

Stop the Maangamizi: We Charge Genocide Ecocide! Campaign



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OPEN LETTER REGARDING UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW REPARATIVE JUSTICE INITIATIVE

Professor John Briggs (Clerk of Senate)
Convenor
History of Slavery Steering Committee
University of Glasgow
Room 533, Level 5, Senate Office
Gilbert Scott Building
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30/09/18

Dear Professor Briggs

We are interested in hearing more about the recently published History of Slavery Steering Committee's (HSSC) report 'Slavery, Abolition and the University of Glasgow' probing into the university's link with racial enslavement.

We write to you as representatives of the 'Stop the Maangamizi: We Charge Genocide/Ecocide!' Campaign (SMWeCGEC) <https://stophemaangamizi.com/>. The SMWeCGEC is one of the campaigning formations of the International Social Movement for Afrikan Reparations (ISMAR) which is the Afrikan reparations movement 'from below', represented by non-state actors and their civil society special interest groups, campaigns and networks. We have been organising a wide range of Maangamizi (Kiswahili term for Afrikan hellcaust/holocaust) awareness and reparations promotional programmes and activities. One of the major highlights of such activities, which we support the Afrikan Emancipation Day Reparations March Committee (AEDRMC) in organising, is the annual 1st August Afrikan Emancipation Day Reparations March from Brixton, London to the British Houses of Parliament <http://www.reparationsmarch.org/>.

On the basis of our track record, we are requesting answers as to why work on the aforementioned Slavery and the University of Glasgow report and related deliberations appear to have been shrouded in secrecy, appearing to exclude broader participation of relevant stakeholders. It seems that vital stakeholders, such as our Afrikan heritage communities in the UK, have been excluded from whatever engagements the HSSC had so far. We are most interested to hear that the university undertook research to, among other things, “recommend possible acts of reparative justice designed to acknowledge this history and engage in the kinds of reparative justice most appropriate to a university based on Enlightenment ideals of truth and justice.” In this regard, we note the proposals that the university is committing itself to listed on pages 16-17 of the report.

It is indeed the case that the Maangamizi war crimes of transatlantic trafficking and enslavement were perpetrated on Afrika and Afrikans on the continent, the lands they had been deported and trafficked to in the Caribbean and other parts of Abya Yala, (the so-called Americas). Accordingly, it is historically and factually incorrect to just focus on Caribbean state sponsored educational or other institutions and existing CARICOM country citizenries as the main stakeholders and beneficiaries of proposed reparative measures. The reason being that the question of such institutions *locus standi* as stakeholders/beneficiaries is a complex and contested one. Furthermore, the contemporary identities that people of Afrikan ancestry and heritage may assume is not necessarily that of their forebears through which modern-day entitlements are based. It follows that this logically broadens the relevant stakeholders and/or beneficiaries beyond those so far considered. Such discourses are being highlighted in connection with the 2015-2024 UN International Decade for People of African Descent; which, in our view, must inform the reparative measures that institutions like the University of Glasgow are seeking to make <http://www.un.org/en/events/africandescentdecade/>.

The mere questionable selection of a few individuals as advisors without, to our knowledge, transparent consultations with our Afrikan heritage communities, including those known to us to be leading Afrikan reparations scholar-activists, raises for us concerns about how relevant academic work at the University of Glasgow respects the ethical demands of research and the tackling of such issues. In particular, with regards to the imperatives of best practice in public and community engagement as defined by the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement. For example, the requirement to proactively listen to, engage with and consult communities of reparations interest; thereby increasing the two-way flow of knowledge and insight between the university and various publics, especially those whose voices are heard less often.

In view of our concerns raised above, we would like to know what mechanisms the HSSC has put in place for community engagement with UK stakeholders from our Afrikan heritage communities. By this we mean UK based organisations, networks and campaigns substantively representing various constituencies of our communities that have ancestral links not only to enslavement, which took place in the Caribbean, but also the continent of Afrika; where the Maangamizi crimes commenced, with enduring legacy-impacts which up until now obstruct sustainable development. We are therefore seeking, not only answers to these vital questions, but also opportunities for dialogue and engagement in remedying the mistakes which the HSSC have appeared to make; notwithstanding what we recognise as your best intentions in boldly venturing into this laudable endeavour, which we welcome.

