

Slaves of the Muslims: Islam's Negro Slave Trade

When African-Americans bring up the topic of “reparations,” none ever mentions the biggest slave traders in history.

THE APRIL 2025 CALL by Colombia's first Black female vice president, Francia Márquez, for “former colonial powers to atone for their past and pay slavery reparations,” made at a United Nations forum in New York,¹ has once again highlighted the staggering hypocrisy of the systemically anti-White global establishment.

The call for “reparations” from White people has been created and sustained by the anti-White media and establishment, which always focuses on the

trans-Atlantic slave trade as the “ultimate sin”—but deliberately ignores the Islamic slave trade in Africa, and the Indian Ocean slave trade, which lasted far longer and involved many millions more Africans.

The reality is that the Islamic slave trade in Africa lasted a staggering 1,300 years, compared to the trans-Atlantic's 350 years. All reliable estimates say that at least 25 million slaves were captured by the Islamics during this period, compared to the 10 to 12 million for the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

By Arthur Kemp

SLAVERY LEGITIMIZED IN KORAN, OLD TESTAMENT

Islamic law (“Sharia”) has formal rules governing slavery. Only non-Muslims can be enslaved, typically through capture in warfare (“jihad”) or as tribute from non-Muslim territories.²

Islamic law (“fiqh”) presumes liberty but allows enslavement of non-Muslims via war capture or birth, permitting purchase if the victim has been “rightfully enslaved.”³

In Islamic law, owners are also permitted to use female slaves for sexual purposes, with any resulting children considered free if the owner acknowledged paternity.⁴ The Koran also specifically permits sexual relations with female slaves (“ma ma-



lakat aymanukum”) in 15 separate passages.⁵

The only parallel to this distinction is contained in the Bible's Old Testament, where a distinction is made between Jewish and gentile slaves. Leviticus 25:39–46 states that

An 1890 photograph of an enslaved African, taken on Zanzibar, the Islamic slave-trading island headquarters for the Indian Ocean slave trade. From the original illustration: “An Arab master's punishment for some slight offense. The log weighed 32 pounds, and the boy could only move by carrying it on his head. An actual photograph taken by one of our missionaries.” (National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.)

Jews who fall into debt are to be treated as hired workers, not as permanent slaves, and must be released. Gentile slaves can, however, be held permanently and passed down as property.⁶

The Islamic slave trade in Africa began with the rapid expansion of Islam following the death of Muhammad in A.D. 632. By the mid-7th century, Arab Muslim armies, under leaders like Amr ibn al-As (c. 573–664), conquered North Africa, including Egypt (639–642), the Maghreb, and parts of the Sudan. Non-Muslim populations, particularly Berbers and Nubians, were often enslaved during these campaigns, either as prisoners of war or as tribute from subjugated communities.

BAQT TREATY FORMALLY STARTS SLAVE TRADE, A.D. 652

The Baqt Treaty, concluded in A.D. 652 between the Muslim rulers of Egypt, under Umayyad Governor Abdallah ibn Said ibn Abi Sarh, and the Christian Nubian kingdom of Makuria, was a non-aggression and trade agreement.

