

BLACK BODIES AND 21ST CENTURY CAPTIVITIES

A Petition to End Persistent Forms of Black Enslavement

There is a tragic irony to the fact that currently 180 years after the Slavery Abolition Act prohibited slavery in the British Empire, 150 years after the Emancipation Proclamation prohibited slavery in the U.S., and 125 years after the Golden Law prohibited slavery in Brazil, black enslavement continues in several especially pernicious forms throughout the transatlantic region. Currently, hundreds of thousands of Africans are trafficked or otherwise forced into direct forms of enslavement, including the forced recruitment of children as soldiers; the sexual enslavement of women and children; and the mobilizing of persons through force or deception into various types of unpaid and involuntary labor. Moreover, black communities across the globe are too often victimized by violence due to the proliferation of weapons exported into these communities, and by a greater zealotry on the part of governments toward black criminalization and incarceration than toward black educational and economic development. This continued devaluing of black life is a stain on humanity and a reproach to the sacredness of human personhood.

We the undersigned call on international organizations and sovereign nation states to focus their collective will and resources toward eradicating practices and policies that are contributing to the continued dehumanization and modern day enslavement of African peoples in many parts of the world. Greater efforts must be made to end the bondage caused by:

- Human trafficking
- Child labor and child soldiering
- Sexploitation of women and children
- Mass incarceration

We specifically call on member governments to endorse and enforce programs, protocols, and conventions of the United Nations and International Labor Organization (as well as the African Union and European Union) on small arms, sexual exploitation, child labor, and human trafficking, including: (1) the *U.N. Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition*, and the *U.N. Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects*; (2) the *U.N. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children*; and (3) the International Labor Organization's *Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999*.

We also call on these international institutions and national governments to consciously develop deeper level strategies to ensure that the dignity and sacredness of the lives of African-descended peoples are upheld and that their human rights are realized and protected alongside those of their fellow citizens around the world.

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