



UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN

JUNETEENTH & REPARATIONS

What is Juneteenth?

Juneteenth celebrates the day – two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed and two months after the Civil War ended – when thousands of Union soldiers breached one of the last strongholds of Confederate insurgents in Galveston, Texas.

The Thirteenth Amendment prohibiting slavery passed later that year, only after an exception was carved out allowing it to persist for people with a criminal conviction.

What are reparations?

Reparations is transformative accountability. A transparent process must be defined in concrete terms by the survivors of atrocities like racial segregation, mass criminalization, forced sterilization, family separation, land theft, and militarized police violence.

Long before the United States or the United Nations (U.N.) existed, every pre-colonial Indigenous and African system of justice included some community process for making amends to victims of large-scale rights violations or environmental damage. These reparative structures form the basis of what later became contemporary public

international law, now codified by the U.N. through five basic elements:

- ◆ Acknowledgment
- ◆ Compensation
- ◆ Restitution
- ◆ Rehabilitation
- ◆ Cessation and Non-Repetition

The end of slavery did not come with reparations. Black people in the U.S. are still owed acknowledgment, compensation, restitution, and rehabilitation for all the harms that flowed from our enslavement, and for all the wealth built on our stolen lives, labor and torture. **Demands for reparations are central to the Vision for Black Lives.**

We demand reparations for:

- ◆ The enslavement of African-descended people in the United States.
- ◆ All the continuing impacts and harms that flow from chattel slavery and anti Blackness, including Jim Crow, white supremacist violence, segregation, land theft, housing discrimination, environmental racism, educational injustice, rollbacks to reproductive freedoms and bodily autonomy, mass criminalization and incarceration, detention and deportation.
- ◆ The War on Drugs and discriminatory criminalization of sex work.
- ◆ Police violence, and violence against people in prison, on probation or parole, and in immigration detention and deportation.

How can we join in the demand for reparations?

Contact your Congressperson and Senator to urge they take action by:

- ◆ **Sponsoring and passing HR40** that creates a national commission to determine how reparations should be made to people of African descent in the U.S.
- ◆ **Sponsoring and Passing H.Res.414, the “Reparations Now” resolution** that calls on the federal government to provide reparations to the descendants of enslaved Black families
- ◆ **Holding hearings on the U.S. “no” vote on United Nations resolution** that seeks reparatory justice for the trafficking and enslaving of Africans and passing congressional resolutions in support of the UN resolution

You can also:

- ◆ **Call your state and local legislators** and demand that they introduce and pass state and local legislation that creates a commission to study how the state, county or city contributed to and benefited from slavery and its after-effects to determine how to best make reparations for people of African descent. (See if there is an existing reparations initiative in your state, city or county here: <https://www.reparationsresources.com/map>)
- ◆ **Amplify the call for reparations through your networks**, platforms, and spheres of influence
- ◆ **Support organizations working to advance reparations at the local, state, and federal levels** - check for your movement organizations doing reparations work near you here: <https://www.reparationsresources.com/table>
- ◆ **Vote for candidates who are committed to sponsoring and supporting reparative justice**
- ◆ **Educate yourself and your community** about the ongoing economic, social, and generational impacts of slavery and systemic racism.