



In the spirit of Mandela

International Tribunal on US Human Rights Violations
Oct. 22-25, 2021 Virtual/NewYork
spiritofmandela.org

The Peoples' Senate

Explanation and Recruitment Manual



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Introduction

The Peoples’ Senate is a strategic initiative stemming from the 2021 International Tribunal held in New York City on the weekend of October 22-25, wherein the United States government and its States were charged with and found guilty of genocide against Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples.

And yet we must do more than simply celebrate the International Panel of Jurists’ guilty verdict. Our job now is to organize a meaningful resistance to this genocide, rooted in the Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities themselves.

There are many ongoing and vital organizing efforts across the country, many local, some focused on single issues, others broader. All could be assisted by a network linking the various efforts, informing the many forces of the work of others and amplifying the voices of all.

Thus the Spirit of Mandela Coalition—which organized the International Tribunal—is calling for the formation of a Peoples’ Senate that can help construct a network to link these efforts and, in the best case, become a platform through which the struggles of each might become the struggle of all—speaking out against genocide and other abuses with a collective voice and developing a program of action to address various issues/struggles that can unite and strengthen our collective voice. The Peoples’ Senate, over time, will be working to provide a model for an alternative to existing governance and show how a body might work that truly represents the people and strives to put decision-making in their hands.

... continued from "Introduction"

The goal of the Peoples' Senate is four-fold:

- a) Help publicize and promote all of the work that everyone is already doing
- b) Make links between individuals and groups and potentially organize common projects to assist in developing collaborative efforts
- c) Develop new initiatives that can unite us on a national and international scale
- d) To elect a Peoples' Senate, bringing forward the leadership of Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities and providing an arena for discussion and exchange, and for developing solutions to the problems faced by all.

Our vision is a Senate which will be a representative body of the peoples and their organizations, elected by local meetings or gatherings - based on geography, or on constituency, or on groups of people engaged in common work. It will then meet on a national level to discuss how this goal of developing a united struggle might be pursued. Election meetings can be regular meetings of already established groups or collectives, or they may be ad-hoc caucuses created specifically for the purpose of electing senators.

We invite you or your organization to join us in developing this initiative.

Vision Statement

To give full, complete and effective voice and representation to Black, Brown, and Indigenous people.

Mission Statement

The Peoples' Senate is an historic initiative to put decision-making in the hands of the people through coordinated, strategic action. The Peoples' Senate will be a national cohesive network reflective of poor and working-class communities across the United States, its colonies and territories.

We encourage participation from individuals and grassroots organizations, including activist, progressive, and revolutionary organizations; workers, women, youth; environmental and healthcare advocates; academics and professionals; religious and community-based organizations and more.

The Peoples' Senate is uniting with all willing to work together to protect, champion and uphold the human rights of Black, Brown and Indigenous peoples, thus ensuring the human rights of all people.

Goals

- Identify, acknowledge, support, recruit and network already existing organizations, coalitions, formations, unions, and assemblies.
- Facilitate the recruited organizations, coalitions, formations, unions, and assemblies to organize and hold caucuses to build working relationships and to nominate and elect Senators to represent their local/region/constituency in the Peoples' Senate.
- Organize and establish such Senate representation across the country.
- Establish regular national Senate meetings for elected Senators to establish national mutual priorities.

The Peoples' Senate and Its Values

The Peoples' Senate is an attempt to develop a structure whereby the organized population of the USA can build a future that manifests the means by which they will be governed — absent white supremacy, absent capitalist exploitation, absent imperialism, absent patriarchy and the colonization of peoples and resources throughout the world.

We envision a Peoples' Senate that will be organized from the ground up and not the top down, ensuring that the most in need will be heard and their issues the first to be addressed by the collective determination of the Senate. Essentially, the Peoples' Senate that we are striving to create will empower the people to destroy the system of individualism, competition, and institutional racism and build an alternative system of cooperation and collective sharing of resources. This is important because the system of white supremacy and capitalism places profits before people, permits the hoarding of wealth, and seeks to repress any form of resistance to racist national oppression.

The task before us is to forge a process that will enable activists, organizers, abolitionists, emancipators, and liberators to join in building the structure, while also helping to develop the socio-economic and political objectives that will be pursued by the Peoples' Senate. This will require collaborating with already-existing formations, such as the "peoples' assemblies" that are presently established in a number of regions, and encouraging the formation of similar bodies in other areas where poor and oppressed peoples are disenfranchised and repressed—as one means of ensuring representation in the Senate. Such formations can become the organized voice of the community, building decolonization programs addressing the immediate needs of those communities. It is our hope that they can be convened by those who are prepared to work together under the agreed principles established by the collective decision of the Peoples' Senate.

