

ROTA Statement on Black Lives Matter

Race on the Agenda stands in lockstep solidarity with the Black community and millions of others across the world who are organising and demonstrating for racial justice, following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis last month.

We are campaigning for transformative changes to the systemically racist policing, which infects both the US and the UK. We are also calling for urgent and decisive action to dismantle the wider aspects of structural racism that still blight so many Black people's lives in so many different ways.

We acknowledge and understand the anger currently felt by so many, especially those from our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, who for so long have faced racism and discrimination in every aspect of their lives. We absolutely believe every individual and all communities should feel they are cared for, respected, included, and are fairly treated.

We are calling for the UK government to respond to the powerful message 'Black Lives Matter' with real action to challenge deep-seated structural racism, which affects all the institutions and public services that BAME people should be able to rely on. The COVID 19 pandemic has also laid bare the underlying racism which has a negative impact on the lives of so many. We add our voices to those demanding an urgent race equality strategy across all Government departments to address the longstanding structural race inequalities in health, incomes, education, housing, employment, the justice system and all other institutions and aspects of service provision.

Now is not the time for yet another commission, we are calling for real action NOW.

There have already been numerous reports and commissions, which have made recommendations that are yet to be enacted. We believe any race equality strategy worthy of the name must have at its core an understanding of, and a challenge to, structural and institutional racism. It should include measurable and timely demands and concrete plans to carry them out.

We support movements such as Rhodes Must Fall in their struggle to decolonise the curriculum of schools and universities and we celebrate the gains the campaign has already achieved. History needs to be taught in ways that do not perpetuate prejudice. Empire, slavery and racism need to be openly examined as core components of British history and then challenged rather than accepted. We need monumental change, not just a change in monuments, if we are to move forward into a more equal and respectful future.

So, we call on all those in positions of influence and power across the UK to harness this moment and bring authentic leadership to the crisis of racial injustice and to be resolute in their support for and funding of BAME communities.

Race on the Agenda will work with all those who hunger for racial justice and equality to achieve real and lasting changes and challenges to racism and discrimination.