

Forum:	Special Conference on Redefining Modern Solidarity (SPECON)
Issue:	The Question of Reparations for Historically Exploited Peoples
Student Officer:	Marialena Petropoulou-Botsiou
Position:	President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Marialena Petropoulou-Botsiou, I am 16 years old, and I am currently attending the 11th grade at Athens College (HAEF). This year I have the utmost honor to serve as the President of the Special Conference on Redefining Modern Solidarity (SPECON) in the 11th PS-MUN 2021 Conference.

This year's Special Conference will be focused on the major issue of "Redefining Modern Solidarity". In the last two years, the international community has experienced a huge shock due to the sudden outbreak and rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. This global crisis has severely impacted the notion of unity and has alienated individuals from the community due to the restrictive measures that were implemented to contain the virus such as social distancing and quarantine. In this year's SPECON you are called to investigate and debate upon issues that aim at tackling the various aspects of this multifaceted matter.

As the expert chair on the topic of "The Question of Reparations for Historically Exploited Peoples" I will be guiding you throughout the process, primarily by helping you conduct research and gain some perspective on the issue. Through this study guide, you will be introduced to the key facets of the question and understand its importance in an effort to reestablish a united and balanced community. I highly recommend that you read all the way through but keep in mind that the study guide only acts as a first interaction with the topic. I strongly urge you to conduct your own research and carefully study your country's position. If you have any questions regarding the topic, you can contact me through my email address at marialenapb@icloud.com.

I am looking forward to meeting you at the PS-MUN Conference,

Sincerely,

Marialena Petropoulou

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of mankind individuals and communities have often been subjected to unjust and hurtful treatment. Victims have severely suffered from a plethora of such incidents ranging from unfair killings, torture, exploitation, and enslavement. It is a persistent phenomenon that continues to prevail in modern society and generate massive repercussions. Nevertheless, various cases of exploitation have not been recognized by the perpetrators and other third parties involved.

When dealing with this issue, it is essential to realize that victims of exploitation have been historically targeted on religious, economic, ethnological, or cultural grounds. Although society progresses towards inclusivity and such ideologies become outdated, the crimes conducted in the past cast a long shadow and as they remain unrecognized. The faulted beliefs that shaped them become integrated in society and inevitably lead to the perpetuation of prejudice. As a result, besides the receptive victims, their descendants often experience this discrimination to a large extent as well. They experience social exclusion, intolerance and in severe cases, systemic discrimination.

The first step towards approaching this issue and ensuring access to just treatment is acknowledging the abuse and providing adequate reparations to the victims and their descendants. The concept of reparations refers to the provision of assistance, financial compensation, and recognition to peoples that have endured damage, loss, or suffering, by those that have carried out the crime.¹ Reparations are a multifaceted approach that can be implemented in various forms depending on the nature of the offense. They can prove to be very effective in improving the conditions of the exploited peoples and providing structural and institutional reforms. However, they cannot erase the societal consequences of the abuses and should be regarded as the first step towards ensuring justice.

The lack of reparations exacerbates the catastrophic consequences on historically exploited peoples. The inability and reluctance of businesses, governments, and international organizations to introduce inclusive and effective policies burdens victims of abuse and hinders progress. While resolution-making, delegates must opt for appropriate and effective measures to solve this multidimensional issue, centered around the needs of abused communities. Delegates must keep in mind the diversity of the issue and strive for solutions that incorporate formal and informal agents. The following study guide provides a detailed analysis of the dimensions of the problem and discusses the implementation of proactive policies that conciliate the effect of historical exploitation.

¹ "Reparation Definition and Meaning: Collins English Dictionary." Reparation Definition and Meaning | Collins English Dictionary, HarperCollins Publishers Ltd, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/reparation>.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Exploitation

Exploitation is the act of taking advantage of an individual or a group of people in a selfish manner to benefit from them and their vulnerability.² Historical exploitation has occurred throughout various historical periods and has been mostly targeted marginalized religious, cultural, or ethnic minorities.