It is expected that the working committees will be organized at the grassroots level, promoting and propagating the political and socio-economic objectives of the Peoples' Senate. Community members will be recruited to become engaged in the Peoples' Senate working committees and decolonization programs. The development of decolonization committees will serve to create alternative programs divorced from the settler-colonial corporate government. In this way, the Peoples' Senate can grow in independence and power, working on the behalf of the poor and oppressed toward liberation and independence. For the Peoples' Senate, the decolonization programs are the actual manifestation of organized activists and workers, united in uniform determination to oppose all forms of genocide which Black, Brown, and Indigenous people suffer under the system of racial capitalism and white supremacy.

We hope that the Peoples' Senate will become a major expression of the organized opposition to white supremacy and capitalist-imperialist exploitation and the profiteering of people's labor and resources. The Peoples' Senate is cognizant that in the U.S., 540 billionaires control 2.6999 trillion dollars — equivalent to all the wealth of all Western Europe. While this hoarding of wealth is permitted and lauded in this system of capitalist-imperialism, the Peoples' Senate recognizes that this hoarding is detrimental to the majority of the U.S. population of 330,000,000, and to the entire world.

The Peoples' Senate also understands that the U.S. population by virtue of living in America and embracing its culture and values and being compelled to abide by the laws and policies of the land, either wittingly or unwittingly, have become complicit in their own oppression in believing and accepting that the U.S. settler corporate government is a democracy which operates in their best interest. The Peoples' Senate will work to dispel these illusions of living in a democracy, when in fact this system of government is a plutocracy whereby the rich rule.

The Peoples' Senate will function to forge a new narrative of what it means to be governed; to exclaim that people's interests must come before U.S. corporate profits; to wrestle control of the means of production from profiteers; and to create new means of production that are worker-operated and controlled.

...continued from "The Peoples' Senate and Its Values"

The Peoples' Senate will denounce all forms of U.S. imperialist colonization and neo-colonial governing, proclaiming the inherent human rights of colonized nations to gain their independence, nationhood, and sovereignty pursuant to international law and the dictates of inalienable human rights.

Remember: We Are Our Own Liberators!!!

Senate Organizers' Duties & Responsibilities

Senate Organizers volunteer and commit to:

- Identify, approach, explain, and recruit organizations, coalitions, formations, unions, and assemblies in given areas;
- Facilitate local and regional caucuses to build working relationships and to nominate and elect Senators to represent their locale/region/constituency in the Peoples' Senate.

Senate Organizers must go through an orientation process conducted by the Peoples' Senate Organizing Committee, which will include several workshop-style virtual meetings.

Senate Organizers will adhere to a disciplined report back schedule and protocol established by the Peoples' Senate Organizing Committee as they organize in their designated locales and regions.

Senate Organizers must be honest and real with themselves in evaluating their time, capacity, and commitment.

Senate Organizers should be prepared to travel throughout their designated locales and regions on the budget provided them in the process of their organizing.

Senate Organizers are expected to be able to explain the history, purpose, vision, mission, and values of the Peoples' Senate and advocate for its development.

Senate Organizers will help establish representative bodies of the Senate in local areas where none exist - to unite Black, Brown and Indigenous communities in the struggle against genocide in all its forms.

Senate Organizers will conduct themselves with dignity, discipline, and self-respect and always present themselves as ambassadors of the Peoples' Senate during the course of their work.

References and Resources

- Spirit of Mandela Coalition website
spiritofmandela.org
- Final Verdict by the International Jurists
tribunal2021.com/full-final-verdict
- "Peoples' Senate at a Glance"
tinyurl.com/peoples-senate-glance



Peoples' Senate Membership Agreement

Organizations: fill ALL sections. **Individuals:** fill ONLY Address, Phone, Email, Agreement.

Name of Organization: _____

Official Representative(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

AGREEMENT

_____(print name) agrees to be a member of the Peoples' Senate and to work with other member organizations and individuals in striving to uphold the Vision and Mission Statements of the Peoples' Senate and work towards its proliferation, development and establishment throughout the U.S..

_____(print name) also agrees with and supports the political position and outcome of the 2021 International Tribunal which found the U.S. guilty of five counts of genocide against Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples, specifically: 1) "Police Racism and Violence" 2) "Mass Hyper-Incarceration" 3) "Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War" 4) "Environmental Racism" and 5) "Public Health Inequities."

_____ Date: __ / __ / ____

Individual Signature

Region or Constituency _____

(for Organizations) Two Signatures Required:

_____ Date: __ / __ / ____
Official Organization Representative (1) *sign & print name*

_____ Date: __ / __ / ____
Official Organization Representative (2) *sign & print name*

(for All) Acknowledgment Required from Two Peoples' Senate Organizers:

_____ Date: __ / __ / ____
Senate Organizer *sign & print name*

_____ Date: __ / __ / ____
Senate Organizer *sign & print name*