

WHAT ARE REPARATIONS?

Reparations are the act or process of making amends for a wrong.

ACCORDING TO THE UNITED NATIONS:

Adequate, effective and prompt reparation is intended to promote justice by redressing gross violations of international human rights law or serious violations of international humanitarian law. Reparation should be proportional to the gravity of the violations and the harm suffered. In accordance with its domestic laws and international legal obligations, a State shall provide reparation to victims for acts or omissions which can be attributed to the State and constitute gross violations of international human rights law or serious violations of international humanitarian law. In cases where a person, a legal person, or other entity is found liable for reparation to a victim, such party should provide reparation to the victim or compensate the State if the State has already provided reparation to the victim.



THE NATIONAL COALITION OF BLACKS FOR REPARATIONS IN AMERICA (N'COBRA) DEFINES REPARATIONS AS:

A process of repairing, healing and restoring a people injured because of their group identity and in violation of their fundamental human rights by governments, corporations, institutions and families. Those groups that have been injured have the right to obtain from the government, corporation, institution or family responsible for the injuries that which they need to repair and heal themselves. In addition to being a demand for justice, it is a principle of international human rights law.

THE UNITED NATIONS OUTLINES FIVE CONDITIONS THAT MUST BE MET FOR FULL REPARATIONS:

1. CESSATION, ASSURANCES AND GUARANTEES OF NON-REPETITION:

Under international law, a state responsible for wrongfully injuring a people "is under an obligation to a) "cease the act if it is continuing, and, b) offer appropriate assurances and guarantees of non-repetition..."

2. RESTITUTION AND REPATRIATION:

Restitution means to "re-establish the situation which existed before the wrongful act was committed." Changes traced to the wrongful act are reversed through restoration of freedom, recognition of humanity, identity, culture, repatriation, livelihood, citizenship, legal standing, and wealth to the extent they can be, and if they cannot, restitution is completed by compensation.

3. COMPENSATION:

The injuring state, institution or individual is obligated to compensate for the damage, if damage is not made good by restitution. Compensation is required for "any financially accessible damage suffered..." to the extent "appropriate and proportional to the gravity of the violation and circumstances."

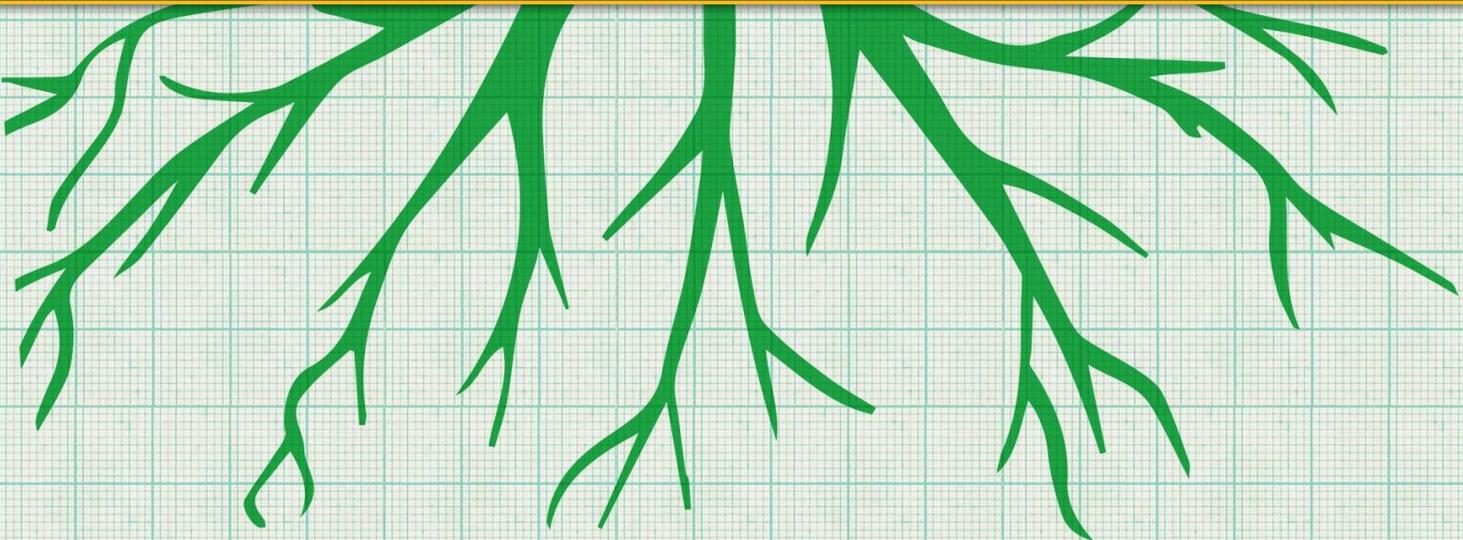
4. SATISFACTION:

