



PETITION

FOR THE CONSTRUCTION IN INTERNATIONAL GENEVA OF A

MEMORIAL TO SLAVERY AND THE COLONIZATION OF BLACK PEOPLE

In view of the following considerations:

- The UN World Conference against Racism (Durban, 2001), recognized that *"slavery and the slave trade, in particular the transatlantic slave trade, were appalling tragedies in the history of humanity (...); that they constitute a crime against humanity and that they are one of the principal sources and manifestations of racism (...)"*. Furthermore, *"Africans and people of African descent (...) have been victims of colonialism and continue to suffer its consequences"*;
- These two Black Holocausts (slave raids followed by deportation and enslavement, and later colonization) deserve a special duty of remembrance because of their duration (from the 7th to the 20th century), their magnitude (more than 300 million deaths), their global dimension and their industrial character;
- The Duty of Remembrance is very important so that this dehumanizing past cannot be forgotten, and so that the awareness of young generations can remain steadfast and everlasting;
- There is no international memorial in Geneva, an international city and the world capital of Human Rights, which recalls the above-mentioned crimes, in which Swiss people and enterprises participated as well, and which could become one of the symbols of the recognition that Black Lives Matter;
- Geneva was a co-founder of the European Coalition of Cities against Racism, launched by UNESCO in 2004, which urges the naming of places (e.g. monuments), *"in memory of events of particular relevance to discriminated groups, with the aim of (...) integrating them into the collective memory and identity of the city"*;
- A Black Memorial is more necessary than ever at a time when there is a growing awareness in the world of the need to bring more consideration to anti-black racism and its multi-dimensional damages. This is also highlighted by the internationalization of the *Black Lives Matter* movement and the worldwide satisfaction with the conviction of George Floyd's murderer;
- This request is in line with the dynamics of the memorial actions undertaken in Geneva in favor of the Rwandan, Armenian and Srebrenica (Bosnia-Herzegovina) genocides, as well as for the Shoah (favorable notice for a Memorial granted last January by the City Council), as mentioned in the local pressⁱⁱⁱ;
- For the realization of this Black Memorial, to be submitted for a competition, multiple artists and architects of African descent from around the world will bring talent and know-how;

We, women and men of African descent and of all other origins, in or outside of Switzerland,
Within the framework of the United Nations Decade for People of African Descent, and
At the initiative of CRAN (Carrefour de Réflexion et d'Action contre le Racisme anti-Noir), Observatory of
Anti-Black Racism in Switzerland (Bern) and UPAF (Université Populaire Africaine en Suisse, Geneva),

Solemnly request, by this Petition addressed to the City Council of the City of Geneva :

- To examine and give a favorable notice to the Project of "International Memorial of Slavery and Colonization of Blacks" to be erected in Geneva, on the Place des Nations or in its vicinity, at the latest in 2024, the year closing the UN International Decade for People of African Descent;
- To contribute to the realization of such a Memorial by providing administrative, financial, technical and other resources, in addition to the various voluntary contributions to be mobilized by us.

We thank the City of Geneva for the interest it will show in this specific and universal Petition.

Done in Geneva, on 24th May, 2021

First signatories (associations or individuals) :

https://www.petitionenligne.ch/pour_un_memorial_de_lesclavage_et_de_la_colonisation_a_geneve_internationale

Petition Executive Committee:

- Carrefour de réflexion et d'action contre le racisme anti-Noir (CRAN, Bern), cran02@bluewin.ch
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Memorial Organizing Committee

(under development, bringing together associations and leading figures from around the world)

ⁱ *World Conference against Racism*, United Nations, Human Rights, New York, 2002, pp. 17-18

ⁱⁱ See UNESCO's proposed Plan of Action, <https://fr.unesco.org/themes/promouvoir-droits-inclusion/iccar>

ⁱⁱⁱ *Tribune de Genève*, 27.01.2021 ; *Genève Home Information*, 26.01.2021 ; *Swissinfo*, 31.01.2021