



**Statement from Mark J. Golding  
President, People's National Party, and  
Leader of the Opposition, Jamaica  
On the Occasion of the  
Exoneration of Marcus Garvey  
January 19, 2025**

**A Triumphant Acknowledgment of a Legacy Restored**

I acknowledge with pleasure President Biden's exoneration of Jamaican National Hero and Panafricanist, the Right Excellent Marcus Mosiah Garvey who was arrested and imprisoned in 1923 when he was convicted of mail fraud and sentenced to five years in prison. Appeals followed and Mr Garvey was imprisoned from 1925-1927 as US President Calvin Coolidge commuted the sentence and had him deported.

Marcus Garvey's exoneration corrects a grave historical miscarriage of justice that resulted from an illegal, intelligence-led operation designed to disable the influential 19th century Pan Africanist movement the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), that had captured the imagination of hundreds of thousands of people of African descent.

President Biden's action acknowledges the profound impact that Garvey had in shaping the narratives of freedom, equality, and justice. Garvey's principles of unity and self-determination served to solidify and embolden the mandate of social justice movements in Africa and its diaspora; and will also encourage a new generation of Pan Africanist advocates to assume a mantle of leadership with a renewed sense of purpose. The decision is a call to action to African peoples to advance the agenda that Mr. Garvey was promoting over a century ago. It is a vindication of the principles for which Garvey stood.

Marcus Garvey, a visionary and an extraordinary Panafricanist, played a pivotal role in advocating for the empowerment and upliftment of African peoples globally. A Jamaican by birth, Garvey's influence transcended borders, inspiring countless individuals to take pride in their heritage, reclaim their identity, and strive for the liberation of their peoples. His ideas continue to resonate today, calling us to action and urging us to recognize our shared responsibility towards one another.

Marcus Garvey's philosophies were deeply ingrained in the civil rights movements across our region and beyond. His call for a universal African identity, a call for Africans to embrace their true selves and work together for the betterment of their communities, remains as vital today as it was during the early 20th century. We have witnessed the impact of his teachings in our local contexts, inspiring generations to stand up for their rights and demand justice.



While grave issues of inequity and imbalance continue to face African peoples and the Diaspora, this action provides a beacon of hope— and is an emblem of resilience and determination. Action, self-reliance, the vision of self and the future have been the only means by which the oppressed have seen and realized the light of their own freedom. Let us continue to draw inspiration from his life and work, pushing forward with strength and unity as we strive for a brighter, more just future for all. The willingness to right historical wrongs not only restores honour to Marcus Garvey but also paves the way for future dialogues on race, equality, and justice. Let us honour this legacy by working together towards a more equitable and inclusive world.

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