Satisfaction is part of full reparations under international law for moral damage, such as "emotional injury, mental suffering, and injury to reputation." In some instances where cessation, restitution, and compensation do not bring full repair, satisfaction is also needed. Apology falls under the reparative category of satisfaction.

5. REHABILITATION:

Rehabilitation shall be provided to include legal, medical, psychological, and other care and services.

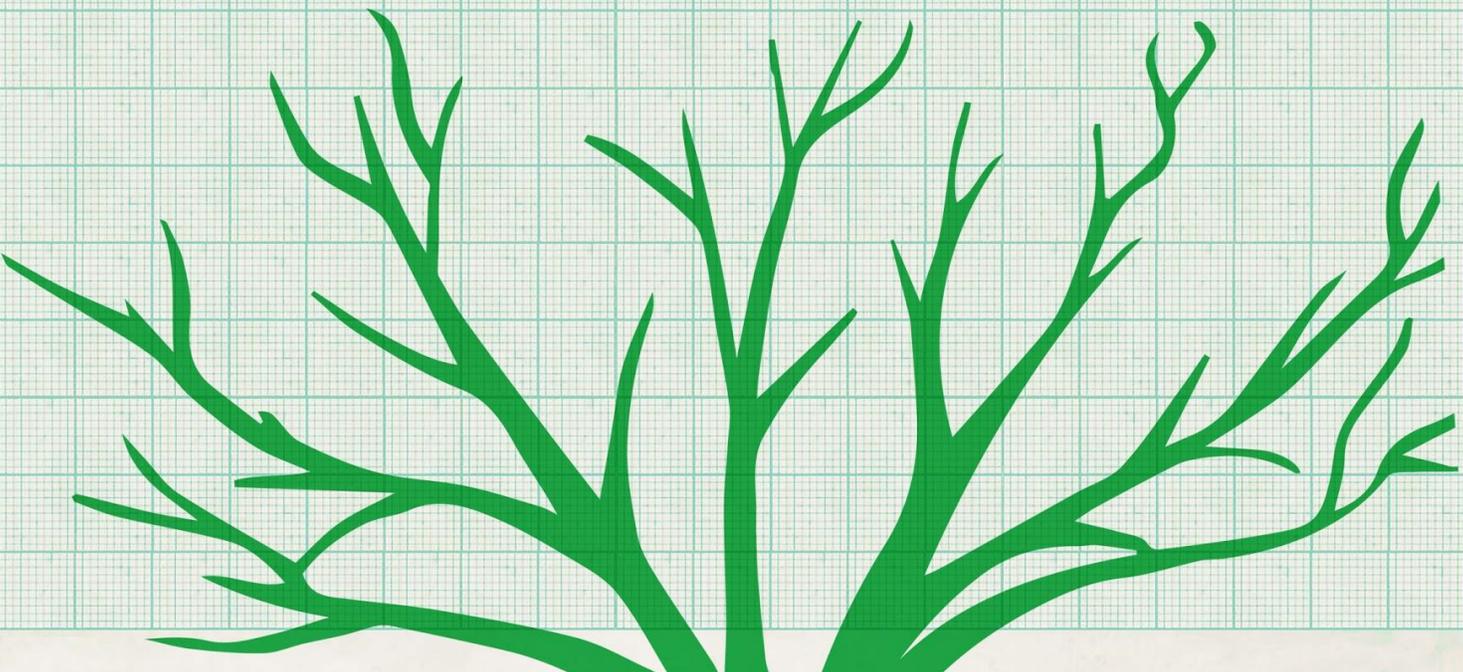
REPARATIONS NOW



WHAT REPARATIONS ARE NOT

There has been a lot of confusion about what reparations are and what they are not. Some presidential candidates have claimed that universal programs like baby bonds are reparations. They are not. Other people have claimed that individual GoFundMe campaigns for their own benefit are reparations. They are not.

