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Slavery Reparations Advocates Bring Campaign to Westminster and Brussels

July 4, 2025

— Categories: *Human Rights*



Global calls for slavery reparations gained renewed momentum this week as Caribbean researchers and activists lobbied political leaders in Westminster and Brussels. The independent delegation's visit follows the Jamaican government's announcement that it will ask King Charles to seek legal advice from the Privy Council on the legal obligations surrounding reparations for slavery.

On Tuesday, the UK's All-Party Parliamentary Group on Afrikan Reparations hosted the delegation in Westminster. Members of Parliament, including Diane Abbott, Dawn Butler, Paulette Hamilton, Juliet Campbell, and Lord Marvin Rees, met with the group to discuss historical injustices linked to slavery and colonialism. The event followed similar discussions held in Brussels, where the delegation met Members of the European Parliament to gain support from representatives of former colonial powers, including Portugal, France, Spain, and Denmark.

Labour MP Bell Ribeiro-Addy, chair of the APPG, described the Westminster meeting as evidence that reparations are not a fringe issue but a global one. She welcomed Jamaica's move to pursue legal remedies and noted that historical injustices were sanctioned and addressed through law, meaning reparations must now follow a legal path as well.

The lobbying effort was coordinated by the Repair Campaign, a group funded by Irish businessman Denis O'Brien. The campaign has developed 15 costed reparations frameworks, tailored to individual Caribbean nations. The plans focus on economic and social development, including health, education, land rights, cultural recognition, and infrastructure, particularly in countries like Haiti, where additional investment is needed. O'Brien argued that both the United Kingdom and European Union should share financial responsibility for reparations, stating they are "equally culpable."

However, the Caricom Reparations Commission, led by Sir Hilary Beckles, released a statement distancing itself from the delegation, clarifying that its members were not officially affiliated with Caricom. The Commission

announced plans to launch its own European campaign in coordination with the African Union to further press for reparatory justice.

The issue has grown in prominence, especially after British Prime Minister Keir Starmer declined to include reparations on the agenda at the recent Commonwealth summit. Meanwhile, Jamaica is pursuing legal clarity on whether the transatlantic slave trade constituted a crime against humanity and whether Britain holds a legal obligation to provide redress.

If the UK's Privy Council fails to support Jamaica's request, or King Charles refuses to refer the case, Jamaican officials have indicated they may seek justice through international courts.