



**PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

REMARKS BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY BRIAN WALLACE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S SPECIAL EVENT
"EQUIANO.STORIES"**

**IN COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF
REMEMBRANCE OF THE VICTIMS OF SLAVERY AND THE
TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE 2022**

**TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL CHAMBER, UNHQ
29TH MARCH 2022, 1:15PM - 2:15PM**

Mr. President, Under Secretary General Catherine Pollard, Excellencies, distinguished delegates and guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to join in this special commemoration of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. As we take the opportunity to solemnly reflect on this horrific period in human history, I offer many thanks to Mr. Kochavi and the Permanent Mission of Israel for sharing with us this excerpt of the haunting yet triumphant lived experience of Olaudah Equiano.

Today's excerpt of the film ***"Equiano Stories"*** features the extraordinary life and experiences of one of the few named Africans to have suffered this crime against humanity, and chronicled his journey before, during and after the 'other worldly' *trauma of displacement*, from power and privilege as was his life on the Continent, *to the horrors of human trafficking and enslavement*. The people of Jamaica are familiar with the name "Olaudah Equiano" as it was he who brought the atrocities of the Zong Massacre – a mass killing by drowning of enslaved people bound for Jamaica – to the attention of the abolition movement. By this action, the original ruling that would have allowed murderers to enjoy the reward of a successful insurance claim for 'lost cargo', as our ancestors were considered, was overturned and provided impetus for the abolition movement. His indomitable spirit knew no bounds.

Mr. President,

Jamaica, Jamaicans, and African Descendants worldwide will view as timely, the new version of the story that offers a modern presentation of Instagram stories, sadly still relevant as the residual effects persist for us, as do modern day versions of systemic racism and human trafficking with which we still grapple.

While we painfully watch the rehashing of the trauma suffered in the 400 years of chattel enslavement and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, we recognize this production as an important tool in the promotion of awareness and understanding among our young people and for generations to come.

As our National Hero, the Right Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey, once wrote:

“A people without knowledge of their past history, origin, and culture is like a tree without roots.”

Marcus Garvey reminded us that we were created masters of our destiny and that we – as people of African Descent – may not receive the dignity and respect necessary for our social and economic transformation if our people continue to demonstrate deficiencies in education, health and wellness services, in a social order in which chronic persistent poverty leads to pernicious violence and crime, and therefore undermining our efforts towards achieving sustainable prosperity for our people.

Mr. President,

Jamaica is unwavering in the pursuit of reparatory justice for the egregious injury, loss and damage caused by slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The perpetrators are known, and their descendants continue to experience the benefits derived from slavery and the slave trade. The victims are known and their descendants are not only still around but continue to experience the deleterious effects of that sordid system.

Since much of what we suffer are consequences of colonialism and its counterparts of slavery and the slave trade, we pursue reparations as Garvey did many years ago. We pursue reparations to ultimately and finally achieve '**recognition, justice and development**'.

Like Equiano, our ancestors emerged from these negative experiences as victors, more than as victims, through their own action. In so doing, they maintained their dignity, integrity and resilience, which they passed on to their descendants. It is in their name that we pursue reparations and claim the destiny of prosperity their greatness and great sacrifice earned for us. It is on their shoulders that I stand before you today.

It is in their name that we continue to call on the United Nations to promote, with urgency among member states, the thrust for reparations for people of African descent as a global public good for the restoration of trust, civility, respect and peace.

Thank you.