As explored above, reparations include five key components: Cessation/Assurance of Non-Repetition, Restitution and Repatriation, Compensation, Satisfaction, and Rehabilitation. Reparations are a concept rooted in international law that involves specific forms of repair to specific individuals, groups of people, or nations for specific harms they have experienced in violation of their human rights. Therefore, reparations cannot be achieved simply through “acknowledgment or an apology” or “investment in underprivileged communities.”

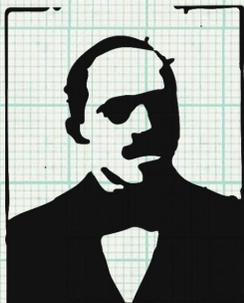


REPARATIONS ARE NOT:

- Just saying sorry or feeling bad while avoiding accountability for individual or collective contributions to the violation, or while benefiting from the harm, whether through inheritance or ongoing privileges.
- Paying an individual Black person's bills.
- Donating any amount of money to a Black institution. Unless accompanied by acts of repair, restitution, and efforts to leverage power, influence, and resources to ensure cessation and non-repetition, simply writing a check is not reparations.

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ONWARD TO VICTORY!



W.E.B. DUBOIS



HEADQUARTERS OF THE



MRS. CORETTA SCOTT KING

REPARATIONS ARE ALSO NOT THE SAME AS "DIVEST/INVEST"

The Vision for Black Lives includes a series of demands calling for divestment from institutions that harm Black people and investment in institutions and programs that will improve our overall physical, social, economic, and spiritual well-being. This is not the same as reparations, which require specific forms of repair to specific groups of people for specific harms they have experienced. Both reparations and divest/invest strategies are essential to our collective liberation and well-being, but are distinct approaches to achieving our goals.

EXAMPLE

Organizers are mounting a campaign to close a local jail. Here's how their demands would differ depending on the framework for the campaign.

REPARATIONS

DIVEST/INVEST

KEY DIFFERENCES

IDENTIFYING THE HARM:

People incarcerated in the local jail experience a number of harms, including physical, sexual, and spiritual violence, loss of liberty, employment, housing, family relationships, adverse health impacts, and more.

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People incarcerated in the local jail experience a number of harms, including physical, sexual, and spiritual violence, loss of liberty, employment, housing, family relationships, adverse health impacts, and more.

The harms identified may be similar, regardless of which approach organizers take.

The city or county is currently spending money on incarcerating and harming people instead of spending on meeting their needs and transforming harms and conflicts and the conditions that produce them.

CESSATION & NON-REPETITION:

To satisfy this prong of reparations, the jail must be closed and the city or county must pass a measure preventing it from being re-opened or operated in a different form or location because we have a right to cessation and non-repetition of harms caused by the jail.

DIVEST:

Close the jail because the money used to run the jail should be used to meet community needs instead of criminalizing people.

While the demand might be similar here, the reason behind it is different. Often reparations focuses on the harm experienced by specific groups of people and how to ensure non-repetition of those harms, while divest/invest focuses on financial choices and community investments.

REPARATIONS

DIVEST/INVEST KEY DIFFERENCES

COMPENSATION:

Compensate all people who have been harmed by the jail for:

- Time spent in the jail, including lost income/wages during time incarcerated. Any physical, sexual, emotional, or spiritual harm experienced in the jail.
- Any money they spent as a result of being in the jail, including phone charges, commissary purchases, fees, fines, etc.
- Time separated from partners, children, and loved ones.
- Environmental harm created by jail construction, operation, or decommissioning.