Reparations

A financial payment or other form of compensation provided by the perpetrator to individuals and communities for harm, loss, or damage that has been caused to them. Historical reparations usually refer to compensation provided by governments to victims and descendants of crimes committed during important historical periods.³

Human rights

Human rights are a fundamental principle that shape modern practices and refer to liberties which are “inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status.”⁴

Injustice

A situation where an individual is treated unfairly, and their entitled rights are being ignored or violated.⁵ Historical exploitation of individuals and communities is a major example of injustice and the inefficiency of formal institutions and mechanisms to recognize the unjust treatment of peoples in the past and expand capacities to compensate them for the damage.

Descendants

A person originating or coming from an ancestral stock or source.⁶ In the case of historically exploited peoples, descendants are often burdened by the abuses conducted in the past and are usually subjected to cases of informal or systemic discrimination.

² "Exploitation." *Www.dictionary.com*, www.dictionary.com/browse/exploitation.

³ "Reparation." *Cambridge Dictionary | English Dictionary, Translations & Thesaurus*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/reparation?q=reparation>.

⁴ United Nations. "Human Rights." *United Nations*, www.un.org/en/global-issues/human-rights.

⁵ "Definition of INJUSTICE." *Dictionary by Merriam-Webster: America's Most-trusted Online Dictionary*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/injustice.

⁶ "Definition of DESCENDANT." *Dictionary by Merriam-Webster: America's Most-trusted Online Dictionary*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/descendant.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Significance of Reparations

Reparations recognize a state's, an individual's, or party's legal obligation to remedy the consequences of infractions — whether it committed them directly or failed to prevent them. They also convey to victims and society at large that the government is dedicated to resolving the core roots of previous breaches and preventing them from occurring again. Victims value reparations because they are typically considered as the most direct and meaningful manner of receiving justice, both in terms of function and symbolic benefits. They are typically intended to replace war compensation for damages that were imposed as a punitive measure as well as to pay for financial damage following previous conflicts. Despite this, they are frequently the very last element of transitional justice to be adopted and supported.

In addition, it is widely believed that also descendants of victims of human rights violations should be entitled to seek claims for reparations as well. In these kind of circumstances, the victim's right to compensation should not expire with their death but should be pursued by their descendants. Nevertheless, this is a complex situation and there are limitations to how long those claims should last.

Historical Background

The policy of reparations dates back to the period of enslavement in the 19th century, when its aims served an entirely opposite purpose. In 1807 King George III of the British Empire, implemented the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade and prohibited the promotion of slaves as tradable goods. This law had considerable impacts on British trade and slave owners lost a major share of their resources. To offset these losses and restore the economy, the British government agreed to provide monetary compensation to slave owners. Approximately £20 million were paid out by the Treasury to support the 3,000 families who used to own slaves. This was the largest loan ever recorded and amounted to 40 percent of the Treasury's annual income or about 5 percent of British GDP.⁷ The heavy reparations burdened the economy of the UK to such a large extent, that the government only completed payments in 2015 through taxpayers' money.

The focus and aims of reparations officially became a method of making amends to communities that have suffered from losses during World War 1. After the end of WWI, the Allied Powers assembled in the Versailles Palace to negotiate upon the peace settlements and the measures to be imposed upon the Central Powers. The Treaty of Versailles outlined their aggressive attitude towards Germany and demanded war payments. The treaty called for monetary reparations to compensate for the war damages caused by German powers and the economic losses that the Allies had suffered from. Nevertheless, these reparations still do not necessarily

⁷ "Britain's Slave Owner Compensation Loan, Reparations and Tax Havenry | Tax Justice Network." *Tax Justice Network*, 24 Nov. 2020, <https://taxjustice.net/2020/06/09/slavery-compensation-uk-questions/>.

comply with the contemporary interpretation of the term, since they were imposed as a vindictive measure rather than a request for amends.

