

3rd Permanent Forum on People of African Descent (April 16 - 19, 2024)

United Nations, Geneva

Speaker:

Ishmael Abdul-Salaam

AFRE- All For reparations and Emancipation

Item 5: Thematic Discussion: The Second Decade International Decade for People of African Descent- Expectations and Challenges

Greetings members of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent. Congratulations Dr. Soomer on your election as the new chairperson of this forum. I am Ishmael Abdul-Salaam, of AFRE (All For Reparations and Emancipation). I must give recognition to our Emeritus Members, The Hon. Silis Muhammad and Atty. Harriett AbuBakr whose efforts to advocate on behalf of Afrodescendant People expand beyond 30 years in the United Nations.

Afrodescendants have unique concerns stemming from the loss of language, identity and culture, and then became victims' colonialism, slavery, ethnocide, racism, and their lingering impacts.

Much Has Already said by some 1400 attendees at this forum so for the sake of time we submit the following Recommendations to be addressed as immediate ACTION ITEMS

Recommendations for Immediate Action:

1. Demand that the UN Secretary General urge states to take immediate executive actions, with measurable outcomes, to address reparations for Afrodescendant People.
2. Urge states to formally recognize the global identity of Afrodescendant People and ensure protection of their human rights by supporting an Afrodescendant Bill of Rights.
3. Include global recognition of Afrodescendant People in the working group and the Permanent Forum in the second decade of the PFPAD as a permanent agenda item.
4. Prioritize restitution in the form of land as a component of Reparations for Afrodescendant People particularly in states where they exist as minorities.

Contemporary Issues requiring action in the US:

- The persistent legacy of plantation slavery manifests in an expanding wealth gap between Black and White households. As of September 2023, Black households in America owned only 23.5% of the wealth of White households.
- This gap continues to widen due to exploitation of land, homes, and communities, often facilitated by policies favoring corporations over Afrodescendants, who frequently fall victim to practices such as redlining and blockbusting.
- Unfavorable financial policies and limited protections hinder the accumulation of generational wealth through land ownership and acquisition. In 1970, two years after the passage of the Fair Housing Act, the national homeownership rate for Black households was 41.8%, barely increasing to 42.3% by 2019. Only 1.2% increase compared to a 9.2% increase for white households during the same period. Neighborhoods inhabited by Afrodescendants are disproportionately labeled as blighted, leading to decreased property values, and facilitating imminent domain seizures for projects like highway expansions, often devastating the socioeconomic fabric of these communities.