INVEST:

Use the money the government would have spent on the jail to fund community-based services available to everyone.

Under a divest/invest framework, it is possible that investment in services that result from divestment from the jail will disproportionately benefit people who would otherwise have been held in the jail, but they will not be exclusively available to people who were previously held in the jail.

Under a reparations framework, compensation would be made to people who are able to trace a specific harm to the jail, but not to all members of a community. Moreover, the amount of compensation for individuals harmed by the jail is not tied to any specific amount of money (like how much money the government spends on the jail annually), it is based on what is needed to fully repair the harms.

RESTITUTION & REPATRIATION:

Restore people who were held in the jail to the position they would be in if they had not been held in the jail, including restoration of lost:

- Housing, including returning them to the communities they were taken from, under conditions that enable them to reconnect with their communities and families in a meaningful way
- Employment
- Child custody
- Voting rights
- Citizenship or immigration status
- Property

INVEST:

Some of the money may be invested in programs that attempt to restore those who were incarcerated but it is not a requirement. It is likely that investments will be made in communities and not specifically targeted to those harmed by the jail.

A requirement of reparations is that those harmed are restored back to the condition they would have been in if the harm had not happened. In a divest/invest framework, it is possible that some of the funds previously used to operate the jail that are reinvested into meeting community needs would help restore people harmed by the jail to the position they would have been in had they not been jailed, but it is not specifically promised or guaranteed.

REPARATIONS

DIVEST/INVEST KEY DIFFERENCES

SATISFACTION:

Under a reparations framework a number of things might happen that meet the need for satisfaction. They include:

- Issue an official apology to everyone who has personally been harmed by the jail or had a family member or loved one held in the jail.
- Hold a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to expose and heal the harms caused by the jail.
- Build a memorial to those harmed by the jail and hold an annual Free the Jail event to educate the public about the historical harms caused by the jail to ensure that they will never be repeated.

DIVEST/INVEST:

There is no guarantee of an apology, memorial, or healing process under Divest/Invest.

Reparations, unlike Divest/Invest, requires an acknowledgement of wrongdoing and an honoring and recognition of the harm caused.

REHABILITATION:

To satisfy this prong of reparations, the state would provide healing services to those directly impacted by incarceration. This could include therapy, healthcare, acupuncture, or other healing services that help those impacted rehabilitate and recover.

INVEST:

While some of the investments may go into healing services, they are not necessarily specifically catered to those impacted.

Rehabilitation for those harmed is a requirement for reparations. It is not a requirement for Divest/Invest.

HOW DO I KNOW IT'S REPARATIONS AND NOT SOMETHING ELSE?

IT IS REPARATIONS IF IT INCLUDES:

- An official acknowledgment and apology for harm, public education, or memorial about the harm; and
- Compensation to a specific, defined group of individuals harmed by a violation, including descendants, as well as family and community members of individuals directly targeted for harm who were adversely affected; and
- Action to restore individuals harmed to the position they were in before the initial harm occurred; and
- Action to stop the systems, institutions, and practices causing the harm; and
- Changes to laws, institutions, and systems aimed at ensuring that harm will not happen again.



MOVEMENT FOR BLACK LIVES

REPARATIONS DEMANDS

OUR VISION

The Vision for Black Lives sets forth a bold vision of reparations for African descended people in the United States and beyond. While we prioritize the demand for reparations for slavery, we do not limit our demand for reparations to slavery. We believe demanding reparations only for slavery erases the reality that the United States has continued to exploit and harm Black people through convict leasing, sharecropping, Jim Crow, redlining, and other policies of structural discrimination and exclusion, and mass criminalization and incarceration through policies such as the "war on drugs."

We believe that people have a right to sovereignty over our bodies, our labor, and our communities. We demand abolition and reparations in connection with all ways and places where this sovereignty is breached; we demand repair in all places where there is disrepair. We believe that reparations is owed across the African Diaspora for all harms associated with colonization and genocide on the continent of Africa, the transatlantic slave trade, and the institution of chattel slavery.

