



MESSAGE FROM THE CARICOM REPARATIONS COMMISSION

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 *Don Rojas* |  February 18, 2021 |  Caricom News |

**On the Occasion of the United States Congressional Hearing on the HR40 Bill
17 February, 2021**

On behalf of the CARICOM Reparations Commission, allow me to congratulate members of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties for conducting this Congressional hearing on the HR40 Bill.

Your hearing comes at a time when the global movement for reparatory justice for 250 years of enslavement and genocide and for dismantling the structures of systemic racism and white supremacy, is gaining traction on every continent.

Today, we stand in solidarity with you. For years, Caribbean reparations advocates have been inspired by the tireless efforts of the late Congressman John Conyers, and now by Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and Congressman Steve Cohen who have picked up the baton to champion HR40.

The Trans-Atlantic trade in enslaved Africans has been deemed a crime against humanity by the United Nations. Chattel slavery, which was imposed on enslaved Africans in the Americas, was the most brutal and dehumanizing form of slavery in all of human history



of human history.

In 2013, CARICOM Heads of Governments established the CARICOM Reparations Commission with a mandate to prepare the case for reparatory justice for the region indigenous people and African-descendants, whose ancestors were the victims of genocide, slavery, slave trading, and racial apartheid.

Our Commission asserts that victims and descendants of these crimes have a legal right to reparatory justice, and that those who committed these crimes, and who have been enriched by the proceeds of these crimes, have a reparatory case to answer.

Reparations is the moral imperative of our age and we believe that the struggle for reparations will become the pre-eminent human rights movement of the 21st Century.

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At the time of political independence in the Caribbean in the 1960s and '70s, our countries were left with a legacy of underdevelopment, manifested in a wide range of persistent social and economic challenges, including crime, poverty and inequality. We see reparations for the crimes of chattel slavery and colonialism as a necessary and just form of compensation and a pre-requisite for sustainable socio-economic development in our region in the 21st Century and beyond.

Our Commission recognizes the peculiar role and function performed by European governments in this regard, being the legal bodies that instituted the framework for developing and sustaining these crimes. These governments, furthermore, served as the primary agents through which slave-based enrichment took place, and as national custodians of criminally accumulated wealth.

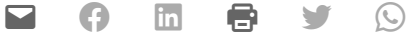
As a consequence, victims and their descendants have a duty to demand reparatory justice. We continue to call upon the European governments who participated in the slave trade and whose countries, citizens and corporations were greatly enriched as a consequence, to partner with us with a view to charting a course to bring about a new world order based on social justice, equality and peace.

I wish you tremendous success with the hearing on 17 February, confident that your advocacy will serve to advance the righteous and noble cause of reparatory justice in the USA and around the world.

Professor Sir Hilary Beckles

Chairman

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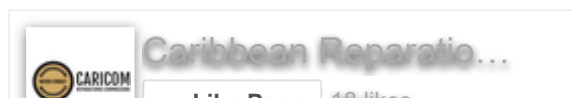
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Caribbean Reparations Commission
about 2 months ago

Since being robbed from our homeland, Africans and their descendants have waged unrelenting efforts for redress. These efforts have taken many forms. Some aimed at self-repair (now called internal reparations); others sought redress from those who committed the crimes. The first acts of reparations sought to restore our liberty and sovereignty.

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Caricom Reparations
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Today Barbados celebrates 50 years of independence from British colonisation and rule. #ReparationTimeCome #NotMyPrince #Freedom #



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