

**Statement of Waikinya Clanton to the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent**

May 2, 2023

Jackson, Mississippi

Madam Chair and Members of the Working Group, thank you for the opportunity to address this esteemed body today. I am Waikinya Clanton. I serve as the Mississippi State Director for the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Greetings on behalf of the **1.124 million Black people** residing in the state.

- Madam Chair, we are in a state of emergency in the U.S Deep South; and there is very little being done about it.
- As we explained in detail in our submission, the city of Jackson, Mississippi stands as a prime example of how the colonial mindset continues to afflict majority Black, Black-led cities in this country, and how practices that amount to apartheid are being imposed on us every day.
- Majority Black cities in the United States were born out of white flight following the desegregation of public schools.
- White flight was an intentional act to starve urban cities by using income inequality to decimate urban economies through the divestiture and repositioning and redistribution of wealth by the majority of its tax base. This exodus caused a ripple effect of failing school systems, under-resourced communities, crippling infrastructure and a host of services.

- This results severely under-resourced schools and communities. Meanwhile, their nearby white counterparts receive an exorbitant amount of funding, resources, and support, higher ratings and greater academic achievements and overall community success.
- Majority Black cities, who are majority Black-led like Jackson, Mississippi suffer from malign neglect.
- Following white flight in the 1970s, this expanded to the stifling of federal funds to address failing infrastructure from the city of Jackson and the county of Hinds to surrounding majority White areas like Rankin and Madison counties in the 1990s, to the hostile takeover we're experiencing in present day, with the attempts at apartheid, the dilution and diminishing of the Black vote and the economic deprivation being imposed on Black-Americans in the US Deep South.
- This is a further example of how social exclusion, when coupled with income inequality, redlining and racial motivations that deepen the outcomes of racial discrimination result in a poor-quality of life outcomes for U.S. Black Americans.
- Black people in the state constitute nearly 40% of its population, a third (1/3) of which have an education of an associate degree or higher; yet the median income for Black people in our state is \$ 27,000.
- In Mississippi, disparities in wealth are enormous and breakdown largely by race. White households have a median net worth \$54,000 greater than households of color in Mississippi, and 47% of Black children live in concentrated poverty, as compared to 10% of White children.
- In Mississippi, 57% of people in jail and 62% of people in prison are Black.

- Through these malicious abuses of power, countless people in the state's Capital city have lost their jobs and have experienced a severe decrease in their income and an attack against their dignity and their humanity.
- What we are experiencing in Jackson is not a unique occurrence here in the United States. Other majority Black cities have seen their version of systemic and institutional racism that consistently reduces the quality of life for Black Americans as well. Cities like Flint, Michigan; Washington, DC; St. Louis, Missouri; Birmingham, Alabama, just to name a few, are also examples.
- Black people in Mississippi stand unified in our outrage, and we ask this body to join us in speaking out against, both the literal and figurative the genocidal starvation, that continue to the plague the lives of Black Americans in the U.S. Deep South.
- Thank you.