Slavery, violent oppression, extraction, displacement, and exploitation of Black communities are not a thing of the past. Our sovereignty, bodily integrity, health, wealth, freedom, rights, and safety have been, and continue to be, violated through the ongoing operation of systems of white supremacy, racial capitalism, ableism, and heteropatriarchy, all of which are rooted in, and were reinforced, by slavery. We seek to illuminate the ways in which systems and institutions that flow from slavery, including the prison, military, and medical industrial complexes, continue to assert ownership over Black bodies.



MOVEMENT FOR BLACK LIVES

REPARATIONS DEMANDS

We particularly lift up the specific forms of past and current oppression and exploitation of economic and reproductive labor of Black women, queer, trans, gender nonconforming, and disabled people under slavery and the systems that grew from it.

We demand reparations now for all of these past and continuing harms, and immediate agency over our bodies, our culture, our community wealth, and our dignity. We believe it is impossible to achieve equality or to end racial injustice without acknowledging and materially addressing past, and continuing, harms. Without accounting for and repairing the accumulated impact of past harms, we are destined to perpetuate them.

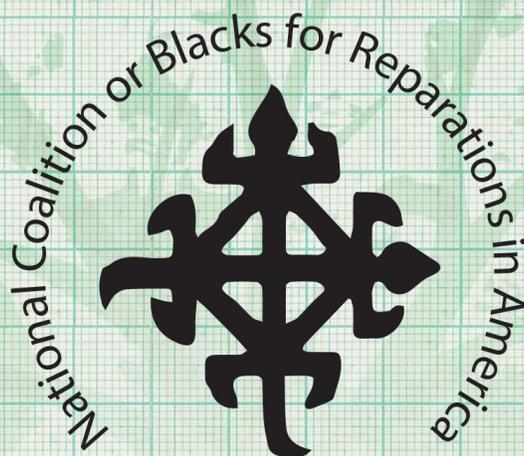
As abolitionists, we believe what is required is a transformation of all systems, institutions, and structures which continue to oppress Black people, a systemic shift in social and economic systems and relations of power, and significant investment in Black community infrastructure.



We believe all who have benefited from the legacy and continued oppression of Black people, including nations, states, and cities, individuals and families, corporations and institutions must do their part in making true reparations. Failure to make reparations renders governments, corporations, institutions, and individuals complicit in slavery and its ongoing effects.

We call for solidarity for all reparations demands made by African descended people around the world. We also support calls for reparations for colonization and genocide of Indigenous peoples and theft of the land the United States is built upon, and honor Indigenous sovereignty and land claims.





"AS ATTENTION IS CALLED TO THE UGLY REALITY OF PRESENT-DAY SEXUAL HARASSMENT, THERE MUST ALSO BE ATTENTION TO THE HISTORICAL SEXUAL VIOLATIONS OF BLACK WOMEN DURING THE ENSLAVEMENT ERA AND BEYOND. FOR WELL OVER 350 YEARS BLACK WOMEN WERE VICIOUSLY RAPED, SAVAGELY BEATEN AND TORTURED... WOMEN WHO RESISTED WERE TERRORIZED, CONTINUOUSLY DEFILED AND DISRESPECTED, AND LYNCHINGS WERE COMMONPLACE... JUST AS WE DO NOT CONDONE OR TAKE LIGHTLY PRESENT-DAY DISCLOSURES AND ACCUSATIONS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT, THE UNFETTERED CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN OF AFRICAN DESCENT

DURING THE ENSLAVEMENT ERA AND BEYOND THAT TO DATE STILL AWAIT REMEDY MUST NEVER BE FORGOTTEN."

- N'COBRA H.R.40 PRIMER, SISTAH'S STATEMENT.

OUR DEMANDS

At the core of M4BL's demands for reparations is a call for full reparations to all descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States for the devastating and genocidal harms of colonialism, the transatlantic slave trade, and the institution of chattel slavery in the United States. Reparations must include full compensation for stolen lives, labor, children, health, well-being, sexual, gender, and reproductive autonomy, culture, language, and spirituality, and for torture, rape, and other forms of physical and sexual violence flowing from the institution of chattel slavery. Reparations must also address the impacts of intergenerational trauma.



