



The "Ark of Return", the permanent memorial to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, located at the Visitors' Plaza of UN headquarters in New York.

25.03.2016 - For over 400 years, more than 15 million men, women and children were the victims of the tragic transatlantic slave trade, one of the darkest chapters in human history.

The transatlantic slave trade was the largest forced migration in history, and undeniably one of the most inhumane. The extensive exodus of Africans spread to many areas of the world over a 400-year period and was unprecedented in the annals of recorded human history.

As a direct result of the transatlantic slave trade, the greatest movement of Africans was to the Americas — with 96 per cent of the captives from the African coasts arriving on cramped slave ships at ports in South America and the Caribbean Islands.

From 1501 to 1830, four Africans crossed the Atlantic for every one European, making the demographics of the Americas in that era more of an extension of the African diaspora than a European one. The legacy of this migration is still evident today, with large populations of people of African descent living throughout the Americas.

Every year on 25 March, the International Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade offers the opportunity to honour and remember those who suffered and died at the hands of the brutal slavery system. The International Day also aims at raising awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudice today.

This year the theme is "Remember Slavery: Celebrating the Heritage and Culture of the African Diaspora and its Roots." This theme draws attention to the rich African culture and traditions that have impacted life in countries that were involved in the slave trade and where the African Diaspora continues to make major contribution in all aspects of life.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, "Africa's influence and legacy are plain to see in the vibrant music, bold art, rich foods and inspiring literature that infuse modern culture. Less recognized, perhaps, are the contributions that the people of the African diaspora have made to medicine, science, government and general leadership in society."

UNRICs Related Links

- [International Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Slavery](#)
- [UNESCO](#)
- [Sustainable Development Goals](#)

Photo: UN Photo/Rick Bajornas