

Submitted by All For Reparations and Emancipation AFRE
NGO in Consultative (Roster) Status with ECOSOC
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Submission to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for Inclusion in the Other Stakeholders Report: 9th Session of the Universal Periodic Review

Review of the Human Rights Record of the United States of America

Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which the United States of America has ratified, states, "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language."

We, the so-called African-Americans, are not in possession of our human rights as ethnic slave descendant minorities living within the confines of the United States of America. Our mother tongue, culture and religion of our origin were removed by force and design during slavery. Thus, to the extent that we were deprived of and denied our culture, our religion and our mother tongue, we are, today, not in possession of our human rights. The United States Government, to date, has not sought to teach us our culture, our ancestral religious belief or our mother tongue, nor has the United States Government sought to inform us that we are absent our human rights.

The United States Government ordained slavery and forced assimilation (integration) upon captive Africans for more than 400 years. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, "disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind." The United States Government's disregard and contempt for human rights ought to be seen by the UN as the U.S. Government has dispossessed us of our original identity and forced the identity of the majority population upon us. As minorities we remained quiescent for a long period of time, in the names given to us by the white majority: African American, Afro-American, Blacks, Negro, Colored, and so on.

For nearly 20 years we have appealed to the United Nations to recognize that we are without our human rights. In 1997 the UN Working Group on Minorities heard our prayer and took steps to help us regain our identity by organizing seminars in Geneva; at the WCAR in Durban; in LaCeiba, Honduras; Montreal and Chincha, Peru. The Working Group on Minorities was instrumental in bringing us together, some 250 million souls who have been left out: in existence, yet unobserved by the States in which they live, and by UN.

In 2002, in LaCeiba, Honduras, for the first time in the history of our sojourn, assisted by the Working Group on Minorities, we collectively gave name to ourselves: Afrodescendants. Afrodescendant leaders from some nineteen countries in North, Central and South America and throughout the Slavery Diaspora called for formal UN recognition of our self-chosen name, Afrodescendants. As we made this call, the United States Government began its call for UN reform. By 2005 this UN reform had resulted in the destruction of the two human rights bodies that were assisting us: the Working Group on Minorities and the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. Effectively, UN reform closed the door to our prayer for official recognition of our self-chosen identity from the UN and from the States under which we live.

In order to be free to live in dignity, we must have our own destiny. This cannot happen without reparations (otherwise stated, restoration), which begins with the full recognition of our existence and our self-chosen identity by the United Nations and the States under which we live. Recognition must be followed by compensation for the U.S. Government having deprived us of human rights, for failing to inform us of our human rights, and for failing to restore to us our human rights after having ratified human rights instruments. Our identity, our dignity, and thus our essence, have been taken and our efforts to restore an identity to ourselves have been blocked by the U.S. Government. Today our destiny remains intertwined with that of the U.S. Government and the white majority, and it should not be. Afrodescendants have a common destiny and they should be intertwined with each other.