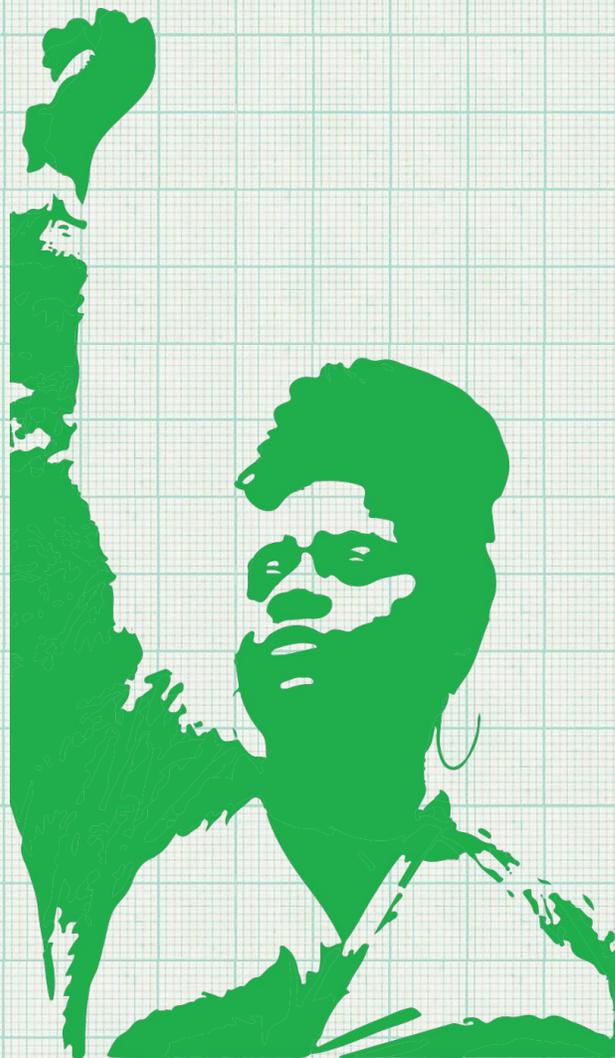
These harms were not only perpetrated and sanctioned by the U.S. government, but also by responsible corporations, educational, religious, philanthropic and other institutions and families that have profited off of the labor, bodies, and lives of Black people.

We also demand reparations for policies and practices enacted in the aftermath of chattel slavery which continued the exploitation, murder, theft, rape, and displacement of Black people.

Reparations are owed to the descendants of enslaved Africans, in a manner and form to be determined by them. Reparations must take as many forms as necessary to equitably address the many forms of injury caused by the transatlantic slave trade and chattel slavery.

While reparations to descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States is a primary and core demand of the Movement for Black Lives, the Vision for Black Lives doesn't stop there.

