
From: rwarehamlaw@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, December 2, 2021 1:04 PM
To: Testimony
Cc: Barron, Inez
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Roger Wareham Testimony in Support of Resos 1039-A & 1040 before the Civil and Human Rights Committee
Attachments: Support for Reparations Resos at NYC City Council Committee hearing 12.2.21.pdf

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NYC CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE HEARING ON REPARATIONS RESOLUTIONS

To the Committee on Civil and Human Rights, Chairperson Eugene and Councilmember Barron. Good morning.

My name is Roger Wareham. I am here today to speak in support of proposed resolutions 1039-a and 1040.

By way of background.

I am a human rights attorney and a member of the December 12th Movement which is a nongovernmental organization that defends the rights of people of African descent in New York City, the United States and throughout the global African Diaspora. I am also the International Secretary-General of the International Association Against Torture which, like the December 12th Movement, is an NGO in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. In this capacity, I have been a regular participant in the UN's

human rights bodies in Geneva, Switzerland since 1989. In terms of the City Council. Most recently I testified before the Contracts Committee on a proposed Intro requiring government contractors to disclose whether their companies had any involvement with the slave trade and slavery.

For over 30 years we have been actively involved locally, nationally and internationally in the campaign for reparations for people of African descent as a vehicle to begin repairing the damage inflicted by over 4 centuries of chattel slavery and systemic racism. In 2001, the United Nations World Conference Against Racism held in Durban, South Africa, declared that the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and chattel slavery were crimes against humanity for which reparations are due the descendants of the victims.^{i[1]}

The state and national legislation which these proposed resolutions support are important steps in advancing that Declaration. The covid pandemic which still overshadows all New Yorkers has further exposed the historic and continuing inequities faced by Black people, particularly in the area of healthcare. This is an opportunity for New York City to take a stand in support of the civil and human rights of its citizenry of African descent.

The agenda for this meeting asks: "In addition to these resolutions, what steps could be taken to address reparations and the continued impacts of slavery?"

My answer is that the New York City Council should support the campaign that is being waged to have President Biden issue an Executive Order on reparations. Early on President Biden stated that he owed his election victory to support from the Black community and that he "[had] our back." We propose that he implement that promise by issuing an Executive Order that would include a \$50 billion downpayment on reparations targeted to provision of state of the art healthcare facilities in Black communities.

I end with the words that we developed for the UN World Conference Against Racism:

They stole us! They sold us! They owe us!

Reparations now!

Thank you.

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^{i[1]} "The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action," 2001

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