



# **BLACK & INDIGENOUS LIBERATION MOVEMENT**

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For indigenous peoples and Africans in the Americas, fourteen ninety two represents the beginning of an age of genocide. Our peoples are forever connected by the invasion and colonization of the Americas, which brought upon us the twin tragedies of chattle slavery and settler colonialism. For us, these atrocities are not only our past but our present which hangs over our common destiny. From the system of policing, born out of the institution of slave patrols, whose agents daily lynch Black people from Bahia in Brazil to New York in the U.S; to the daily theft of indigenous land to burn for cattle in the Amazon or poison with oil in Standing Rock.

In this moment when our elders are allowed to be swept away by a deadly pandemic, by negligent governments operating under the same genocidal logic of racial capitalism which began our oppression some 530 years ago, our past threatens to become our future. Now more than ever is the time for our peoples to unite in a Black and Indigenous Movement to confront once and for all this odious present. This is a time for mutual solidarity against racial capitalism, the carceral state, extractivism, patriarchy, and mass displacement. Our fight to end centuries of colonization requires us to work together, to organize across borders and across languages in order to achieve liberation and self determination for our peoples across the hemisphere.

### **WHO WE ARE**

The Black and Indigenous Liberation Movement (BILM) is a coalition of grassroots organizations that, in solidarity with frontline communities and other allies, support anti-colonial struggles in 12 countries across Abya-Yala or so-called "America", from Canada to Brazil.

While social and political divisions proliferate, BILM stands as a union of like-minded organizations aware of the pressing need to join forces and establish common lines of action among different groups fighting the ravages of racial capitalism.

We are a growing family of grassroots organizations active across Abya-Yala whose common goal is the self determination of African and indigenous peoples.



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## **OCTOBER 12TH WE DECLARED “BLACK AND INDIGENOUS LIBERATION DAY”**

### **PRECEDENTS**

October 12 has a long history of protest movements in the Americas dating back to at least the 19th Century, though opposition to the actions of Columbus and Europe gained traction in the latter half of the 20th century when Native-American led rebellions were picked up upon by left-wing political parties in the region. People in Chiapas, Mexico, took down a statue of conquistador Diego de Mazariegos in 1992, who had conquered the region and installed Villa Real de Chiapa de los Españoles (now San Cristóbal de las Casas) and Villa Real de Chiapa de los Indios (now Chiapa de Corzo) in 1528. In 1997 a statue of Christopher Columbus was removed and defaced in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and 2004 saw the toppling of another Columbus statue in Caracas, Venezuela. 350 Indigenous representatives from across the hemisphere gathered in Quito in 1992 to protest against the 500th anniversary celebrations of Columbus Day, declaring it the “International Day of Solidarity with Indigenous People”.

We want the entire world to join our efforts to deconstruct the injustice and lies underpinning the doctrine of discovery extolled by Columbus Day. Now more than ever, October 12th must become a symbol of our expanding historic consciousness and anti-colonial resistance as expressed in our political, cultural and artistic movements.

### **2020 ANTI-COLUMBUS PROTESTS**

2020 has already witnessed the explosion of widespread anti-colonial action and international protests triggered by the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers and the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Protestors in the US toppled and threw a statue of Christopher Columbus into a lake in Virginia, while in the city of Boston another monument of Columbus was decapitated. In Belgium protestors painted and burned a statue of King Leopold II, under whose mandate approximately 10 million Congolese died, while a crowd of nearly 1000 protestors at the University of Oxford took down a statue of Cecil



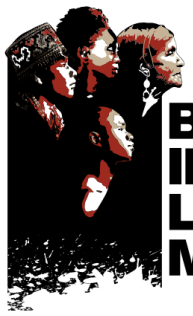
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Rhodes, a British imperialist political figure and precursor to apartheid in South Africa. In Latin America there were numerous actions including in Mexico City where the local government removed the statue of Columbus amid protests to tear it down. By early November, approximately 60 statues had suffered damage, according to Chile's Council of National Monuments. Among the protesters' targets were several figures linked to the colonization process, including Cristóbal Colón. The statue of the navigator located in the Cristóbal Colón square in Arica, which according to the Council had been inaugurated in 1910 for the centenary of independence, was destroyed.

In Quito, Ecuador, people gathered in the Arbolito Park to march on the offices of the State Attorney General before gathering around a statue of Isabel la Católica (the Queen of Castile who financed Columbus' voyages) on Avenue 12 de octubre to protest against Columbus Day and remember the 11 protestors killed one year ago in 2019 during a heavily criticized police-crackdown against widespread, indigenous-lead, anti-government mobilizations that brought the country to a halt and witnessed the militarization of the capital city.

In La Paz, Bolivia, protestors adorned a statue of Isabel la Católica with indigenous dress and used red paint to decry the arrival of the Spanish in 1492 and the subsequent exploitation, slavery and genocide of Native peoples, as well as debate more contemporary issues including the imposition of European values and present-day globalization of the city.