The concept of reparations officially adopted the purpose that has been defined and outline above, after the end of the second World War. WW2 is one of the greatest examples of historical exploitation towards large communities and it acts as the reference point for this policy. Specifically, it deals with the payments undertaken by the Federal Republic of Germany to the State of Israel that aimed at compensating the Jewish population for their placement in concentration camps controlled by the Third Reich. Since then, reparations have been claimed by many victims of injustice and are mostly connected with the slave ownership and exploitation in the UK and the USA.

Barriers to claiming reparations

Reparations for victims of mistreatment are of paramount importance, yet there are various causes that hinder the application of such claims.

The Burden of the Bill

One of the main arguments that discourages institutions from guaranteeing reparations is that they are an expensive measure that affects every citizen, regardless of their involvement in the case. For governments to provide compensation to victims, large payments need to be made directly or to support the expansion of the available capacities. This creates strain on the economy and aggravates debt. This debate has erupted in the US where many people argue that reparations must not be considered, since it is unfair to burden the whole country when only a limited number of Americans owned slaves. Nevertheless, studies have proven that 25 percent of white families from southern states of the Confederacy were slave owners, while in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana the percentage was more than 40 and even 55 and 57 in Mississippi and South Carolina, respectively.⁸ This data can act as evidence to oppose the argument and highlight the importance of reparations.

Competition amongst Exploited Communities

In the past decades more communities have been requesting compensation from their perpetrators, yet it has been granted only to a few cases. This divergence concerning claims creates a competitive atmosphere and raises questions amongst the communities. When a victimized group asks for compensation, there is a lot of resistance met from the side of other exploited groups which claim that their requests need to be discussed first. As a result, the battle for recognition and compensation becomes more difficult as more parties get involved and actively attempt to obstruct their struggle for an inclusive society. Societies which are already polarized due to the direct or

⁸ Jr., William D. "10 Things We Get Wrong About Reparations." *Rolling Stone*, 19 June 2021, www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-commentary/juneteenth-reparations-misconceptions-1186060/.

indirect conflict between perpetrators and the victims, face greater division and become imbalanced.

The Difficulty of Determining the Payment

One of the most imperative obstacles that obstructs the provision of reparations is the incapacity to pinpoint a specific price for oppression. The lack of specialized indicators that measure the economic, social, and political gaps between exploited communities and other citizens makes it impossible to determine the appropriate payment. In some cases, wealth gaps and demographic data can provide a general picture of the situation, especially in countries like the US where the effects of slavery are still present amongst the black community. Nevertheless, there is no available metric to help states assign the appropriate amount that could possibly value to the cruelties such communities have faced. Consequently, monetary payments are usually an ineffective measure.

Implementation of reparations

The diversity observed amongst the historical cases of exploitation results in the necessary adoption of versatile and distinct reparative techniques that can effectively approach the different dimensions of each case.

Representatives of Claims

Reparations are a multidimensional matter that incorporates various stakeholders and can be approached through diverse perspectives and means. Multiple parties are involved and affected by the conduct of abuse and violence, and thus have the right to demand reparations if they deem it necessary for the improvement of their living conditions. Claims for compensation in instances of historical wrongdoings can be divided into three main categories.

The first case is when the reparations are claimed by individuals who have actively and directly been exposed to the act of exploitation in the past. This category refers to the receptive victims of the crime, which have experienced its harshness and severity first-hand. They are usually the individuals that have been the most affected and burdened by the atrocity. Additionally, primary victims of historic exploitation are also the ones who usually have had the least access to justice, equal representation, and social inclusion due to the less progressive institutions of the past, the prevalence of discrimination and the lack of mechanisms such as social media. As a result, the claim of reparations attempted by the direct victims of the wrongdoing are the most ineffective and difficult to achieve.

The second category shifts focus from the individual to the community. Reparations and compensation can be claimed in cases where historical wrongdoings have primarily targeted communities rather than individuals, usually due to religious and ethnic pretexts. In such cases, members belonging

to these communities have the ability to assemble and address the issue of reparations. This method is more effective than the first, since the request is made collectively and there are more forces to support the argument and convey the needs of the harmed communities, while the individual is unable to assert influence on its own.

