



Indian Diaspora Council

Indian Diaspora Council International

Shared heritage, aspirations and interests

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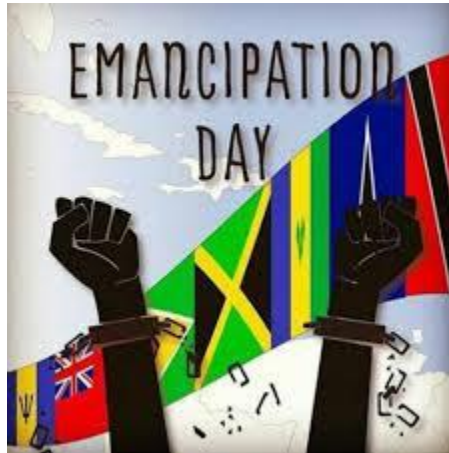
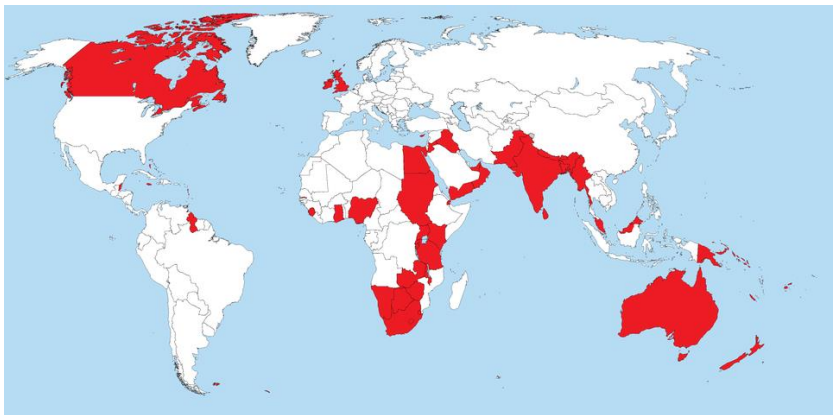
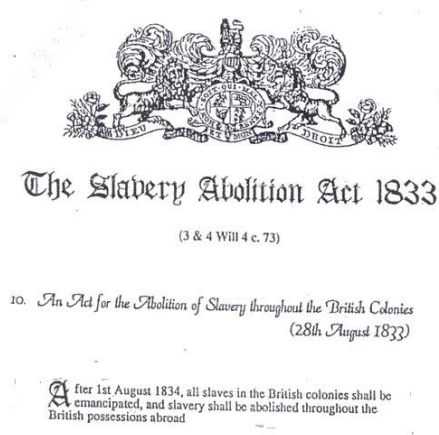
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Press Release

Emancipation Day 2023 – Commemoration of 1834 Abolition of Slavery in British Colonies

The Indian Diaspora Council International (**IDC**) and its global affiliates join with others in former British colonies, the UK and elsewhere, in commemorating Emancipation Day 2023 in observance of the 189th anniversary of British abolition of slavery.



The Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 ended slavery in the British Empire on August 28, 1834. The end of slavery in 1834 brought freedom from abhorrent, dehumanizing, demeaning and despicable physical brutality, domination and oppressive exploitation of human beings for profit.

Also known as Freedom Day in many countries, Emancipation Day is widely observed in many former British colonies of the British Empire, including the Caribbean, South and East Africa during the first week of August in observance of the emancipation of slaves of African descent. It is also observed in other areas in regard to the abolition of serfdom and other forms of servitude.

Emancipation was also the beginning of indentureship of Indian laborers to the former British colonies lasting from 1834 through 1920. The Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC) recognizes the historic significance of Emancipation Day and the official end of organized inhuman treatment of people while cognizant that many of the same practices were imposed on Indian indentured laborers who replaced the freed African slaves in the plantations.

Shadel Nyack-Compton, IDC Coordinator, Grenada, and Honorary Consul General of India to Grenada: “Emancipation Day is a historical moment that changed the world dramatically. The sacrifice and bravery of our people should be honoured and remembered for the rest of our lives because we owe them the freedom we enjoy today. More importantly, remembering our roots keep us strong and standing tall. Emancipation Day empowers us to continue the work they've started in fighting for equality and protecting our hard-earned freedom. May we never forget the selfless sacrifice of our ancestors and may we live our lives worthy of the courageous legacy they left behind”.

Khalil Ali, Author, Historian, IDC London, UK: “Emancipation Day is one of the most important moments in human history. Sadly, and as if we have learnt nothing about enslavement, we still see what is called “Modern Slavery” around the world today. Let’s continue to campaign for an end to this vile activity”.