Thousands of indigenous people from across Colombia gathered in Cali to protest against ongoing killings and violence in rural, largely indigenous, regions of the country, which have left at least 42 people dead this year alone, according to the UN, and to demand a meeting with President Duque who is accused of turning a blind eye to the situation. More rural Campesinos and Colombia's African-descendent populations were expected to join. Columbus Day marks "the largest genocide in the history of our territory", decried Franky Reinoso, an Indigenous Guard from Caldas Regional Indigenous Council. Last month, the statue of Spanish conquistador Sebastian de Belalcazar was pulled down with ropes during a protest by members of the Misak Indigenous peoples in Popayan.



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*"It was not the discovery of America, it was the beginning of the invasion of America by Europe, it was the invasion and looting of everything". Protestor, Quito-Ecuador.*

## OUR EVENTS

On Monday October 12th BILM hosted a series of online events and panel discussions on Indigenous and Black solidarity across the Americas, centering marginalized voices, and attempting to unite people during a time in which political leaders are sowing division. Debates included political strategy, how to deconstruct Columbus Day, and included contributions from Black and Indigenous Women's Organizations from across the continent.

Brazil held a parallel digital activism event called the "Dia da Liberação Negra e Indígena". Contributions came from Celia Xacriaba, Brazil; Akua D. Smith from The BlackOUT Collective; Dallas Goldtooth from the Indigenous Environmental Network; Jaime Vargas, President of Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador; Sonia Guajajara, from Brazil's Indigenous People Articulation ; Driade Aguiar Coordinator at Fora Eixo Brazil; Leonidas Isa, President of the Indigenous and Campesino Movement of Cotopaxi; Gabriel Rocha Gaspar from Media Ninja and FRONTeiras, Brazil; Sapara leader Manari Ushigua with the Sapara Nation; with hosting from Kichwa activist Ana Cachimuel and Clayton Thomas-Müller from 350.org.

Anti-Colonial music and short films were showcased from artists and activists from Brazil, Spain, Ecuador, Mexico, the US and beyond, with live concerts, videos and murals streamed from Barcelona and the Ecuadorian Amazon, 'AfroPacific' music from Chonta Que Suená, the Grecia Albán Trío, and a closing concert from Los Nin, an Andean Kichwa hip-hop band from Cotacachi and Otavalo.

**View more:** <https://www.blackindigenouseliberation.com/>

## OBJECTIVES

1. Create and maintain a network of Black and Indigenous organizations working throughout the hemisphere that will allow coordinated action and solidarity for our struggles.



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- a. Form a democratic body with representatives from coalition members to discuss and produce points of unity, proposed actions, and priorities for solidarity work across the network.
  - b. Create systems of accountability to ensure organizations are adhering to points of unity and decisions made by the democratic body and provide for appropriate sanctions when violated.
  - c. Create and delegate power to regional working groups within the democratic body to focus on regional solidarity work and actions.
  - d. Set goals for fundraising for specific projects and establish rules for the fair distribution of revenue among member organizations and coalition projects.
2. Develop a hemisphere wide movement to establish a commission to address reparations and return of indigenous lands.
  - a. Research and develop information tools to support Black and Indigenous claims to reparations and sovereignty.
  - b. Facilitate the process to define common agendas, goals and paths that will determine short, medium and long term strategies for the movement.
  - c. Launch a joint declaration outlining a set of demands and a potential road ahead in which the lives and rights of indigenous and black peoples are fully recognised.
3. Promote a dialogue on intersectionality between Black and Indigenous struggles through developing, supporting and commissioning regular discussions through social media and live events.
  - a. Produce, book and organize continental solidarity events in order to amplify Black Liberation and Indigenous Resistance during the week of October 12th, 2021.
  - b. Produce, book and organize an in-person or online Events during specific dates throughout the year
  - c. Produce, book and organize an in-person Week of Action Event starting November 1st 2021 at the Conference of the Parties COP26 in Glasgow.



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## **POINTS OF UNITY**

- A singular continental history spans the slave trade between Africa and the Americas, the murder and displacement of indigenous peoples that began under colonialism, and the systematic violence against and exclusion of Black and Indigenous peoples ever since. We regard the struggle for black self-determination and the struggle for indigenous self-determination as part of a broader anti-colonial struggle taking place across the continent in the search for more meaningful forms of sovereignty and an end to our oppression.
- We seek to construct a world in which Black and Indigenous lives are no longer systematically targeted for demise.
- Our struggle for liberation must transcend colonial borders.
- Ending oppression based on race, ethnicity, color, descent or nationality depends upon also ending oppression based on sex, gender, sexuality, disability, citizenship status, and class.
- Our ability to include local realities and connect them to global issues is our best route to success.
- Success depends on communication between popular movements. Policy and legislative victories are just one step in the process of social change.
- Our form of communication and organisation is democratic, horizontal and respectful. Open minds, solidarity and interdependence; not hierarchy, exploitation and extraction.
- Education and a historic consciousness are essential for progressive change. There is a direct link between what is happening today with what has happened in the past.
- Protecting people means protecting the earth.
- An economic model based on structural exclusion and marginalisation is incompatible with our vision of liberation.