As underlined above, historical mistreatment has detrimental repercussion on the direct victims of the atrocities, but also stigmatizes their descendants. Hence, the third and final category refers to reparations that are obtained through the line of descendants related to victims of injustice. People with ancestral links to victims of mistreatment can make reparative claims as long as the consequences and the aftermath of the injustice has a considerable effect on their daily lives. This is the most prevalent and typical method used to demand compensation.

Forms of Reparations

The main goal of reparations is to recognize the obligation of a state towards individuals or communities in order to reduce the effects of abuses it has either directly executed or failed to prevent. According to the United Nations, there are five ways through which reparations can be carried out.

The first measure is called restitution. Through this policy, governments aim at achieving the full recovery of the original situation of victims before the effects of the injustice. By implementing restitution and providing the appropriate reparations, exploited peoples are allowed complete restoration of their human rights. Restitution offers liberty in cases of enslavement, as well as the return of residence, employment, education, healthcare and more, in cases of milder abuses. This method is directly linked to the second one, which calls for damage compensation. This form of reparations refers to the provision of compensation for any loss with a serious economic effect that can be clearly indicated and assessed, such as physical or mental harm, loss of income or savings and material destruction. The combination of the aforementioned forms strives for the restoration of the initial state of the victims and the improvement of their economic situation.

An additional method of applying reparations is distinguished as satisfaction. This form aims at increasing transparency about violations committed in the past and urges perpetrators to take responsibility of their historical wrong doings. Furthermore, it outlines the importance of oversight and adherence by international common standards for human rights. Specifically, it concludes that judicial and administrative sanctions must be imposed in severe cases where reparations remain a pending matter and actively effect the victims. It also highlights the significance of strengthening the role of marginalized and targeted communities by recovering their cultural remains, promoting their rituals and commemorating their historical cases of abuse.

The final two forms of reparations are categorized as rehabilitation and guarantees of non-repetition. The first method of claims calls for the immediate provision of medical, psychological, social, and legal services to victims that have been heavily affected by their subjection to injustice, torture, or exploitation and suffer from physical and psychological disorders. Also, in most instances of historical violations, the individuals and communities seldom have appropriate and sufficient access to formal justice mechanisms where they can support their claims. Thus, rehabilitation aims at expanding the legal and social capacities available to make them more accessible to marginalized groups. Lastly, the guarantees of non-repetition are formal institutional reforms and national policies that are established to safeguard and ensure the avoidance of similar cases happening in the future.

Impact of reparations

Although reparations are incredibly important when dealing with social injustices, they can generate crucial consequences on the individual as well as the society at large. Thus, when drafting resolutions and brainstorming reparation policies, it is essential to keep in mind these repercussions and find ways to minimize or counteract their effect.

The provision of reparations often has significant socio-political and economic consequences on both the perpetrators and the exploited peoples. Firstly, the most commonly used argument, is that reparations are not cost-effective policies. In order for reparations to be granted to groups that have been subjected to injustice, the government must finance them. Money that is allocated towards exploited communities reduces the capacities available that are needed to finance other government expenditures. Less money is available for the provision of other services, infrastructure, education, healthcare and more. Consequently, reparations often have a negative effect on society, especially innocent third parties that are not involved in the situation. Furthermore, reparations can have serious economic consequences on the individuals that receive monetary compensation. Victims of mistreatment usually belong in low-income households and marginalized groups. In such cases, if reparations are provided in the form of an income stream, individuals might heavily rely on these amounts in their daily lives and lose their incentive to work. As a result, labour productivity decreases, and exploited peoples lose their steady sources of income. Instead, this money must be used by exploited peoples to enhance their skills, gain access to education or healthcare, and actively strive to improve their situation.

