

In Support of the United Nations Declaration Recognizing the Trafficking of Enslaved Africans and Racialized Chattel Enslavement as the Gravest Crime Against Humanity (A/RES/80/250)

U.S. Civil Society Joint Letter

TO:

His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana
The African Union
The Caribbean Community (CARICOM)
The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)

RE: U.S. Civil Society Joint Letter in Support of the United Nations Declaration Recognizing the Trafficking of Enslaved Africans and Racialized Chattel Enslavement as the Gravest Crime Against Humanity (A/RES/80/250)

We, the undersigned organizations representing civil society across the United States, write to express our strong and unequivocal support for the March 25, 2026, United Nations General Assembly resolution entitled:

“Declaration of the Trafficking of Enslaved Africans and Racialized Chattel Enslavement of Africans as the Gravest Crime against Humanity”

We commend His Excellency President John Dramani Mahama for his leadership in championing this historic resolution in his capacity as the African Union’s Champion on Reparations, and we recognize the unified and principled stance of the Global South in advancing truth, justice, and historical clarity.

With 123 nations voting in favor, this landmark resolution affirms what descendants, scholars, and advocates have long asserted: that the transatlantic trafficking in Africans and the system of racialized chattel enslavement were unprecedented in their scale, duration, and structural design, and that their enduring consequences continue to shape our world today.

We write also to make clear that the vote of the United States government in opposition to this resolution does **not** reflect the views of the broad and growing reparations and other social justice movements within the United States.

The U.S. government’s position — including the assertion that no single atrocity should be regarded as more significant than another, or that reparations are not legally warranted for historical injustices — fails to acknowledge the unique and world-defining nature of racialized chattel enslavement.

As emphasized by the Pan African Lawyers Union (PALU), this designation is not a hierarchical comparison, but a **descriptive articulation of truth** — reflecting the scale, duration, systemic structure, and enduring impact of this system, which constitutes an absolute crime comparable to no other but itself.

The Declaration itself affirms that for over 400 years, millions of African men, women, and children were forcibly captured, commodified, and subjected to one of the most extensive and prolonged systems of exploitation in human history — with consequences that continue to manifest in structural racism, global inequality, and underdevelopment.

We further affirm that within the United States, there exists a rapidly expanding reparations ecosystem composed of grassroots organizers, descendant-led initiatives, scholars, legal advocates, artists, faith leaders, policymakers, and state and local task forces — all engaged in advancing reparative justice through education, advocacy, litigation, cultural work, and mass mobilization.

To date, five states and nearly 80 municipalities have established or are in the process of establishing reparations commissions or task forces, reflecting a growing recognition of the need to address historical harms at every level of governance.

Across the country, long-buried truths are being unearthed — from lynchings and massacres to institutional complicity — revealing the depth and breadth of harm and the urgent need for repair.

This moment builds upon the 25-year-old legacy of the 2001 World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa, and its resulting Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. The March 25, 2026, resolution advances that foundation by clearly and unequivocally declaring that the trafficking of enslaved Africans and racialized chattel enslavement constitutes **the gravest crime against humanity**.

We therefore stand in solidarity with the African Union, CARICOM, CELAC, and the nations of the Global South in affirming this truth.

Finally, we submit that the global recognition reflected in this resolution is the result of generations of struggle, advocacy, and resistance. The seeds planted by our ancestors are bearing fruit. Reparations is no longer a distant aspiration. It is a moral imperative, and an emerging global reality.

And we affirm that it is achievable — in our lifetime.

Respectfully,

[signees names, titles, organizations]