers’ rights, land use, and how people are treated. To substantiate this point, this report states that several mainstream environmental stakeholders have only worked on building and new technologies that cater about conservation, wildlife, trees and open space but have not taken into consideration inputs on the concern about black people.

This argument is supported and proven without evidence to the contrary that climate change and racial injustice do share the same roots and should be addressed together, and that there is no climate action that is not also about racial justice. Climate change is the result of a legacy of extraction, colonialism and slavery which took several millions of African people to the Western world. Ultimately environmental justice dates back to the 1970s or ‘60s during which several slave quarters were established. Mistreated black slaves when freed, were given lands that were eventually surrounded by things like petrochemical industries.

34The idea of killing black people or indigenous people, all of that has a long, long history that is centered on capitalism and the extraction of labor from Africa.

IHRC HQ affirms to the fact that to separate these issues will be impossible. The truth is when reviewing the information of climate justice we found out that, peoples of African descent, have always worked multi-dimensionally because we have to be able to fight on so many different planes. Trajectories of black people fighting police brutality and fighting for racial justice abounds.

The peoples of African descent do today treat matters of environmental justice as having the same ingredients and therefore holds that, there is no distinction between one and the other of all the discriminatory thinking’s.

This is a picture of the environmental justice issue.

It is this clear economics that climate change is the child of all that destruction, of all of that extraction, of all of those decisions that were made and how those ended up, not just in terms of

people of African descent freedom and taking away freedom from black people, but this is hurting the people still and it's all related. One sure thing is that with Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico and Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans the loss of lives was simply not just because it was an extreme weather event.

- - -

Ref: IHRCOUNCIL/GEME/2020/324/ HRC- AD

March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## **Report (2) : ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT**

By: Amb. Dr. HAISSAM BOU\_SAID (IHRC Ambassador / Special Representative Envoy to Geneva)

It started with conquest, genocides, slavery, and colonialism which the black people suffered in the early 19th century.

Indigenous Africans and people of African descent around the world are three times more likely to die from climate change than white people.

This is in part because they are 70 percent more likely to live in counties or communities in foreign countries that are in violation of simple issues such as federal air pollution standards.

It is indisputable that climate change is a threat to peoples physical health, mental health, air, water, food and shelter, but particularly peoples of African descent face the greatest risks because they are socially and economically disadvantaged.

Reviewing where they live, their health, income, language barriers, and limited access to resources has proven this point.

The communities, in which they live, shall in future, suffer the worst impacts of climate change, unless we recognize that fighting climate change and environmental justice are inextricably linked.

For example the effects of heat facing such communities such as warming temperatures and more intense and frequent heat waves as the climate changes would in the long run reach serious consequences.

Higher temperatures lead to more deaths and illness, hospital and emergency room visits, and birth defects. Extreme heat can cause heat cramps, heat stroke, heat exhaustion, hyperthermia, and dehydration.

The poor air quality in these communities making a big infraction to the environment.

While climate change does not cause poor air quality, burning fossil fuels does; and climate change can worsen air quality.

Heat waves cause air masses to remain stagnant and prevent air pollution from moving away.

Warmer temperatures lead to the creation of more smog, particularly during dry season in Africa and summer in Western world.

And wildfires, fueled by heat waves and drought, produce smoke that contains toxic pollutants that cause other health problems.

Meantime a survey study was made by my office as Ambassador at large of the IHRC to the Middle East and North Africa in collaboration with our Africa Region HQ to get a verdict on the reported cases of mistreatment of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), showed that there is no nation in Africa with a responsive government doing enough to

protect displaced women and girls and ensure that they have access to basic rights and services or to sanction their abusers, who include camp leaders, vigilante groups, policemen, and soldiers.

The list of activities and projects carried out are in the area of public safety projects including campaigns on indiscriminate attacks on civilians, rapes, forced displacements, and acts of violence especially those with an ethnic dimension, and expressing IHRC's utmost concern at the plights of the civilian population in violence, including women, children, internally displaced persons, and refugees.

Therefore we have established the Human Rights Education Federation conducts trainings with a view to producing and developing high-level professional manpower.

It is further consciously designated for advancing the frontiers of knowledge through Research both basic and applied including providing services through sustained engagements on societal topical discourses, as the relevance of the main objects (teaching, research and service) of the institution will greatly propel studies and global considerations on human rights to development.

This project is in regards to the IHRC's activities that cover public health and safety which is a human right. The IHRC reports will help the Federal Government of Nigeria and other African States through their Federal Ministry of Environment to raise data on the waters pollution and environmental degradation issues which will establish the assessments on future emission trends, policy measures, climate change adaptation, financing research, training and national circumstances. The IHRC-FMoE have perfectly established this mechanism and tagged it as the #BeatPollution Movement.

Therefore we call on:

1. Use the Power of Boycott.
2. new policies on the climate crisis
3. Hold Parliamentary Representatives Accountable. ...
4. participating in efforts to decrease global warming and its effects on human health
5. Practice Self-Education. ...
6. Elevate the Voices of Impacted Communities. ...

- - -