Reparation programs can lead to severe inequalities amongst the exploited community due to the socio-political differences of the members. Social groups that have faced exploitation are not homogeneous. Within one target population, some members are wealthier than others, some members are less affected by the injustice and perhaps some are convicted criminals. The question that arises is whether everyone is equally eligible to the reparations. When such policies are delivered on a collective basis, reparations are distributed equally. This way, wealth and power

inequalities amongst members of the community are exacerbated. Moreover, a common effect of reparations is that they are usually disliked by the uninvolved parties. Especially in cases that deal with racial and ethnic issues, the provision of reparations causes disputes and third parties claim that they are being treated unfairly. Hence, discrimination remains prevalent and the deeper causes of the issue are not addressed.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Australia

One of the most recent cases of reparations occurred in Australia and dealt with the exploitation of Aboriginal Australians. Aboriginal peoples are the earliest indigenous society living on the mainland and the surrounding islands. Between 1910 and 1970, the government issued officials to collect children of mixed White and Aboriginal descent and place them in boarding schools or church-run missions. Approximately one out of three indigenous children were violently separated from their families around the nation, a study shows.⁹ These were eventually named the “Stolen generations”. The violations were only officially recognized in August 2021, when the federal government decided to pay \$280 million in reparation payments to survivors and descendants of victims that were forcefully displaced from their environment, especially in regions with federal control such as the Northern and Australian Capital Territories.

Germany

Germany has one of the most stigmatized pasts and accounts for the most well-known case of reparations. After the end of WWII, the Jewish population that had been placed and exploited in concentration camps requested reparations. In September 1952 West Germany decided to give \$7 billion in goods to the recently established state of Israel. Through this provision the Israeli government expanded its economic infrastructure and tripled its Gross National Product (GNP). Payments were often targeted at individual survivors and reached a total of \$89 billion in 2012. Reparations remain a sensitive issue and Germany continues making payments to this day. In 2019 about 400,000 Jewish people who lived through WWII were alive and that year the German government gave \$564 million to the Claims Conference in order to provide the payments.¹⁰

⁹ Pannett, Rachel. "Australia to pay hundreds of millions in reparations to Indigenous 'stolen generations.'" *The Washington Post*, 5 Aug. 2021, www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/08/05/australia-indigenous-school-reparation/.

¹⁰ "Holocaust Survivors Continue to Receive German Reparations Payments to This Day." | *Working Towards Understanding and Healing Between Native American and Non-Native Peoples*, 18 Feb. 2021, <https://healingmystories.wordpress.com/2021/02/18/holocaust-survivors-continue-to-receive-german-reparations-payments-to-this-day/>.

South Africa

In the 20th Century South Africa's government adopted a legislative system that implemented systemic discrimination and supported segregationist practices targeted at people of color. After 1991 when the laws were repealed, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up to suggest reparations and other ways to compensate for the harm that victims of the former regime faced. A total of \$360 million was proposed, to be distributed in six yearly payments. However, in 2003 the President, Thabo Mbeki, declared that he would only address \$85 million delivered in one-time payments of \$3,900 to each victim. As a result, as of 2012 only 16,397 received adequate compensation, amounting for a tiny portion of the actual crowd of individuals harmed by Apartheid.¹¹

United Kingdom (UK)

The discussion on reparations towards people of African descent in the UK is an ongoing and current debate that remains unsolved. Citizens who are related to African families who were victims of slavery are still facing institutional racism. Yet, the UK has not introduced or recognized the situation, which slowly aggravates. The UK, as a former imperial superpower that was actively involved in slave trade, has stated its guilt for the atrocities they committed, but reparations remain unresolved. The economic burden and the fact that no direct victim still exists, are used as excuses to avoid the discussion. Nevertheless, the compensation must be claimed by their descendants and the countries from which slaves were taken. Recently, Jamaica unsuccessfully attempted to request reparations from Britain, since it was the centre of the slave trade, with many European powers forcibly transporting Africans to work on plantations.¹²

United States of America (USA)

The United States have been the main figure involved in the issue of reparations, with various incidents and claims being discussed. Besides the contribution of the U.S. in slave trade and the exploitation of African people by their owners, the U.S. was also involved in one of the successful cases of reparations being granted. During WWII, President Franklin D. Roosevelt implemented his Executive Order 9066 in 1942 and officially established Japanese internment camps.¹³ For three years, the U.S. government incarcerated individuals and citizens with Japanese roots in isolated camps. This measure was taken as a response to the Pearl Harbor attacks and is

¹¹ "South Africa to Pay \$3,900 to Each Family of Apartheid Victims (Published 2003)." *The New York Times - Breaking News, US News, World News and Videos*, 16 Apr. 2003, www.nytimes.com/2003/04/16/world/south-africa-to-pay-3900-to-each-family-of-apartheid-victims.html.

