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Statement to the 26th Session of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent

Regional meeting with civil society

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The criminal Trans-Atlantic Trafficking of People with African Lineage and Heritage, commonly referred to as the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, consisted of a minimum of 36,000 voyages that are documented in the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*.¹ At least 12.5 million people from the African continent were trafficked to the Americas and they and their descendants were dehumanized through a *slave manufacturing process* that resulted in the crime against humanity known as *ethnocide*.

While the economic damage of the slave trade and its legacy has been well studied and calculated in the United States, less studied and understood is the damage to the victims' identity resulting from ethnocide. For Black people in the United States, this has resulted in an identity crisis as well as a legal crisis, both domestically and internationally.

In addition to the identity crisis, we are now beginning to understand the genetic damage that was done.

Scientific study has definitively proven that biopsychosocial adversity affects gene structure and function through biochemical actions on the epigene and lead to pathologic function of the specialized cells of the body creating The Transgenerational Epigenetic Effect (TTEE). Kenneth S. Nave, MD states, "Under certain environmental conditions, the epigenome programs or 'reprograms' the genetics of the cells of the limbic system which, **in its most fundamental definition, is the center of all human thought, emotion, behavior, learning and, when present, psychosocial pathology.** . . This environmental shaping of the gene is well confirmed and is also recognized to be transmissible at least to the fourth generation of one's descendants and beyond. That means that any environmental hardship experienced by your ancestors and causing this genetic environmental shaping could possibly, and is probably, transferred down to you, their descendant, and likewise your progeny, for generations. This is The Transgenerational Epigenetic Effect."²

Until recently, reversing the dehumanization process that resulted in ethnocide, and resolving the identity crisis of the victims of the slave trade was thought impossible. However, due to the advent of genetic testing through the company African Ancestry, it is possible to restore the ancestral lineages of the victims. More than 750,000 tests have already identified maternal and paternal lineages, creating the new Lineage Restoration Movement.³ With restored identities, groups of people on both sides of the

¹ <https://www.slavevoyages.org/>

² Nave, Kenneth S., *Competent Proof: The Legal Standing African Americans Have in the Battle for Slavery Reparations*. June 2020. www.drkennave.com

³ <https://www.balanta.org/news/lineage-restoration-movement>

Atlantic who share the same ancestry are now reconnecting and returning to their ancestral homelands. They are creating a new model of development and Diaspora relations on the African continent that prioritizes human repair and development over economic investment. This was most evident in 2019 when Foday Conteh led a contingent of Temne and Mende descendants back to Sierra Leone where they gained citizenship⁴, and in January 2020 when I myself became the first of my family, after two hundred and fifty years, to return to my ancestral homeland in Guinea Bissau and helped launch that country's "Decade of Return Initiative".⁵

One important implication of restoring the ancestral lineage is that it allows the victims to better utilize the Universal Human Rights Instruments, and in particular, those pertaining to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities.

The dehumanizing slave manufacturing process took place in controlled environments that used violence and terrorism over the course of four hundred years. To reverse engineer The Transgenerational Epigenetic Effects, it is going to require controlled environments of the opposite kind: peace, security, and most importantly, autonomy, self-determination and liberty. This can be achieved through the exercise of minority rights and self-determination under a framework of democratic pluralism in the Americas.

I invite the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent to review my complete Statement as well as the document, Agenda for Black America's Restoration and Self Determination⁶, to see a vision and proposal for what this looks like in the United States.

Thank you,

Siphiwe Baleka, Founder

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⁴ <https://youtu.be/eqjt9FODYOs>

⁵ <https://www.balanta.org/news/report-of-the-president-of-the-balanta-burassa-history-amp-genealogy-society-in-america-mission-to-guinea-bissau>

⁶ <http://www.siphiwebaleka.com/blog/2020/10/22/agenda-for-black-american-restoration-and-self-determination>