

Ending Systemic Racism

A Statement of Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace

Healing us of systemic racism means going beyond understanding individual prejudices and even beyond being aware of the effects of biases in people who wield power. The ICUJP recognizes the racism that is built into our entire system. Individual accountability is vital, as is a recognition of the historical factors behind the status quo. For example, the move to reallocate funds from law enforcement to neighborhood development recognizes the history of the penal system in keeping control and moves these funds into aiding communities as the surest way to preempt crime.

ICUJP seeks to collaborate with our congregations and organizations, including educational systems and entertainment industries, to tackle this issue.

Areas include:

- **Economic justice:** our sisters and brothers of color disproportionately live in poverty, and the legacy of racism, in housing and education thwart attempts to move their families and themselves upward. Disparities in income, wealth and houselessness are highly racialized and discriminatory against Black, Indigenous, and other people of color.
- **Security justice:** overt and unconscious biases within law enforcement, along with a sense of impunity, endanger the lives of Black people. This has repercussions for the officers.
- **Criminal justice:** the penal system is focused on revenge and retribution, leading to cycles of recidivism and disproportionate punishment for the poor, instead of working towards rehabilitation and restorative justice
- **Environmental justice:** mines, pipelines, carcinogenic and polluting factories and mines are disproportionately built on Indigenous land and in minority neighborhoods.
- **Housing justice:** besides for economic reasons, studies show that many are locked out of homes and apartments that they could afford because of discrimination against people of color, LGBT+, and people with disabilities.
- **Medical justice:** the recent statistics of fatalities by race from the pandemic illustrate the lack of access to medical care in communities of color, and the resulting lack of faith in the medical system.
- **Civic justice:** current accusations of 'voter fraud' are being used to disenfranchise poor communities, illegally removing hundreds of thousands, primarily people of color, from voting lists.

Systemic racism is also manifest in our global relationships, furthering stereotypes against Arabs, Latin Americans, Africans, South Asian, Chinese or any other group that the country has political or economic conflict with.

Reparations to Black communities would not come from any personal guilt but rather from the need to return the wealth created by and stolen from enslaved people, as well as by the systems that have evolved since to maintain a color-line in society.

Without ending institutionalized and internalized racism, any other progressive or humanitarian changes are a house of cards. Ending systemic racism would lift all of us up together.

Let's work together to make these changes a priority for action among all people of faith and good conscience.