

**Second Session: Permanent Forum on People of African Descent
UN HQ New York
30 May to 2 June, 2023**

**Item 5: Thematic Discussion – Transnational Migration
31 May, 2023 15:00 EDT Room CR-4**

Statement (2 mins)

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In Feb 2022, we were all affected by the devastating events that unfolded in Ukraine and were gripped by scenes of people fleeing into neighbouring countries. We were also gripped by the appalling stories that emerged of African citizens, students and other people of colour who were being turned away from trains, refused the right to cross the border to safety or otherwise mistreated or impeded, as they reported, purely due to their race and ethnicity.

Another year, another conflict, this time in the Sudan - once again, we are gripped by the appalling stories emerging of Sudanese diaspora and families fleeing to Chad, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and beyond, while the international community's response to evacuating families has been unnecessarily bureaucratic, confusing, and far from satisfactory.

Right here in New York, at this Second Session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, where two of the key topics are on Reparatory Justice and Transnational Migration, some of our colleagues are not here because they were refused visas, or have been offered interview dates after the forum has taken place, or, are right here in New York but have been unable to get their passes to join the sessions despite queuing up from 6.45am on Tuesday morning.

The systemic link between migration and racial injustice involving people of African descent continues to show up in many different forms. The global debate about dysfunctional forms of mobility - ie slavery, colonialism, contemporary forms of irregular migration and how the lives of people of African descent have been marginalized in these contexts, devalued, and, in extreme cases, extinguished, remains largely unresolved and the impact continues to be felt.

The UN must use its influence to remind the world of the unfinished business of advancing the rights of people of African descent, call on the international community to remove the stain of structural and systemic racism that impact on the mobility and lives of people of African descent. Our job here is not done and after 40 decades since the first shipment of enslaved Africans to Virginia, the international decade of people of African descent will need much more than a decade to advance the rights and dignity of Africa and its global diaspora.