¹² "What Are Reparations And What Forms Can They Take?" *EachOther*, 29 July 2021, <https://eachother.org.uk/what-are-reparations-and-what-forms-can-they-take/>.

¹³ History.com Editors. "Japanese Internment Camps." *HISTORY*, 29 Oct. 2009, www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/japanese-american-relocation.

deemed one of the cruelest violations of human rights. The camps were shut down in March 1946 and in 1976 President Ford abolished the Executive Order 9066. A few years later, President Reagan formally apologized for the atrocities and established the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, through which \$20,000 were given to more than 80,000 Japanese Americans. Although the U.S. has effectively dealt with this issue, it has not responded as effectively to the African Americans still suffering from the aftermath of slavery.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The OHCHR was established by the General Assembly of the UN through resolution 48/141 in December 1993. The OHCHR is the main UN body responsible for the safeguarding of human rights and it maintains international standards for human rights, as they were proposed through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, through the collaboration with member states. Efforts to deal with the provision of reparation have been primarily conducted and promoted by the OHCHR. One of the recent attempts to remind and reinforce the significance of reparations was made by the UN high commissioner for human rights Michelle Bachelet. In a statement made in June 2021, she called "on all states to stop denying - and start dismantling - racism" and to "listen to the voices of people of African descent".¹⁴ Specifically, this year she outlined a four-point agenda that strives for transformative measures on racial discrimination and lack of equality, that will be set out by the OHCHR and implemented by states on a national level. In her statement, she discussed how the nature of reparations must mainly be financial and involve simple guarantees to avoid repetitions.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date of Event	Description of event
September 1952	West Germany agreed to pay \$70 billion to the then-young state of Israel for holocaust reparations.
1988	The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 awarded \$20,000 each to over 80,000 Japanese Americans.
December 1993	The OHCHR was formed by the UN General Assembly through resolution 48/141.

¹⁴ "UN Human Rights Chief Calls for Reparations over Racism." *BBC News*, 29 June 2021, www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-57646933.

1994	Florida agreed to a reparations package of \$3.36 million in 2014 dollars for the race riot that destroyed the black town of Rosewood on the Gulf Coast.
16 December 2005	GA proclaimed the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law.
2013	President Thabo Mbeki announced in 2003 that he would authorize only \$85 billion, to be given in one-time payments of \$3,900 for apartheid.
2013	North Carolina passed a \$10 million reparations program that should give the 177 living victims of forced sterilization around \$50,000 each.
28 June 2021	OHCHR released the High Commissioner's Agenda towards transformative change for racial justice and equality, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 43/1.
August 2021	Australia's federal government agreed to pay about \$280 million in reparations to survivors who were removed from their families in federally controlled areas including the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

The issue of reparations is of utmost importance, yet it is often neglected by the international community. So far, limited actions have been taken to combat the effects of historical exploitation and ensure the provision of appropriate compensation to the victims.

[A/RES/60/147](#)

The UN attempted to approach the issue and propose a set of guidelines that aim at establishing the international legal framework around the matter. On 16 December 2005, the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/147 and created the "Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law".¹⁵ This document officially calls upon states to abide by humanitarian law and recognize the right of victims to reparative claims. It expands access to justice and urges governments to provide the necessary compensation for any harm suffered.

[A/HRC/RES/43/1](#)

¹⁵ "OHCHR | Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation." www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/remedyandrepairation.aspx.

