

# CHICAGO TORTURE JUSTICE MEMORIALS



May 6, 2022, will mark the 7th anniversary of the passage of reparations legislation for Chicago Police Torture survivors by Chicago's City Council. This historic legislation was passed in response to decades of activism, independent journalism, intrepid litigation, and an inspirational, multiracial, intergenerational campaign led by [CTJM](#), [Project NIA](#), [We Charge Genocide](#), and [Amnesty International](#), during the first wave of the #BlackLivesMatter movement and Chicago's municipal election season of 2014-15. The passage of this legislation resulted in:

1. A formal apology from the Mayor and City Council for the torture and abuse committed by Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge and detectives under his command;
2. The creation of a permanent public memorial;
3. The creation of a history curriculum on the Burge torture cases taught to 8th and 10th graders in Chicago Public Schools;
4. Free tuition at Chicago's City Colleges for Burge torture survivors, and their family members, including grandchildren;
5. Up to \$100,000 to the Burge torture survivors alive in 2015; and
6. The creation of the [Chicago Torture Justice Center \(CTJC\)](#).

With the passage of the reparations legislation, Chicago made history becoming the first municipality in the U.S. to provide reparations for racially motivated police violence. The organizing and passage of the legislation also created communities of care providing immeasurable support and healing to survivors. To date, CTJM with scores of others have worked to implement five of the six planks of the ordinance and is working with the City to realize the permanent public memorial.

In addition to the 7th year anniversary of the passage of the reparations ordinance, we are proud to celebrate the 5th anniversary of the [Chicago Torture Justice Center \(CTJC\)](#) enabled by the legislation. The Center, the first of its kind in the nation, provides holistic trauma-informed treatment and support to all individuals affected by state violence. As the Center describes the work they do:

We respond to community members harmed by police violence and race-based trauma with comprehensive support rooted in Politicized Healing. Politicized healing is the belief that our healing is political and our politics are healing. Politicized healing addresses the harm—felt by individuals and communities—caused by historic and evolving systems of oppression.

In addition to our therapeutic services for individuals, we identify harmful structures and systems that are rooted in fostering and replicating trauma at individual, familial and communal levels, and that reproduce inequity. We are dedicated to naming, deconstructing, and transforming these systems as an integral part of our work.

CTJC not only provides services and support for individual survivors, but it is also a welcoming home to whole communities working to heal from police violence and organizing against the violence inflicted by the carceral system.

As Robin D.G. Kelley discusses in his essay “A Day of Reckoning’ Dreams of Reparations,” the fight for reparations includes securing a variety of resources, financial and beyond. These resources are not the end-all-be-all; rather, these resources serve as the seeds that grow into a fully-bloomed movement that secures the sustainable, transformative social change we need to build the world we want to live in: a world where policing, prisons, and punishment are not the response to society’s problems. A world where Black folks, where everyone has everything they need to thrive.

While financial compensation is key to repairing economic harm that is caused by racist and institutionalized violence, it is more than just a paycheck and an apology as [N’COBRA](#) has educated us. Kelley says the fight for reparations was/is “never solely or even primarily about money.” The fight for reparations was/is “about social justice, reconciliation, reconstructing the internal life of black America, and eliminating institutional racism.” While individual financial compensation to survivors was a significant part of the 2015 reparations package, perhaps the most direct, long-lasting, and long-term element was the guarantee of a center where the movement to build this world we want to live in can continue, expand, and win.

We are proud to bear witness to the CTJC becoming, in the past five years, one of the essential, foundational, building blocks we need to continue struggles for more reparations, an end to the carceral system, and the anti-Black racism that propels it. It is spaces and opportunities like the CTJC that serve as the backbone of a movement fighting for an end to these systems of injustice and for the imaginative creation of new ways of being and existing as individuals and as whole communities.

Today, we are honored to salute all those who work and contribute to CTJC, many of whom are survivors themselves who have dedicated their lives to this work. The CTJC is truly an extraordinary place, and we celebrate its creation, existence, and growth as an unprecedented space for addressing racialized state violence. We also look forward to celebrating the construction of a public memorial that honors survivors of police torture, their families, and the movement that fought for and won reparations in Chicago.

Long live reparations until we all are free!

Joey Mogul and Jen Ash, on behalf of Chicago Torture Justice Memorials