



Call for inputs for the 2023 report of the United Nations Secretary-General on the implementation of the programme of activities of the International Decade for People of African Descent

Organization: [Equipo de Implementación del Decenio Afrodescendiente en España.](#)

Context: Spain

Summary:

Starting from a breakdown of the different areas of this call for inputs on the International Decade for People of African Descent, less than two years before the end of the Decade, the Spanish State has not taken sufficient actions for the recognition, justice and development of people of African descent in its territory not for an effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Despite several initiatives and projects led by civil society aimed at the rescue, investigation, visibility and celebration of people of African descent in Spain, the efforts of the State have been minimal and in many cases null. That is why it seems to be an alternative the proclamation of another decade to push for actions towards ending anti-Black racism in Spain and take the necessary measures to advance the situation of Afro-descendants in Spain.

As mentioned in resolution [69/16](#), the objectives of the International Decade for People of African Descent are:

- (a) To strengthen action and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels to achieve the full enjoyment of the rights of people of African descent.
- b) Promote greater knowledge of and respect for the diversity of the heritage and culture of people of African descent and their contribution to the development of societies;
- c) Adopt and strengthen national, regional and international legal frameworks in accordance with the Durban Declaration and Program of Action and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and ensure their full and effective implementation.

In this regard, the Spanish government has not officially launched the International Decade for People of African Descent therefore showing little political will to fully address the objectives of the Decade.

Regarding: addressing past legacies, including enslavement, the transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans, colonialism, apartheid and genocide, with a view to achieving reparatory justice for people of African descent:

1. Truth-seeking measures

There are no official truth-seeking measures impulsed by the government at local, regional or national level. Civil society efforts to open, promote and impulse the learning, recognition and dissemination of the history of enslavement projects such as [España Negra](#) seek to investigate and rescue the history of slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade as well as to portray the presence and contributions of African and Afro-descendant people, all of this in the Spanish context specifically. However, there is no official narrative that promotes acknowledging this historical legacy to begin to address restorative justice. In fact, restorative justice is not a State policy priority. The Spanish government has not implemented, promoted or designed any actions, policy or measure dedicated to truth-seeking.

2. Public apology and acknowledgement

Other EU members, such as The Netherlands, have issued public apologies for their involvement in the Transatlantic Slave trade. However, not only has Spain been silent about it, in fact, some [Spanish politicians](#) continue to voice a public narrative that celebrates the legacies of colonialism and have in the past condemned public apologies for atrocities committed during the colonial era.

3. Memorialization measures

No memorializations measures have been promoted or put in place by the Government. At regional level, some regional governments have supported the production of movies and documentaries that visibilise and investigate history of enslavement and its legacy, such as the Agencia Andaluza de Instituciones Culturales, Conselleria de Turismo, Cultura y Deporte: [Gurumé: canciones negra de tu memoria](#) y [Los Negros](#).

4. Measures that aim at putting an end to the long-lasting consequences of the above-mentioned past legacies and at guaranteeing non-recurrence, including measures to address systemic racism and racial discrimination, special measures, and development policies and programmes, among others;

There are no measures at the State level to address the long-lasting consequences of colonialism and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. There is an initiative that aims at tackling hate crimes, however this action plan does not address structural or systemic racism.

At the local level, the local and regional administrations have created an anti-discrimination service to address hate crimes and racism. Some examples of this are [IqualaT](#), a service to assist victims of hate crimes and discrimination put in place by the Valencian local government and part of the Valencian Strategy for Equal Treatment, Non-discrimination and the Prevention of Hate Crimes 2019-2024 or the local anti discrimination offices [ONIDIS](#) to provide legal advice in cases of discrimination. However, we do not consider those measures good practices that aim to put an end to structural racism as they only address specific

manifestations of racism. It is also problematic that most people do not know these services exist and their work and impact is questionable at best.

At national level, the Ministry of Interior is implementing at national level a two years [action plan](#) to combat hate crimes.

In the context of fighting hate crimes, despite the fact that important advances have been made in terms of non-discrimination and respect for diversity, various forms of intolerance like racism, xenophobia, LGBTIphobia and others continue to be present in our society, taking on many shapes, which range from the most subtle to the most serious.

In 2018, during his visit in Spain, the UN WGEPAD was informed about Spanish festivities using the blackface in several Spanish towns and cities, including the city of Alcoy in Valencia and the city of Igualada in Catalonia. This practice is considered offensive and helps to normalize slavery as something harmless and inconsequential in the collective imagination. Despite representatives of civil society have been calling for an end to the practice since 2017, the government has not implemented solutions to end the blackface in Spain.

5. **Any other forms of reparation, including restitution, rehabilitation, and compensation; The effective participation of people of African descent and their communities in the design, implementation and evaluation of the above-mentioned measures; The integration of an intersectional approach in the design, implementation and evaluation of the above-mentioned measures; Any challenges and lessons learnt in relation to efforts towards achieving reparatory justice for people of African descent.**

There are no lessons learned in terms of reparatory justice as there have been no actions nor measures to address it. The official narrative is still celebrating the effects of enslavement and colonialism as an achievement without addressing the legacy from a critical and anti-racist perspective. The official positioning from the government and the administration is to defend the legacy of enslavement rather than an acknowledgement of the crimes against humanity committed in the context of enslavement and colonialism against Africans.