Since then, the UN has not taken any binding measures to deal with the issue. Recently the UN high commissioner of human rights emphasized in a statement the urgency of reparations and called for the necessary action. Following this remark, the OHCHR published a four-point agenda pursuant to the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 43/1 on 19 June 2020.¹⁶ This report addresses the need for transformative change and the guarantee of historical reparations, mostly focused on victims of racial injustice. It calls upon states and intergovernmental bodies increase transparency, confess to wrongdoings, and take the vital steps towards the elimination of systemic racism.

Reparations through informal mechanisms

As the legal international response has been inadequate in achieving amends, many informal and private mechanisms have taken it upon themselves to provide a solution to the problem. Specifically, descendants of slavery and mistreatment in the UK are actively suffering from racism and social exclusion, as mentioned above. The government has not addressed the issue and refuses to pay reparations. As a result, private companies in the UK such as the pub chain named Greene King, a large pub chain, and the insurance company Lloyd's of London promised to deliver large sums to Black, Asian and other ethnic minorities and marginalized communities, from the reparation payments their ancestors had received as former slave owners.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

As the issue has received inadequate elaboration so far and the international community has ineffectively approached the concerns of the suffering populations, the solutions proposed by the delegates must introduce a plethora of new, proactive ideas.

Strengthening the representation of victims

Direct victims of exploitation and their descendants are often unable to seek remedy and justice for the harm they were subjected to, since they cannot access legal mechanisms and voice their concerns. As these communities usually remain marginalized and unstable, they cannot express and support their claims due to the unfavorable conditions. In order for their needs to be heard, representativeness and legal protection needs to be improved. This could be achieved through the introduction of national policies that aim at establishing non-discriminatory environments and expanding legal capacities to ensure that their rights are not being violated and they are given sufficient support.

Ensuring transparency and oversight

¹⁶ "OHCHR | Implementation of Human Rights Council Resolution 43/1." www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Racism/Pages/Implementation-HRC-Resolution-43-1.aspx.

Since the international legal framework is very vague and no legally binding measures have been put in place that oblige states to provide reparations, enhancing transparency and clarity is necessary. International organizations must implement resolutions and take proactive measures towards ensuring that stakeholders and perpetrators adhere to the reparation agreements that have been discussed. Victims are often promised reparations, yet they seldom receive them. More insight must be provided into the processes of the governments and their national policies regarding compensation mechanisms. Furthermore, external agents could be introduced to safeguard the abidance to international standards and guarantee the fair provision of the reparative claims made by the victims.

Encouraging support from informal mechanisms

As mentioned above, governments often fail at providing the necessary reparations and abiding by their promises. In such cases, victims must seek alternative methods of acquiring compensation. One useful suggestion is turning to companies and urging them to support the exploited peoples. Similar to the actions taken by the firms in the UK, multiple corporations, especially those that might have previously gained from human rights abuses, could allocate their resources to provide reparations on an individual or community basis. Such reparations could be executed in the form of direct monetary funds, charity support, provision of goods and services, or advocacy.

Introduction of official platforms

Individuals and communities with ancestral links to exploited populations often struggle at claiming reparations and delivering justice. Their voices are often disregarded based on the argument that they are not direct victims of oppression and as long as violations are not currently happening, reparations are unnecessary. This attitude stands as a significant barrier in the adoption of reparation agreements. In order for descendants to raise their concerns and demand justice for their past, they must be given a means of communication. Special platforms by governmental institutions or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) could be set to enhance the feeling of solidarity, allow them to express their needs and present their claims.

Increasing awareness

As the battle for reparations is often one-sided, awareness can be a helpful tool in inviting more people to support the cause and promote the requests of the victims. NGOs and states could introduce educational courses, promotional campaigns, interactive programmes and more, to enhance the citizens' knowledge of the significant cases of exploitation and highlight how the majority of them remains unsolved. Additionally, raising awareness could connect society with the harsh past of the harmed peoples and emphasize the feeling of solidarity amongst them, thus urging them to support the battle for reparations and establish an inclusive atmosphere.

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