

Human Rights Day 2022 Must be Recommitment to the Black Radical Human Rights and Peace Traditions

By [Black Alliance for Peace](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

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December 10 is Human Rights Day. On this day, U.S.-led Western states that are responsible for a majority of the most horrific crimes against humanity will cynically exploit the human rights idea, partially to deflect from their sordid records, but also to enlist the liberal human-rights framework into their arsenal of ideological weapons.

This Human Rights Day must be different. As tens of thousands of people are dying in Ukraine during an avoidable war to the ongoing wars in Yemen and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the slaughter of Palestinians in occupied Palestine, and the hundreds of thousands who died unnecessarily from COVID-19 in the United States, it must be stated—without any equivocations—that if human rights are to have any value, they must be liberated and reconstructed to serve the oppressed.

That has been the work of the Black Alliance for Peace (BAP) since its inception in 2017. Embracing the Black radical human-rights and peace traditions, the tagline of this formation has been: "A People(s)-Centered Human Rights Project Opposing War, Repression and Imperialism."

We love peace!

It is only within the context of social peace that the possibility of human freedom, as well as individual and collective development and progress, can take place. But powerful forces correctly understand peace is a threat. It is a threat because those whose existence depends on the use of extreme forms of state and institutional violence understand the inexplicable link between peace and social justice.

But without justice, there can be no peace!

That is why the Black Alliance for Peace correctly stated, “Peace is not the absence of conflict, but rather the achievement by popular struggle and self-defense of a world liberated from the interlocking issues of global conflict, nuclear armament and proliferation, unjust war, and subversion through the defeat of global systems of oppression that include colonialism, imperialism, patriarchy, and white supremacy.”

There can be no ambiguity here. We do not fight for the ideas in people’s heads—we fight the structures of oppression.

And human rights?

BAP operates within the framework of the Black radical human-rights tradition that is being popularized as the People(s)-Centered Human Rights framework (PCHRs). What constitutes that framework?

PCHRs are “those [non-oppressive rights](#) that reflect the highest commitment to universal human dignity and social justice that individuals and collectives define and secure for themselves through social struggle,” according to BAP National Organizer Ajamu Baraka.

This people(s)-centered framework proceeds from the assumption that the genesis of the assaults on human dignity at the core of human-rights violations is located in the ongoing structural relationships of colonial-capitalist oppression. Therefore, the PCHRs framework does not pretend to be non-political. It is a political project in the service of Africans, as well as the colonized working classes, peasants, and socially oppressed. It names the enemies of freedom: The Western white-supremacist, colonial-capitalist patriarchy.

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