



12th June 2020.

Statement on Recent Events

The global reactions to the recent killing of an unarmed black man, Mr George Floyd, by the Minneapolis police in the United States on 25th May, 2020, which was, at that point, the latest in an endless line of police brutality against black bodies and manifold other forms of racist violence, cruelty, and injustice that people of African descent have endured, may signal a new reckoning with this troubling history.

The anger, revulsion and pain that all people of good will have expressed about the callous and casual termination of Mr George's life under the knee of a police man even as he cried "I can't breathe!" provides a unique opportunity for everyone who believes in the sanctity of all human lives and the equality of all races to reaffirm their commitment to these values.

We must do more. We must recommit ourselves to the struggle in various ways to end the doctrines and practices of racism and associated forms of violence and injustice. Racist doctrines and practices may be most cruelly dramatized by police brutality against black people in the United States, but they are no less insidious in many other countries around the world, including the United Kingdom.

The Oxford African Studies Centre hereby reaffirm our unflinching aversion to all forms of racism and discrimination. We eagerly stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and other movements struggling for social justice and equality and against racist and discriminatory doctrines and practices – in the present, and the elements and symbols of such doctrines and practices surviving from history – including the Rhodes Must Fall movement.

Many of our former and current students are leading voices in the Rhodes Must Fall movement. Simukai Chigudu – a former student in African Studies and now associate professor of politics in the university – [wrote in the UK Guardian newspaper of 12 June 2020](#): "when the righteous fury and indignation over the present moment begins to simmer down, the messy work of challenging racism in all its structural, institutional and interpersonal guises must continue". The African Studies Centre fully subscribes to the Rhodes Must Fall agenda of challenging institutional and interpersonal racism.

We believe that this moment in time is an invitation to every institution, including educational institutions, to commit themselves to exploring all means of strengthening the conditions of our common humanity, including providing more opportunities within these institutions for people of African descent, in particular, and minority groups, in general. As a Centre that studies African people and societies, we commit to redouble our efforts in working with the University to expand and increase its commitment to diversity and non-discrimination, including in the curriculum and recruitment.

- **The African Studies Centre, School of Global and Area Studies, University of Oxford.**