



## **Press Conference launches a week of publications and events putting issues of reparations & restitution of looted artefacts firmly on the agenda**

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[London, 10.00am BST, 18 October 2023] – At a press conference by the main entrance of the British Museum, Bell Ribeiro-Addy, Streatham MP and Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Afrikan Reparations (APPG-AR), will launch a week of reparations themed events and activities organised by APPG-AR. These include:

- The publication of a summary briefing report: ***Hearings of the APPG-AR on the Restitution of Stolen African Artefacts and Human Remains.***
- **An Early day Motion (EDM)** and lobby in Parliament on the restitution of stolen African artefacts and ancestral remains
- **The Inaugural UK Reparations Conference 2023** from Saturday 21st - Sunday 22nd October 2023 at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Afrikan Reparations (APPG-AR) brings together parliamentarians, campaigners, communities and other stakeholders to examine issues of African reparations and the restitution of cultural artefacts and ancestral remains. APPG-AR explores policy proposals on reparations and development and how best to redress the legacies of African enslavement and colonialism.

The kick-off press conference outside the main British Museum entrance launches the summary briefing report of two APPG-AR hearings and a policy roundtable over 2022-2023, bringing together diverse perspectives from parliamentarians, senior museum experts, lawyers, academia and diaspora heritage practitioners, on the legal and global best practice on restitution. The experts highlighted the need for proactive measures and collaboration to address the challenges associated with restitution, such as the lack of a proper audit or cataloguing of collections, exposed by the recent scandalous theft and sale of classical items at the British Museum.

Expert recommendations in the report include: The Department of Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) should provide resources for provenance research, negotiation of claims and cost of return; enhanced guidelines for the treatment and restitution of ancestral human remains within heritage/museum settings in England; The CMS Committee should undertake an urgent and comprehensive hearing into provenance and restitution; and Parliamentarians should consider proposing new legislation that

applies similar provisions of the 2009 Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) to stolen African artefacts and human remains in UK collections

In response to the report Bell Ribeiro-Addy, APPG-AR Chair, noted: 'in supporting restitution efforts and implementing necessary changes to legislation and museum practices, the UK government can take significant steps towards rectifying historical injustices and fostering a more equitable and inclusive approach to cultural heritage.'

She continued: 'The hearings and the roundtable further underscored the urgency of the issue, emphasising that the countries of origin must be given the opportunity to care for their own cultural heritage, which requires a comprehensive understanding of what items are in possession, especially when after recent events we take note of the questionable safety record at the British Museum. I will be launching an Early Day Motion on this subject and we will be exploring broader issues of reparatory justice at our 2 day conference on 21-22 October at Friends House in Euston.'

Ends

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## NOTES

1. The summary report is available for free download on the APPG-AR website, [UK Reparations Conference 2023 — APPG for Afrikan Reparations \(appg-ar.org\)](https://www.appg-ar.org), ensuring accessibility to a global audience. It is also available on the AFFORD website – [www.Afford-uk.org](http://www.Afford-uk.org). APPG-AR acknowledges that this summary report is part of an ongoing process, and it does not provide definitive answers to the complex issues it explores. Instead, it serves as a catalyst for further research, dialogue, and collaboration among museums, source communities, and relevant stakeholders. APPG-AR invites scholars, museum professionals, policymakers, and the public to engage with the findings and participate in the ongoing conversation regarding the restitution and reparations of cultural objects.

2. Other events following the press conference and publication launch include: the APPG-AR organised UK Reparations Conference 2023 from Saturday 21st - Sunday 22nd October 2023 at Friends House, [173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ](https://www.friends-house.org). The conference brings together campaigns, institutions, and individuals to discuss the issue of reparations for colonisation, the transatlantic kidnap, trafficking and enslavement of Africans, theft of looted artefacts and ancestral remains, and continued exploitation of peoples of African descent across the world. The conference will be free to attend and will feature sessions on a range of policy issues as they relate to reparatory justice - from the restitution of artefacts to land rights, education, employment, environmental justice, economics, law, culture, and many other areas beside. Speakers include international government representatives, national and international dignitaries, Independent UN experts, campaigners, academics, Members of Parliament, legal experts, and youth voices. **To register and for further information please go to. [UK Reparations Conference 2023 — APPG for Afrikan Reparations \(appg-ar.org\)](https://www.appg-ar.org)**

3. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Afrikan Reparations (APPG-AR) brings together parliamentarians, campaigners, communities and other stakeholders to examine issues of African reparations and the restitution of cultural artefacts and ancestral remains. APPG-AR explores policy proposals on reparations and development and how best to redress the legacies of African enslavement and colonialism. The APPG-AR seeks to continue the work of honourable Bernie Grant MP (1944-2000) on the restitution of African artefacts and ancestral remains to enable the restitution of stolen African artefacts and human remains. We look forward to exploring new ways to progress the restitution dialogue we hope to contribute to a constructive and informed global dialogue

3. The African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) is an international organisation established in 1994, with a mission 'to expand and enhance the contributions Africans in the diaspora make to African development'. AFFORD's mission is achieved through programmes and projects within the following overlapping themes: enterprise and employment, diaspora remittances and investments, diaspora engagement and capacity and action research, policy and practice. AFFORD acts as a co-secretariat for the APPG-AR, and compiled this report through its Return of the Icons programme which focuses on restitution of looted African artefacts and human remains to their country of heritage.

Website: [African Foundation for Development - African Foundation for Development \(AFFORD\) \(afford-uk.org\)](http://www.Afford-uk.org)