

DPAC May 2026 Newsletter



Why Apology for Slavery is Essential

Transatlantic, racialized slavery remains a major challenge in modern society.

Central question: Why is it essential to apologize for slavery, especially the racialized transatlantic slave trade?

UN Resolution on Slavery

March 25, 2026: UN recognizes the transatlantic slave trade as “the gravest crime against humanity.”

Calls for reparatory justice and restitution of cultural items.

The vote: 123 in favor, 52 abstentions; Argentina, Israel, and the United States voted against.

Resolution coincided with the International Day of Remembrance for victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

Questions Raised by the Vote

Why is it difficult for some states to acknowledge an obvious wrong against humanity?

Do “no” votes suggest these countries see no wrong and might repeat such actions?

Do abstentions reflect political calculations or reluctance to face the implications of acknowledgment?

US Position on Reparations

US deputy ambassador Dan Negrea: Objects to slavery but denies a legal right to reparations for acts not illegal under international law at the time.

Argues that ranking some crimes as more severe than others diminishes the suffering of other victims of atrocities.

Boston’s Apology (2022)

The Boston City Council unanimously apologizes for its role in slavery and its lasting harm.

Condemns systemic white supremacy and racism reflected in ongoing inequities in housing, education, and income.

Pledges efforts to repair past and present harm to Black Americans.
Commitment to removing anti-Black symbols and increasing public education on slavery’s impact.

France and the “Black Code”

French lawmakers move to formally repeal slavery-era “Code noir” laws.

Code noir defined enslaved people as “movable property,” denied them legal personhood, and ownership.

Required slaves to be baptized and raised Catholic.

A new bill would require the government to report on the consequences and lasting effects of colonial law and slavery on racism and discrimination.

Aims to improve how slavery is taught in schools.

Vatican Apology

Pope Leo XIV issues a historic apology for the Vatican's role in legitimizing the transatlantic slave trade.

Delivered via encyclical "Magnifica Humanitas (Magnificent Humanity)."

First papal apology for past popes granting authority to conquer, subjugate, and enslave non-Christians.

Describes the Vatican's role as a "wound in Christian memory."

Pope Leo's own family history links him to both enslaved people and slave owners.

Apology is seen as a means of reclaiming the church's moral credibility regarding human dignity.

Why Apology Is Essential

Provides official and public acknowledgment of historical wrongs.

Validates the generational trauma of descendants of people of African descent.

Lays groundwork for societal healing and shifts from denial to truth.

Acts as a first step toward reparative justice and systemic equality.

Serves as official validation that institutions profited from forced labor and violated human rights.

Beyond Apology: Restorative Justice

Words alone are not enough; genuine apologies must be followed by restorative justice.

Restorative justice means tangible policies to address inequities perpetuated by slavery and similar mindsets.

For the US, such steps would align with the founding creeds of equality and justice for all.

Reparations and Accountability

Many apologies tend to avoid the question of reparations.

Reparations are an essential question of accountability in the healing process.

Accountability functions as a corrective measure for past wrongs.

"Adult" Perception and Next Steps

Current apologies reflect "adult" efforts to understand slavery's effects on today's experiences.

There is hope for the next step: real accountability, even as some delay issuing overdue apologies.

The church is urged to lead the effort to reclaim moral authority in modern society.

Pan-African Perspective and Sankofa

Pan-Africanists advocate centering the experiences of people of African descent.

Sankofa wisdom: we sometimes must look to the past to embrace a better future.

Thank you very much for sharing this message with others and for being part of this journey. Together, we forge ahead. Peace. Remember to visit us at www.diasporapan-African.org

Remember: Subscribe to our email us at dpaddmn@gmail.com. – DPAC President.