



**“GHANA, MAHAMA, MALCOLM AND QUEEN MOTHER MOORE:
THE ASPIRATION AND ACHIEVEMENT
OF REPARATIVE JUSTICE”**

Los Angeles Sentinel, 04-02-26, p. B-1

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

THE QUEST FOR REPARATORY JUSTICE for the Holocaust of enslavement and the colonial and empires’ life-crushing companion forms of oppression and their consequences and enduring legacy have been a central aspect of our liberation struggles from their inception. Indeed, Nana Queen Mother Moore taught that given the scale and savage severity of the injury to us, our oppressors “owe us more than they could ever pay”. But she, Nana Haji Malcolm and all our ancestors affirmed that we must and will achieve justice, not only compensatory justice, but justice in the larger systemic and liberative sense. And a recent world encompassing reparative justice initiative has brought us closer to achieving this centuries-old moral and political imperative.

On March 25, 2026, the United Nations General Assembly passed an historic resolution (A/RES/80/250) titled “Declaration of the Trafficking of Enslaved Africans and Racialized Chattel Enslavement of Africans as the Gravest Crime Against Humanity”. The resolution, proposed by President John Dramani Mahama of Ghana and backed by the African Union and the Caribbean Community, was adopted with 123 votes in favor and only three against - the United States, Israel and Argentina. Fifty-two countries abstained. The resolution emphatically declares “*the trafficking of enslaved Africans and racialized chattel enslavement of Africans as the gravest crime against humanity by reason of the definitive break in world history, scale, duration, systemic nature, brutality and enduring consequences that continue to structure the lives of all people through racialized regimes of*

labour, property and capital” and therefore requires urgent and rightful reparative justice.

There are several factors that give this historic resolution and its conception and successful passing the historical weight and meaning that it has achieved. First, the resolution is an honor and righteous offering (*tambiko*) to our ancestors. In this achievement their voices are raised, their memory uplifted, and their just claims are accepted and supported on a global scale at the highest level, the United Nations. The Poet Laureate of Barbados, Esther Phillips, paid homage to the ancestors saying, “There are spirits of the victims of slavery present in this room at this moment, and they are listening for one word only: justice. Because for them and for the world, there can be no peace without justice – reparatory justice – and that call is answered only when words are turned into action”. Before the victorious vote, Pres. Mahama had visited the African Burial Ground in New York and paid homage to the ancestors and afterwards he said, the ancestors are rejoicing at this historic achievement.

Secondly, it is clearly a turning point in the struggle for reparative justice in several fundamental ways. Certainly, the defining of the Holocaust of enslavement, the *Maangamizi*, a great and intentional destruction, as “the gravest crime against humanity” is transformational both in its claim of its rupture in history, savage severity, systemic character, duration and enduring consequences, and the resolution’s being supported at a global level in a decisive vote. This not only represents an important advancement of the reparations movement,

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but also counters the immoral and unjust attempts to diminish and dismiss the moral and legal cogency of the reparative justice claim. And it opens up the discussion for an international engagement around the concept of the injury, “the gravest crime against humanity”, how we frame the interpretation without hierarchy and diminishing others’ injuries from empire, and how this definition informs the scale of the reparative remedy due.

Thirdly, the resolution also represents an historical milestone in the UN and international engagement with African peoples’ issues including the diaspora. The African Group, which with 54 members is the largest regional bloc at the UN, played a decisive role. This is something Haji Malcolm challenged the independent African nations to do in the liberation context of the 1960s. Also he called attention to the growing international power of the Afro-Asian bloc and later also the Latin American nations now called the Global South and an emerging shift of the balance of power in the United Nations away from the European imperialist and colonial powers. He used the Bandung Conference and its follow-up as a model. It is a promise and aspiration to be regained and realized in cooperative practice and is thus, another achievement of the initiative. Furthermore, this initiative also reflects the diplomatic skill and commitment of Ghana, the African Union, Caricom and African American reparations experts and strategists in developing and negotiating the texts and securing support in achieving this, especially in this Trumpian era of attempts to forget, erase and rewrite history, and coercion, cowardice and self-censorship.

This is also the contributive results and culminating reward of over a century of work and struggle for reparations and reparative justice by a wide range of African American and other diasporan Africans and their organizations. These include in addition to Queen Mother Moore and Haji Malcolm X: Nana Callie House and Nana Isaiah Dickerson, (the Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty & Pension Association, 1898); Nana Messenger Muhammad (the Nation of Islam); Nana Dr. Imari Obadele and Nana Queen Mother Dorothy Lewis (N’COBRA); Nana John Conyers; Nana Randall Robinson and so many others. Here it is important that we, the direct descendants of the Holocaust of enslavement, not participate as junior brothers and sisters as we seek the reparative justice which our honored ancestors initiated and invested so much in. Indeed, a radical equity among our nations and communities in our representation, deliberations, and initiatives must be a shared commitment in our going forward.

Certainly, this achievement also offers an incentive and space for increased pan-African initiatives to realize our ancestors’ aspirations for a strong global African community united to achieve and ensure African and human good and the well-being of the world. Thus, stressing the pan-African scope and content of this initiative, Pres. Mahama said, “I speak these words today not only for Ghana, but also in solidarity with the rest of Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, the wider Diaspora and, indeed, all people of good conscience throughout the world”. Haji Malcolm, stressing the shared history and interrelated interests of African peoples, told African heads of state at an African Summit (1964), “Your problems will never be fully solved until and

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unless ours are solved. You will never be fully respected until and unless we are also respected. You will never be recognized as free human beings until and unless we are also recognized and treated as human beings”. This historical moment is both an invitation and opportunity to build and strengthen African unity in a shared project of *ujima*, collective work, responsibility and struggle for the reparative justice and larger justice we demand and deserve as African peoples, diasporan and continental. Finally, it is important to reaffirm that a correct and comprehensive conception and achievement of reparative justice, we must understand and approach it, as a people, as a component part and critical site and source of our ongoing struggle for African liberation, the dual struggle to be ourselves

and free ourselves and build the good societies and world worthy of the name and history African.

THIS COLLECTIVE WORK AND STRUGGLE for “a free and redeemed Africa”, Nana Marcus Garvey teaches us, is a gift, a sacred offering, to our ancestors in “sacred memory” and appreciation of all they sacrificed and gave us. And this liberated and liberating Africa is and must be, not only a united continent, but also a united world community. And as Nana Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah taught, a free, united and strong Africa would self-consciously strive to “become one of the greatest forces for good in the world”. For as Nana Mary McLeod Bethune taught us, ultimately, “our task is to remake the world. It is nothing less than this”.▲

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