

THE BLACK ALLIANCE FOR PEACE

A People(s)-Centered Human Rights Project Against War, Repression and Imperialism

The History of African Liberation Day

African Liberation Day has its origins in the First Conference of Independent African States, convened by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and held in Accra, Ghana, from April 15-22, 1958. Delegates to the conference declared April 15 “African Freedom Day.” It was a day that would mark each year of the onward movement of African liberation, and symbolize the determination of African people to free themselves from foreign domination and exploitation.

With the establishment of the Organization of African Unity in 1963, Africa Freedom Day became African Liberation Day. Now celebrated on May 25th, African leaders called for a day of mass demonstrations across African and the African Diaspora against colonialism and neocolonialism, European domination and white supremacy. Today, African Liberation Day is a day to reaffirm our commitment to Pan-African socialism and to the revolutionary struggles of African peoples around the world against capitalism, neo-colonialism, racism, and zionism.

As part of the events marking this year’s African Liberation Day, the Black Alliance for Peace (BAP) is fulfilling the call to action in the African Diaspora by focussing on the struggle for African Liberation in the Americas. Our assertion is that Haiti, the Black Republic, is an African nation. The history of the Haitian people is a history of [African resistance](#). It is a history of struggle with parallels and interconnections throughout the Black communities of the Americas—in Colombia, Brazil, Venezuela, and elsewhere—and one that represents a critical site for the global project of revolutionary Pan-Africanism.

Haiti and African Liberation in the Americas

The Republic of Haiti is key to the history of and the present-day struggles for African liberation in the Americas. Haiti was the location of the first sustained

white settlement at the dawn of the European invasion, beginning in 1492, of what became known as the “Americas.” Haiti was also the site of the first revolution against slavery that resulted in a liberated African territory, with the establishment of the Haitian Republic in 1804. In Haiti, more than half a million Africans rose up in a thirteen-year rebellion that destroyed the plantation economy that created the wealth of Europe, ended the enslavement African people, and defeated the white imperial powers of France and Spain.

For Africans in bondage throughout the so-called Americas, Haiti provided a burning symbol of freedom and an early, successful example of Pan-African revolt. Any enslaved person who set foot on Haiti’s soil was declared free. Throughout the nineteenth-century Haiti’s name was on the lips of African insurrectionists and revolutionaries from the Virginias to Brazil who fought to end slavery and deal a death blow to whitem supremacy. As a liberated territory, Haiti became the launching ground for the war of independence from Spain waged by the forces organized around Simon Bolívar in 1823. In Haiti, Bolívar’s forces received training, arms, and a refuge from Spanish forces. Because of Haiti’s revolutionary history, its sovereignty has always been under threat. The “fear of another Haiti” has long haunted the white plantation societies of the Americas. It is fear that remains as the existence of a free Black republic poses a threat to the white supremacist, capitalist global order.

For the Black Alliance for Peace, [Haiti](#) is the real and symbolic ground in which resistance is being waged once again to liberate the territory from foreign control and to serve as a strategic space for supporting the [still unfulfilled anti-colonial struggle](#) of the Caribbean and the broader Americas region.

The African Crucible: Haiti, Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela

Along with Haiti, Brazil (with the largest population of Africans outside of Africa), and [Colombia](#) (with the third largest population of Africans outside the continent), are the natural political spaces for BAP’s extended work beyond the borders of the U.S. Both Brazil and Colombia represent two of the most sophisticated and developed Black resistance movements in the African world.

The structural connections between Haiti, Brazil, and Colombia are being forged in a crucible of police violence and state terror, dispossession and economic exploitation. Currently ruled by a corrupt, unpopular, dictatorial president backed by the United States and its proxies, the Haitian people have been the victims of kidnappings and police violence whose intent is to quell protest and silence dissent. In Brazil, African people are subject to both rampant poverty and indiscriminate killings by the police and armed militias, all under the watch of a neo-fascist president. In [Colombia](#) the mass strikes and mobilizations in response to a set of punishing tax “reforms” and brutal [US-backed austerity regimes](#) have been met with a wave of military-style repression that have led to dozens dead and hundreds injured and detained.

While Brazil used Haiti as a [training ground](#) for its own state security forces, deploying them as part of a United Nations occupying force, the U.S. State Department has recruited Colombian police to train their Haitian counterparts in “security.” Connected through their common African cultural roots, Haiti, Brazil, and Colombia have also been united in a common struggle against violence, economic deprivation, and white supremacy.

Linking with the struggles of African peoples in Haiti, Colombia and Brazil would not be complete politically without connecting those struggles with the ongoing struggles to liberate the Americas from U.S. and European political and economic control. And for that, the revolutionary process in Venezuela is crucial, especially with its large Black population that is a critical element of the Bolivarian revolutionary process. In short, the African nations of the Caribbean and the Americas are crucial to African Liberation.