

Intervention: 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Consent  
Tiffany Roberts, Director of Public Policy  
General Debate; Reparations

Elders, Excellencies, Madame Chair & Beloved Community-My name is Tiffany Roberts and I offer this intervention as Director of Public Policy of the Southern Center for Human Rights, which is a nonprofit law firm committed to ending the criminalization of race and poverty in America's Deep South based in Atlanta, Georgia. **We encourage continued examination of the role of escalating political repression intended to expand carceral systems, in frustrating the aims of the reparatory justice movement.**

During the first session of this Forum, we shared disturbing Atlanta data related to the racial wealth gap and state violence. During the second session, we intervened regarding the brutal political repression being wielded in the name of building Cop City, which—if built—will be one of the largest police militarization facilities in the nation. On the second day of the second session, as we sat with each other in New York City, the home of charitable bail workers was raided, and three nonprofit organizers were arrested and charged with felony offenses. Since then, 61 people have been charged with racketeering and other serious charges in the name of Cop City and perhaps even worse, in 2024 our legislature moved—without opposition from our Black led local government—to further criminalize free speech and charitable public service. Nationally, 2023 was the most violent year on record for U.S. Police in recent years.

We are grateful for your support of Black southerners and urge this collective to commit to flanking strategies that undermine political repression and state violence against people of African descent by governments purportedly led by people of African descent. We invite the close examination of Atlanta, where Black movement leaders are frequently ignored by Black-led government, resulting in atrocities like record numbers of deaths for people held pretrial and being the site of the first killing of an environmental defender on US soil, Manuel Teran.

We were honored to participate the ICSW strategy session yesterday on militarism invite everyone to consider carefully the intersections of militarism on policing, migration, colonialism and extraction as we fashion reparatory justice strategies. This question requires our honest assessment of the role that Black faces in high places play in protecting imperialism, colonialism and authoritarianism. Our hope is that we will walk in alignment with our honorable ancestors who fought, rather than those who traded in betrayal. What can reparatory justice mean while Black officials so invested in sowing disrepair remain in power?

In the spirits of *the people who could fly* from Igbo Landing (whom we learned about in the Opening Ceremony)--just hours from Atlanta and mere minutes from where Ahmaud Arbery was killed—we are honored to co-labor with all of you. Thank you.