

Tiheba Bain

Hello My name is Tiheba Bain, Founder and Executive Director of Women Against Mass Incarceration. Thank you, Madam Chair, for receiving me as a community member of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent.

The people of African Decent are a people of strength, beauty and resilience. Today we not only stand up but rise up to combat systemic racism. Systemic trauma is a direct result of systemic racism and this must not be ignored.

Mass incarceration continues the historical events of colonization. It effects the intergenerational psychology of People of African Descent by displacing us from our communities, under the guise of protecting society from the dangers of black people.

Women are the fastest growing population to be incarcerated in Carceral America, at ***over 9 times the rate of Men.*** . Women of African Descent disproportionately make up most of these numbers. Black Women experience systemic racism in multiple ways, we see it by what some call the pipeline system:

- The poverty to prison pipeline: A system that perpetuates economic in-security in the low-income communities in America
- The school to prison pipeline: A system which continuously causes harm to our children using harsh disciplinary measures and the overuse of law enforcement in our schools.
- Child welfare to prison pipeline: A constant invasion and removal of our children from our homes by the family regulation system. Which uses words like “Adoption Safe Families Act” to camouflage the truth of family displacement.
- And so many others

These pipeline systems are ploys to police and incarcerate Black women and families. These oppressive systems are designed to keep the families of African descent marginalized and disenfranchised.

Yet we continue the movement towards equitable justice.

We can combat the harms of systemic racism by dismantling the policies that encourage these pipelines. We require mechanisms in each country to ensure that people of African descent realize their full human rights. Policies that invest in grass roots organizations who initiate awareness, galvanize people power and transform the experiences of people of African descent are needed.

Together as a people change is created, implemented and sustained.