

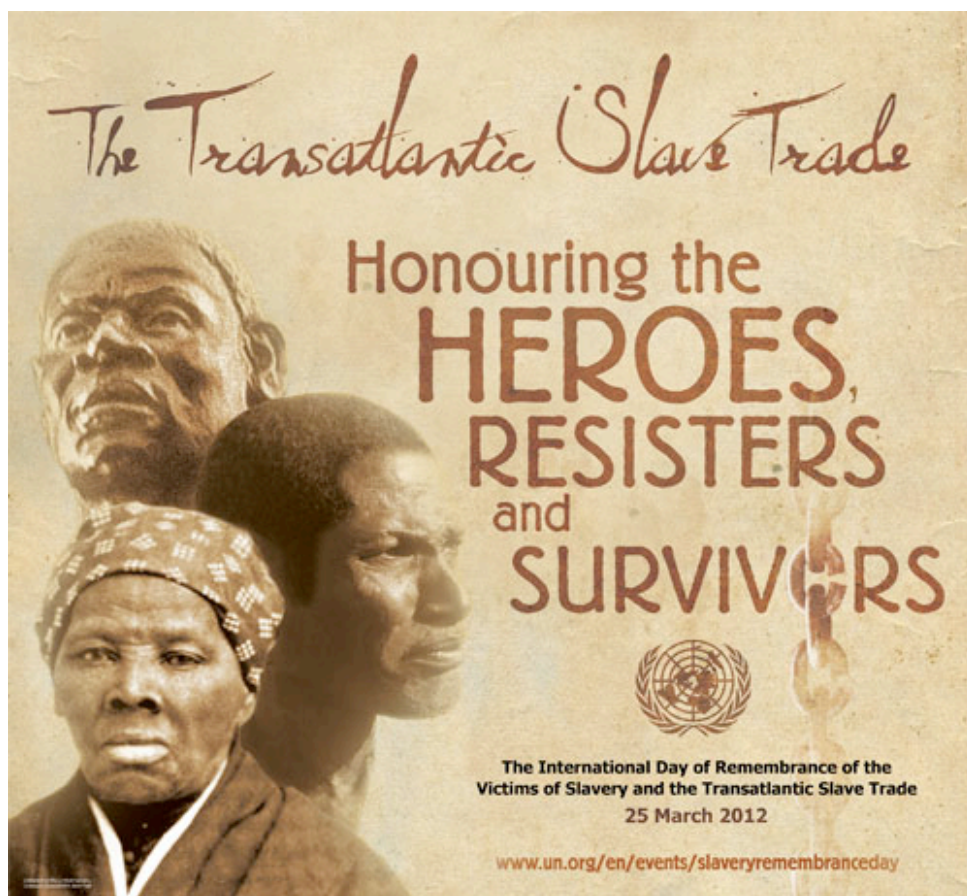


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## UN honours heroes and survivors of transatlantic slave trade



23 March 2012 –

The United Nations is hosting a series of events, beginning today, to pay tribute to the men and women who bravely fought against the transatlantic slave trade and those who continue to stand up against modern forms of slavery.

“The transatlantic slave trade was a tragedy because of slavery’s fundamental barbarism and immense scope, and because of its organized, systematic nature,” [Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon](#) said in his message to mark the Day, which falls on Sunday.

The General Assembly in 2007 designated 25 March as the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade to honour the 28 million estimated Africans who were violently removed and cast into slavery, mainly in colonies in North America, South America and the West Indies.

“One set of human beings – the traders, owners and others who participated in and profited from this evil enterprise – elevated themselves above another, assaulting their victims’ very essence,” Mr. Ban said in his remarks.

He noted that this year’s theme – “Honouring the Heroes, Resisters and Survivors” – recognizes those who stood up against slavery when the trade was at its height, and those who stand up now to protect against its manifestations today.

The Day also serves as an opportunity to teach about the causes and consequences of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

“New laws, institutions and mindsets have given us better tools for the struggle against these ills,” noted Mr. Ban. “Yet we must also recognize that bias has increased in many parts of the world.

“We see discriminatory practices gaining political, moral and even legal recognition, including through the platforms of some political parties and organizations and the dissemination through modern communication technologies of ideas based on the notion of racial superiority.” He stressed that the UN remains firmly committed to countering such hateful acts and trends.

This year’s commemoration features several events in New York. These include a special meeting of the General Assembly on 26 March; an exhibition that includes images of heroes and activists, original documents, historical illustrated newspapers and artefacts; an evening of cultural and culinary specialties of Africa; and a global student videoconference.

In addition, plans are under way to erect a permanent memorial at UN Headquarters to remind the world that millions of Africans were violently removed from their homelands, abused and robbed of their dignity over the course of four centuries during the transatlantic slave trade.

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