

International Panel of Jurists Convenes to Oversee Tribunal on US Human Rights Abuses Against Black, Brown and Indigenous Peoples, 22-25 October 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, 6 October 2021

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In the spirit and legacy of the Russell Courts on Vietnam (1966-67) and Latin America (1973-76), and the Permanent People's Tribunals which followed (1979-present), a newly constituted panel of Jurists from the fields of law and human rights has assembled to oversee the International Tribunal on US Human Rights Abuses Against Black, Brown, and Indigenous Peoples, to take place from 22-25 October 2021 in New York City and virtually. As experts in the inter-related fields of institutional and structural racism, colonialism and neocolonialism, women's and children's rights, minorities rights, Indigenous treaties and international law, self-determination and sovereignty processes, and the genocide conventions, the Panel of Jurists asserts itself as an independent and non-governmental body which will convene to hear testimony based on a broad indictment served to the accused US federal and state parties.

The International Tribunal itself derives from an historic legacy and trajectory, initiated by a US-based coalition, *In the Spirit of Mandela*. Created in 2018, the coalition recognizes and affirms the rich history of diverse activists including Nelson Mandela, Winnie Mandela, Graca Machel Mandela, Ella Baker, Dennis Banks, Cesar Chavez, Fannie Lou Hamer, Fred Korematsu, Lolita Lebron, Rosa Parks, Ingrid Washinawatok, and many more in the resistance traditions of Black, Brown and Indigenous Peoples. Though fully independent and separate from the *In the Spirit of Mandela* coalition, the Panel of Jurists recognizes the important experiences which have shaped the petitioners' charges against US government agencies.

2021 marks the 70th anniversary of the campaign in which African American leaders Paul Robeson and William Patterson, with the support of eminent sociologist Dr. WEB DuBois, presented the "We Charge Genocide" petition to the burgeoning United Nations headquarters. A decade later, Minister Malcolm X (El Hajj Malik el-Shabazz) formed the Organization of Afro-American Unity, in part to bring the case of US human rights abuses to the attention of the UN. The Tribunal itself will be held at UN headquarters and the Church Center for the UN, but hearings and community testimony will also take place at the site of Malcolm X's assassination, the now-refurbished and Columbia University-affiliated Malcolm and Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center in Harlem.

The Panel of Jurists is composed of nine members, with representatives including a South African former Member of Parliament; a Board Member of the distinguished Nobel Peace Laureate organization with an unprecedented dozen Nobel Peace officer awardees; a Puerto Rican legal scholar who serves as an expert for the UN Committee on Decolonization; a UN representative of the oldest inter-faith pacifist organization in the world; an internationally-

accredited expert on genocide; the director of the only peoples-centered US human rights network with ECOSOC status and consistent UN advocacy; the youngest elected Chairman of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and leader of UNITY/the United National Indian Tribal Youth; and the former Chair of the United Nations Working Group on People of African Descent and a judge of the Permanent People's Tribunal. They are majority women and majority global south rooted, from India, Eritrea, Haiti, France, Puerto Rico, the USA and elsewhere. Mini-biographies of the Panel of Jurists are attached.

These jurists will preside over two days of testimonies from impacted victims, expert witnesses, and attorneys with firsthand knowledge of specific incidences raised in the charges/indictment. The Tribunal will be evaluating charges of human and civil rights violations on the basis of the following five areas:

- Police killings of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people,
- Hyper/mass incarcerations of Black, Brown, and Indigenous people,
- Political incarceration of Civil Rights/National Liberation era revolutionaries and revolutionaries and activists, as well as present day activists,
- Environmental racism and its impact disparities and its impact on Black, Brown, and Indigenous people,
- Public health racism and its traumatic impacts

As a result of the historic and systemic charges of all the above, the overarching charge of genocide is also being evaluated.

The Panel of Jurists will announce its Verdict following deliberations and discussions, planned for delivery at the United Nations on Monday, 25 October 2021.

2021 International Tribunal on U.S. Human Rights Abuses

Panel of Jurists

1. Chief: Her Honorable Magdalene Moonsamy (South Africa), former Member of Parliament (ANC); Deputy Chair of the African Peer Review Mechanism, an instrument of the African Union; attorney-director of the Women's Justice Foundation; Admitted Attorney of the South African High Court; lecturer of the Law Society of South Africa's Legal Education and Development (LEAD) school
2. Dr. Vickie Casanova-Willis (USA), Executive Director, US Human Rights Network; past president, National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL); founding member of Black People Against Police Torture; Co-organizer of the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent and Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (US Visits); co-author of multiple historic policy-shaping reports including the first UN Universal Periodic Review raising the issue of US Political Prisoners and COINTELPRO
3. Kassahun Checole (Eritrea/USA), CEO and publisher, Africa World/Red Sea Press; renowned Pan Africanist and Pan American scholar; lifetime advisor of the Association of Concerned African Scholars and the African Studies Association
4. Sherly Fabre (Haiti/USA), International Fellowship of Reconciliation United Nations Representative; member, Muslim Peace Fellowship/Community of Living Traditions; co-founder, Proyecto Faro
5. Professor Mireille Fanon Mendès-France (France), former Chair of the United Nations Working Group on People of African Descent; former Commissioner of the 2020 International Commission on Inquiry (Systemic Racist Police Violence against US People of African Descent); Judge of Permanent Peoples Tribunal; Co-Chair of the Frantz Fanon Foundation
6. Dr. Alexander Hinton (USA), Director of the Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights, Rutgers University; UNESCO Chair on Genocide Prevention; Distinguished Professor of Anthropology
7. Chairman Brian Moskwetah Weeden (Mashpee Wampanoag), Chairman of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe; Bear Heart from Eel Clan; Co-President/Trustee of the United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY); Co-Vice President of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Youth Commission
8. Binalakshmi "Bina" Nepram (Manipur/Northeast India), Founder-Director, Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network; Founder-Director, Global Alliance of Indigenous Peoples, Gender Justice and Peace; Board member of the International Peace Bureau (1910 Nobel Peace Laureate)
9. Wilma E. Reveron Collazo (Puerto Rico), long-standing member and leader, *Colegio de Abogados de Puerto Rico* (Puerto Rican Bar Association); former Executive Director of the Puerto Rico Center for Research assigned to the United Nations Office of Information on the Right to Self Determination; former Senior Staff Attorney, American Civil Liberties Union

Special Advisor to the Panel of Jurists: Matt Meyer,

Secretary-General, International Peace Research Association

Chair of the Tribunal Advisory Committee: Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge,

Director, Quaker United Nations Office; South African former Member of Parliament