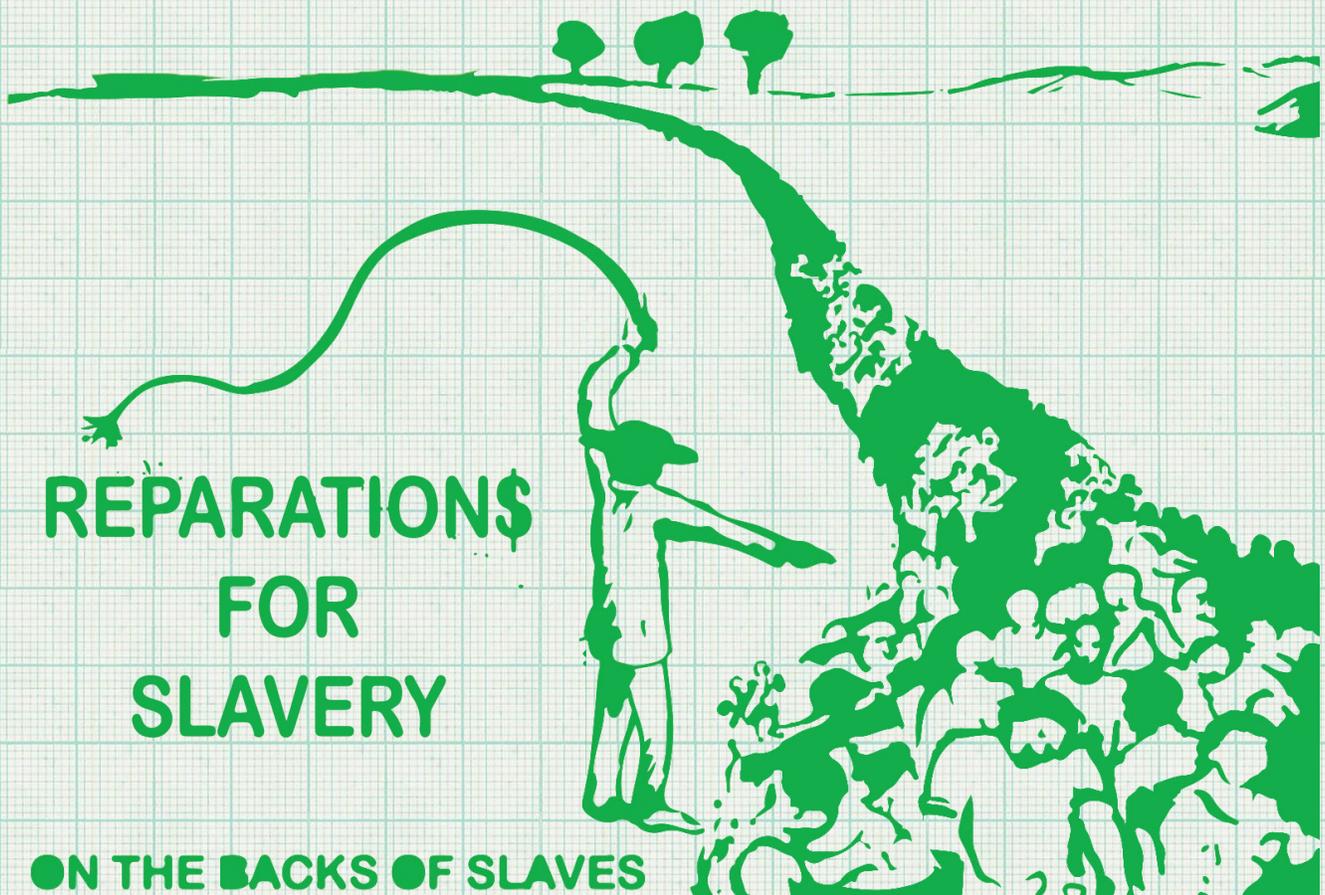
We, like N'COBRA and many other formations that have come before us, call for reparations to all African descended people in the United States for harms flowing from the "badges and incidents" of slavery—the ways in which the practice of chattel slavery in the United States marked all Black people, regardless of whether they are direct descendants of Africans enslaved in the United States, for dehumanization, violence, structural exclusion, and discrimination. This includes: racial terror, state-sanctioned segregation, and theft and destruction of Black people's land, property, businesses, and homes in the Jim Crow era and beyond, housing discrimination and "redlining," and the ongoing effects of racial segregation, discrimination, and structural exclusion which represent ongoing impacts and harms of slavery that have not yet ceased or been remedied.



We also call for reparations for all Black people in the United States who have been subject to post-slavery policies and practices representing a continuation of harms inflicted in the context of chattel slavery, including family separation, state-sponsored sterilization and medical experimentation, mass criminalization and incarceration which followed slavery, and for the violence, institutionalization, discrimination and structural exclusion specifically targeting disabled Black people, and contributing to high rates of disability among Black people.

