

## **FULL COUNCIL MOTION – SEPTEMBER 2020**

### **Atonement and Reparation for Bristol's role in the Transatlantic Traffic in Enslaved Africans (TTEA)**

#### **This council notes that:**

1. Bristol played a major role in the Transatlantic Traffic in Enslaved Africans (TTEA) which saw at least 15 million Africans forcibly trafficked to the Caribbean and America with many thousands losing their lives during the crossing from Africa to the Americas on ships registered in Bristol. A significant amount of the institutional and corporate wealth of our city was founded through this hugely regrettable inhumane episode in our collective history. 'By the latter half of the century, Bristol's position had been overtaken by Liverpool. But even as late as 1789, the trade to Africa and the West Indies was estimated to have comprised over 80 per cent of the total value of Bristol's trade abroad.' (1)
2. Around 2 million people of African descent live in the United Kingdom itself, including an estimated 30,000 plus in Bristol which includes a high percentage of African Caribbean descendants. (2)
3. In 1833 the British Government used £20 million to compensate enslavers, the debt for which was not paid off until 2015. Formerly enslaved persons received no compensation.
4. 'The United Nations Basic Principles and Guidelines on the 'Right to A Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law' provides a framework for the reparatory justice system including, among other measures: an investigation of the facts, an official acknowledgment, and apology, a receipt of answers; an opportunity for victims to speak in a public forum about his/her experiences and to be actively involved the reparatory justice process.
5. The various efforts made by community activists and movements including the Countering Colston Campaign, the Council's legacy steering committee, the International Network of Scholars and Activists for Afrikan Reparations (INOSAAR), the Pan-Afrikan Reparations Coalition in Europe (PARCOE), CARICOM (Caribbean Community and Common Market) Reparations Committee, the Stop The Maangamizi Campaign, the Global Afrikan People's Parliament (GAPP), The Afrikan Emancipation Day Reparations March Committee; and many others who have been working for many years to raise awareness of the lasting impact of enslavement.
6. The progress made in educating young people in Bristol on African Caribbean and 'Black' history, culture and achievements through the city-wide One Bristol Curriculum.

#### **Full Council believes:**

1. It must be a priority for Bristol to actively acknowledge this history and actively seek to bring about reconciliation and reparations by lending and leading its voice as an institution towards remedial holistic reparations and action towards the legacies that continue to plague contemporary life for descendants of the African Caribbean enslaved. The continuation of harm and discrimination manifests itself in but is not limited to: over representation in the mental health system, discrimination within the criminal justice system, poverty and disadvantage.
2. The International Decade for People of African Descent, proclaimed by UN General Assembly resolution 68/237 and to be observed from 2015 to 2024, provides a solid framework for the United Nations, Member States, civil society and all other relevant actors to join together with people of African descent and take effective measures for the implementation of the programme of

activities in the spirit of recognition, justice and development. Such a process is long overdue in Bristol.

**Full Council resolves:**

To call on the Mayor or other appropriate council agency to:

1. Ensure the scope of the commission recently announced includes an audit to trace the flow of wealth from the (TTEA) into the city of Bristol and its citizens and down the generations to the present day. The commission should also call on those Bristol institutions, families and corporations with historic ties to (TTEA) to share their understanding of their role, and clarify what measures they will put in place to work with African Caribbean heritage communities, to agreed measures and implement steps towards holistic reparations for African Caribbean heritage communities.
2. Write to the Prime Minister to request that the UK government immediately establishes an All-Party Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry for Truth & Reparatory Justice to acknowledge, apologise and instigate reparations for the (TTEA) the experience and extent of which is further understood by campaigners as the Maangamizi. (3)
3. Write to the Chancellor to raise concerns about how tax payers were until 2015 paying back compensation paid to enslavers. A petition gaining 10,000 signatures expresses the disgust at this fact, which many people, not just those of African Caribbean descent, find completely abhorrent. (4)
4. To ensure all schools in Bristol are implementing the 'One Bristol Curriculum', and request that independent private schools and academies do so as well.
5. Carry out an audit to establish the living conditions for people of African descent living in council housing and other dwellings and see that it is fit for purpose.
6. In collaboration with CORE (Commission of Racial Equality) and other partners, seek to scrutinise and lobby the health and criminal justice systems including but not limited to providing and resourcing culturally competent mental health provision for African descent people inside and outside of the prison service and better representation in terms of ethnicity on parole boards.
7. To protect and support long-standing black-led cultural institutions of the city that continue to be severely underfunded and under resourced, either through direct council intervention or by brokering relationships with institutions in the city. Such institutions may include the Malcolm X Centre, the Kuumba Centre, the Docklands Settlement and the Rastafari Cultural Centre.

