

National Grassroots Reparations Convening/ 5th Annual Mike Brown Jr Weekend Commemoration

By Danita Green



August 9-11, I attended the reparations networking program in Ferguson, MO which commemorated the 5th anniversary of the murder of Mike Brown Jr. and the Ferguson Uprising. The Truth-Telling Project (<http://www.thetruthtellingproject.org/>), founded by [Dr David Ragland](#), brought thought-leaders from all over the country together to discuss Reparations and create a network for organizations dedicated to this work. The National Truth Telling and Grassroots Reparations Convening, invited organizers and activists from Black-Led grassroots organizations throughout the nation, as well as their families and friends of people victimized by police violence, to Ferguson to participate in this important commemoration and work toward the transformation of our communities, and the transformation of the relationships between Black folk and the broader society which is currently so much shaped by structural and direct violence.

There were several members in attendance from N'COBRA - the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations founded in 1987 - a coalition organized for the sole purpose of obtaining reparations for African descendants in the United States. They shared stories of reparatory actions across the country, and aided in defining Reparations today.

According to NCOBRA , **reparations is a process of repairing, healing and restoring a people injured because of their group identity and in violation of their fundamental human rights by governments, corporations, institutions and families.** “Those groups that have been injured have the right to obtain from the government, corporation, institution or family responsible for the injuries that which they need to repair and heal themselves. In addition to being a demand for justice, it is a principle of international human rights law.” said NCOBRA representatives that were present.



The UN Basic Principles recognize the following five forms of reparations: 1) restitution: restoration of a victim's rights, property, citizenship status; 2) rehabilitation: psychological and physical support; 3) compensation; 4) satisfaction: acknowledgement of guilt, apology, burials, construction of memorials, etc.; and 5) guarantees of non-repetition: reformation of laws and civil and political structures that led to or fueled violence. United Nations Recognizes this definition and areas of reparations. I participated in the closing plenary on non-repetition and emphasized trauma informed care as a way to reduce the impact of historical trauma.



The 3 day event included both public and private forums addressing Reparations. On August 9th, 200 people gathered at the site where Mike Brown was killed. There, we were addressed by civic leaders and family members concerned about racially motivated violence and the lack of systemic support. This conversation continued throughout the convening and came to a climax on the 11th as 50 of us converged on the St Louis courthouse facing the Dred Scott Memorial Statue. After which, we marched to the river, poured libations and freedom songs, honoring the ancestors and local civil rights leaders.

Coming To The Table and specifically our [Richmond chapter](#) were lauded for our work in racial healing and . attempts to do this work across racial lines. Even though there were several black-led groups that support nationalist actions reparations, the need for racial healing and cooperation remains an important and vital goal for long range success. Attendees are hopeful that Coming To The Table will be one organization that can lead the way.