WE BELIEVE THAT

- ☑ Specific reparations are owed to descendants of enslaved Africans; AND
- ☑ Reparations are owed to ALL Black people in the United States for the ongoing harms flowing from the afterlives of slavery in the United States, including the many African descendants of enslaved people in the United States who, as a result of chattel slavery and its aftermath, are unable to trace their ancestry to establish a specific claim as descendants of enslaved people, and are nevertheless entitled to reparations for the harms flowing from slavery; AND
- ☑ Anti-Black immigration policies and practices, and the harms flowing from them, are both rooted in slavery and part of the ongoing afterlives of slavery, and that Black migrants are entitled to reparations for the harms associated with them.



While other groups have been harmed by some of the same state policies targeting Black people, we recognize that many of these policies are intended to specifically target and have specific impacts on Black people, and are often rooted in chattel slavery. For example, the practice of shackling pregnant people in prison while giving birth is rooted in the expectation that the incarcerated population would primarily be made up of formerly enslaved people of African descent, and that the people experiencing this treatment would be Black women, who have given birth in literal and figurative shackles for centuries in the United States. Because Black women continue to be incarcerated at twice the rate of white women, this practice continues to be disproportionately experienced by Black women. And, because of Black people's unique history, this practice has specific emotional and spiritual impacts on Black incarcerated women and their babies. We, therefore, call for reparations for these harms to Black people and communities based on these specific histories and impacts, while recognizing, and often supporting, the right of other groups to demand reparations for the specific harms these policies have had on them.



The Movement for Black Lives supports the demands of other groups for reparations for harms they have experienced, including the demands made by African descendants in the Caribbean through CARICOM and the demands of African nations against European colonizers.

There are a range of positions within the M4BL ecosystem about land claims as part of demands for reparations. However, the totality of the Movement for Black Lives Policy Table is committed to Black and Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination, and we look forward to engaging in consistent and continued conversations internally and with First Nations.

**A FEW OF THE DEMANDS FOR REPARATIONS INCLUDED IN THE
THE VISION FOR BLACK LIVES ARE:**

1.

Legislation at the federal and state level that requires the United States to acknowledge the lasting impacts of slavery and establish and execute a plan to address those impacts. This includes the immediate passage of H.R.40, the "Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act," or subsequent versions which call for reparations remedies.

2.

Reparations for the systemic denial of access to high-quality educational opportunities in the form of full and free access for all Black people (including undocumented and currently and formerly incarcerated people) to lifetime education including: free access and open admissions to public community colleges and universities, technical education (technology, trade, and agricultural), educational support programs, retroactive forgiveness of student loans, and support for lifetime learning programs.

3.

Reparations for the wealth extracted from our communities through environmental racism, slavery, food apartheid, housing discrimination, and racialized capitalism in the form of corporate and government reparations focused on healing ongoing physical and mental trauma, and ensuring our access and control of food sources, housing, and land.

**A FEW OF THE DEMANDS FOR REPARATIONS INCLUDED IN THE
THE VISION FOR BLACK LIVES ARE:**

4.

Reparations for the cultural and educational exploitation, erasure, and extraction of our communities in the form of mandated public school curriculums that critically examine the political, economic, and social impacts of colonialism and slavery, and funding to support, build, preserve, and restore cultural assets and sacred sites to ensure the recognition and honoring of our collective struggles and triumphs.

5.

Reparations for the devastating impacts of the “war on drugs” and criminalization, including a reinvestment of the resulting savings and revenue into restorative services, mental health services, job programs, and other programs supporting those impacted by mass criminalization.

Reparations must also address ongoing harms to Black people in the United States, including but not limited to police and state violence, mass criminalization, incarceration, institutionalization, deportation, and exclusion, segregation, and structural employment and housing discrimination, food and service apartheid, denial of health care, and high rates of disability and stress-related conditions, high rates of maternal and infant mortality, and lower than average life expectancy, forced sterilization, and denial of reproductive care and gender, sexual, and reproductive autonomy in Black communities.



**"OUR PURPOSE IN LIFE IS TO LEAVE
A LEGACY FOR OUR CHILDREN AND
OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN. FOR
THIS REASON, WE MUST CORRECT
HISTORY THAT AT PRESENT DENIES
OUR HUMANITY AND SELF-RESPECT."**

- QUEEN MOTHER MOORE