**Motion to be moved by:** Cllr Cleo Lake

**Date of submission:** 26 August 2020

Footnotes

- 1) <https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/stories/bristol-transatlantic-slave-trade/>
- 2) Estimates based on most recent census (2011)
- 3) The terms of reference for this commission of inquiry should focus on the need to inform the public of the nature of colonialism and enslavement, as well as its long-term

consequences including present-day impacts upon both individuals and communities. The Commission's work should be of a participatory nature, calling for submissions from all those with knowledge of the nature and impacts of colonialism and slavery.

This will aim to include, but not be limited to, testimony from: individuals, organisations, academics, communities, and nations. Affected communities and individuals must have their own voice, agency, and self-determined solutions in effecting reparatory justice and steps must be taken to facilitate their participation in any reparatory process in which the United Kingdom is engaged.

Ultimately the goal is to secure holistic reparations - including but not limited to financial compensation - as defined by the UN's 'Basic Principles and Guidelines'. These include mechanisms for restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees for non-repetition. See notes below.

4) <https://www.change.org/p/refund-our-taxes-paid-to-compensate-enslavers>

Notes:

*Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law*

Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 60/147 of 16 December 2005

1. *Restitution* should, whenever possible, restore the victim to the original situation before the gross violations of international human rights law or serious violations of international humanitarian law occurred. Restitution includes, as appropriate: restoration of liberty, enjoyment of human rights, identity, family life and citizenship, return to one's place of residence, restoration of employment and return of property.
2. *Compensation* should be provided for any economically assessable damage, as appropriate and proportional to the gravity of the violation and the circumstances of each case, resulting from gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law, such as:
  - (a) Physical or mental harm;
  - (b) Lost opportunities, including employment, education and social benefits;
  - (c) Material damages and loss of earnings, including loss of earning potential;
  - (d) Moral damage;
  - (e) Costs required for legal or expert assistance, medicine and medical services, and psychological and social services.
3. *Rehabilitation* should include medical and psychological care as well as legal and social services.
4. *Satisfaction* should include, where applicable, any or all of the following:
  - (a) Effective measures aimed at the cessation of continuing violations;
  - (b) Verification of the facts and full and public disclosure of the truth to the extent that such disclosure does not cause further harm or threaten the safety and interests of the victim, the victim's relatives, witnesses, or persons who have intervened to assist the victim or prevent the occurrence of further violations;
  - (c) The search for the whereabouts of the disappeared, for the identities of the children abducted, and for the bodies of those killed, and assistance in the recovery, identification and reburial of the bodies in accordance with the expressed or presumed wish of the victims, or the cultural practices of the families and communities;

- (d) An official declaration or a judicial decision restoring the dignity, the reputation and the rights of the victim and of persons closely connected with the victim;
- (e) Public apology, including acknowledgement of the facts and acceptance of responsibility;
- (f) Judicial and administrative sanctions against persons liable for the violations;
- (g) Commemorations and tributes to the victims;
- (h) Inclusion of an accurate account of the violations that occurred in international human rights law and international humanitarian law training and in educational material at all levels.

5. *Guarantees of non-repetition* should include, where applicable, any or all of the following measures, which will also contribute to prevention:

- (a) Ensuring effective civilian control of military and security forces;
- (b) Ensuring that all civilian and military proceedings abide by international standards of due process, fairness and impartiality;
- (c) Strengthening the independence of the judiciary;
- (d) Protecting persons in the legal, medical and health-care professions, the media and other related professions, and human rights defenders;
- (e) Providing, on a priority and continued basis, human rights and international humanitarian law education to all sectors of society and training for law enforcement officials as well as military and security forces;
- (f) Promoting the observance of codes of conduct and ethical norms, in particular international standards, by public servants, including law enforcement, correctional, media, medical, psychological, social service and military personnel, as well as by economic enterprises;
- (g) Promoting mechanisms for preventing and monitoring social conflicts and their resolution;
- (h) Reviewing and reforming laws contributing to or allowing gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Other notes:

- Legacies of British Slave-ownership - UCL: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/>
- Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation – UN Office of the High Commissioner:  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/remedyandrepairation.aspx>
- Stop the Maangamizi Campaign: <https://stopthemaangamizi.com/>