Dr. Arnold Thomas, IDC Coordinator, St. Vincent & the Grenadines: “Emancipation Day is of special historical significance to St. Vincent and the Grenadines as it links three of the most awful deeds committed by the British on the inhabitants of the country. First was the genocide of the indigenous Kalinago/Garifuna people in 1795 to clear the way for sugar planters, second was the introduction of African slaves to work the estates, and thirdly, after slavery was abolished and freed blacks refused to work Indians were brought in as indentured workers, which we all know was a new system of slavery. We are always reminded of the genocide, slavery and colonialism that so fundamentally affected our development, and one of the issues discussed among scholars and others is whether indenturedship should be addressed in the quest for reparations. We cannot commemorate Emancipation/Freedom Day without consideration of these underlying issues”.

Cliff Rajkumar, President, IDC Canada: “Freedom is the birthright of every human being. Enslavement, of any kind, is the most despicable and abhorrent subjugation of this birthright. Emancipation day must be recognized as a potent reminder that we must stay on guard and vigilantly protect and preserve the integrity of the freedoms and rights that is now enshrined in our constitution and governing democratic processes. It is now our duty to defend and safeguard the sacrifices of our hard fought for liberties and the dignity of our sacred humanity.

Prakash Singh, President, IDC Guyana: “With same intent and purpose slaves, or slavery, was the odious ingredient that smoothened the path of human civilization. For more than 250 years wealth was created by subjecting human beings in a most unspeakable and dehumanizing manner in which 10 to 12 million souls were hauled from a homeland to servitude. It was not by choice - but by the sheer force of the inhumanity of it. With resilience born from determination and willpower from character, it was they who triumphed in new homelands. We reflect today on the ordeal, however we envision it to be, and to celebrate the self-esteem of a people. That they have endured indignities mortifying to common sensibilities and survive, we should celebrate”.

“The Guyana chapter of IDC joins in unison with the voices there in marking this event. We should know. We must remember. We can never forget. With hope for some rapprochement in rekindling bonds we might move to regain a little of what was lost. What we have got as our legacy in the process is a greater grasp of

Ashook Ramsaran, President of Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC): “Emancipation Day marked the official end of the inhumanity of slavery and brutality of people for profit, a horrible experience etched in history for all posterity not to be repeated. That sad experience is a numbing reminder of the suffering, determination, persistence and endurance under extremely brutal and inhuman conditions.

While we celebrate, we also reflect on the triumph of the human spirit and the invaluable contributions of all migration and indigenous peoples to the diverse culture and development of the various countries. Among people of former British colonies, the saga of shared history and shared experience have fostered a unique kindred spirit of resolve, togetherness and kinship – a triumph over obstacles and difficulties with dreams and aspirations of a shared destiny intertwined by history and fate. The descendants of slaves, while saddened by the inhuman experience of their forebears, will always take pride in their unique accomplishment, recognizing and appreciating the enormous sacrifices and achievements for a better future.”

IDC Member comments: “In looking back, however, the awakening of the colonial masters' conscience in 1834 to forge a new beginning of civility by formally denouncing and abolishing slavery in the British colonies was a step in the right direction. Notwithstanding, this redemptive good news was marred by the introduction of Indentureship, a new form of slavery, of Indian labourers on account of greed and corruption. Today, we, the descendants of Indian indentured immigrants join hands with our African brothers and sisters to commemorate and observe the 187th anniversary of the British abolition of slavery and pledge to never again ever surrender to such indignity and oppressive domination of the human spirit and free will.

“The Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC and its members acknowledge that exploitive oppression of any kind is the most morally wrong and despicable act that human beings can be subjected to. As such, we now join hands with ALL freedom loving people of the world to recognize and celebrate emancipation day, 2021 in homage to our brave and courageous forebears and also all those who have endured the brutality of enslavement.”

The Indian Diaspora Council International and its members acknowledge that “oppression of any kind is the most abhorrent and despicable act to which that human beings can be subjected. As such, we now join hands with all freedom loving people of the world to recognize and celebrate emancipation day, 2018 in homage to our brave and courageous forebears and also all those who have endured the brutality of servitude. We honour their resilience and unwavering faith in their enduring beliefs and traditions which enabled them to triumphantly weather the storms and sufferings of this barbaric and inhumane system of enslavement.”

It was not until 1917 the labor bondage ended and now the descendants of the semi slaves through the Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC) are united to showcase to the world the plight and severe hardship their forefathers endured and perhaps to advocate for Reparatory Justice. Gradually the IDC is making inroads for global recognition of such historic events and was successful in convincing the State of New York to adopt a Resolution in recognition of the 100th Anniversary of the Abolition of Indian Indentureship on July 19, 2017. IDC continues to advocate recognition of historic milestones of our journeys.

The Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC) encourages efforts with similar resolve and inspired motivation, individually and collectively, to continuously strive for freedom from poverty, diseases, wars, inhumanity, economic inequalities and social injustices.

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Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC), established in 1997, is an international non-profit organization with global affiliates and membership in 21 countries with the objective to embrace, engage and enhance the shared heritage, aspirations and interests of persons of Indian origin with optimum inclusivity.*