We are however somewhat dismayed that there does not appear to be any recognition of UK based communities of reparations interest, in general, and various groupings of the ISMAR in particular; such as the Pan-Afrikan Reparations Coalition in Europe, the Global Afrikan People's Parliament and the Europe-Wide NGO Consultative Council for Afrikan Reparations (ENGOCCAR). You ought to have known about the role of such Afrikan

heritage community formations have been playing in Afrikan reparatory justice activism since the 2001 World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia & Related Intolerance and its related activities such as: the 2002 African & African Descendants World Conference Against Racism which took place in Barbados; the 2004 UN International Year to Commemorate the Struggle Against Slavery and its Abolition commemorating the Bicentenary of the Haitian Revolution including the hallmark events co-organised through the Rendezvous of Victory (ROV), like the ROV commemorative programme from 21-29th August 2004, 'Commemorations 2004-2007: Time to Resolve the Big Question on Reparations'; the 2006 Global Pan-Afrikan Reparations & Repatriation Conference which took place in Accra, Ghana; events of ROV and the 2007 Cross Community Forum between 2005 and 2008 observing the Bicentenary of the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act as well as initiatives to recover the history of Afrikan resistance to the Maangamizi; right up to the 2017 launching of the International Network of Scholars & Activists for Afrikan Reparations (INOSAAR) and the outdoorings of its historic 'Principles of Participation' in collaboration with some academics at the University of Edinburgh
<https://www.inosaar.llc.ed.ac.uk/en/principles-participation>.

The 2018-2019 theme for the Afrikan Emancipation Day Reparations March and its related programmes and activities is: 'Nothing About Us Without Us: Actualising the Reparatory Justice Change We Envisage'. This theme was specifically chosen because of the malpractice of various establishment institutions and their related governmental and non-governmental organisations in dealing with issues relevant to Afrikan reparations without any ethical engagement with Afrikan heritage communities. Most often such establishment institutions do not even engage with those from our communities who live in the neighbourhoods in which those institutions are based. Indeed, many prefer to ignore the highly knowledgeable, conscientised and most active members of organisations, networks and campaigns regarding the issues concerned; choosing to deal with a few questionably and surreptitiously chosen personalities on the serious intergenerational struggle for Afrikan reparations. Yet doing so without open, transparent and ethical engagements with our communities. This clearly flies in the face of all that is regarded as best practice in engagement on such issues, more so with regards to the ethics of academic research.

We therefore feel it is appropriate to have a say on what reparative programmes and initiatives the University of Glasgow is developing, how they are to be implemented as well as evaluated, and who are to be the actual beneficiaries. In our view, such beneficiaries must certainly include our Afrikan heritage communities from all over the world who are resident here in the UK. Furthermore, Afrikan heritage communities within the UK should not be excluded from these discussions given the historical and contemporary ties that such communities have with Afrikan people trafficked from Afrika, enslaved in the Caribbean and other parts of the so-called Americas and subsequently trafficked to Europe.

We look forward to having further dialogue with you on these important matters.

In Solidarity & Service

Esther Stanford-Xosei

SMWeCGEC Coordinator General,

Based in London with Afrikan heritage from parents hailing from Guyana & Barbados

<https://reparationsscholaractivist.wordpress.com/2015/05/13/outline-of-my-activist-work-on-reparations/>

Daniel Davidson

SMWeCGEC Representative,

Based in Manchester with Afrikan heritage from parents hailing from Jamaica

cc.

1. Dr. Stephen Mullen and Professor Simon Newman, authors of 'Slavery, Abolition and the University of Glasgow' report, University of Glasgow
2. Professor Kevin O'Dell, Dean of Public Engagement, University of Glasgow
3. Professor Budd Hall, UNESCO Co-Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education
4. The Association of Commonwealth Universities
5. Professor Gus John, Gus John Associates
6. Pan-Afrikan Reparations Coalition in Europe (PARCOE)
7. Global Afrikan Peoples Parliament (GAPP)
8. Europe-Wide NGO Consultative Council for Afrikan Reparations (ENGOCCAR)
9. Afrikan Emancipation Day Reparations March Committee (AEDRMC)
10. International Network of Scholars & Activists for Afrikan Reparations (INOSAAR)