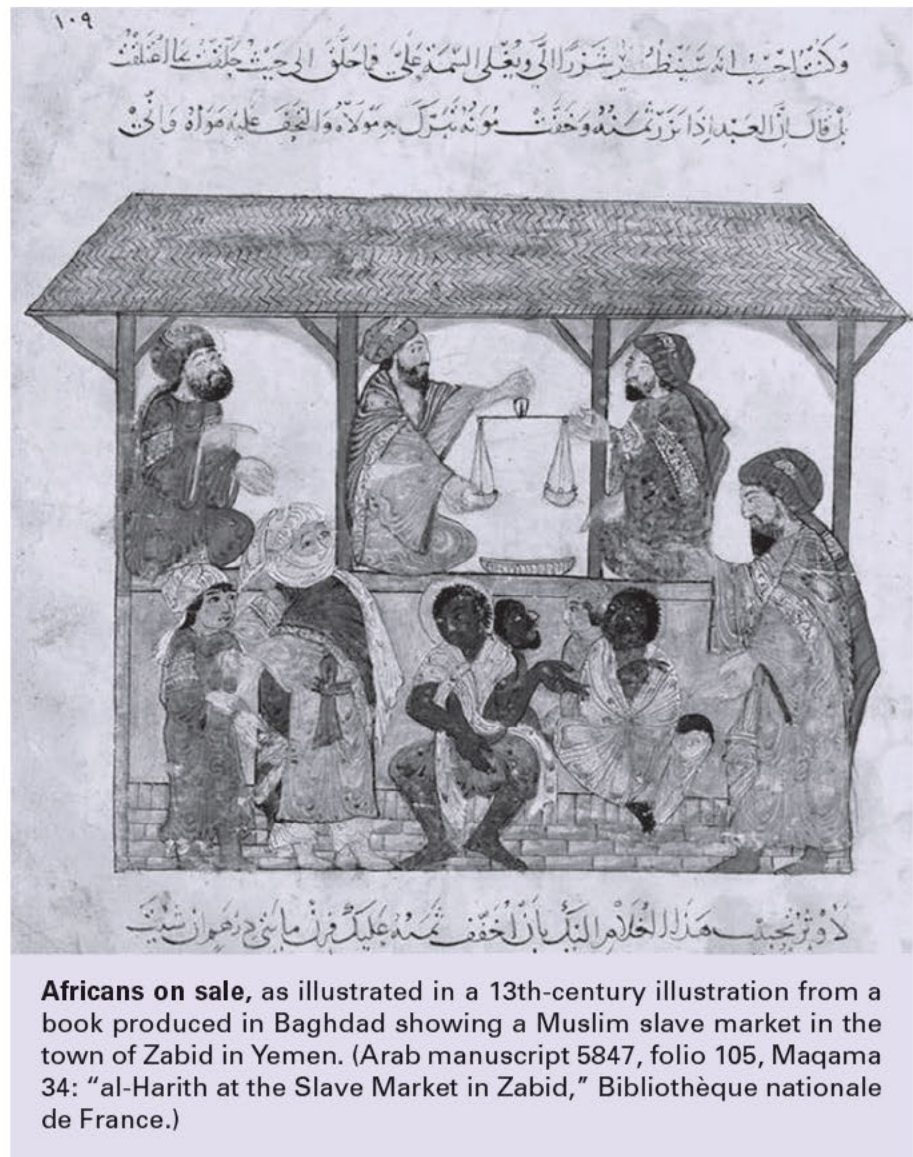
Signed following unsuccessful Muslim attempts to conquer Nubia, its key provisions included an annual tribute exchange: Makuria agreed to supply 360 (later 400) high-quality slaves to Egypt, sourced from regions south of Nubia, while Egypt provided goods such as wheat, barley, wine, horses, and linen—and an offer of peace.⁷

AFRICAN SLAVES DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT ISLAMIC WORLD

These slaves, primarily from Nubia's southern regions, were transported to Egypt and distributed to the broader Islamic world, including the Arabian Peninsula and across the Levant.

Slaves from North and North-eastern Africa were used in various roles, including domestic service, agriculture, and military service.

The demand for eunuchs—castrated male slaves—emerged early, as they were prized as harem guards



Africans on sale, as illustrated in a 13th-century illustration from a book produced in Baghdad showing a Muslim slave market in the town of Zabid in Yemen. (Arab manuscript 5847, folio 105, Maqama 34: "al-Harith at the Slave Market in Zabid," Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

and administrators.

Castration, often performed in trading hubs like Aydhab (modern Sudan), was brutal, with a survival rate estimated at only 10–30%. Those who survived fetched high prices in markets in Cairo and Baghdad.⁸

Eunuchs were particularly valued in the Ottoman Empire (1299–1922), where they served as administrators.

EXPANSION DOWN THE EAST COAST OF AFRICA

By the 9th century, Muslim traders, primarily Arabs and Swahili merchants, expanded down the East African coast, establishing trading posts along the Swahili Coast (modern-day Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique).

This region became a major hub for the Indian Ocean slave trade, driven by demand from the Middle East, Persia, India, and beyond. The trade was facilitated by dhows (traditional Arab sailing vessels) and relied on partnerships between Arab merchants and local African elites, who supplied slaves in exchange for goods such as textiles and beads.

Zanzibar, an archipelago off the coast of present-day Tanzania, emerged as the epicenter of the East African slave trade by the 18th century under Omani Arab rule.

SLAVE CAPTURE, TRANSPORT

Slaves were primarily Bantu-speaking peoples, captured from the interior of East Africa, including

regions as far as the Great Lakes and modern-day Mozambique. Capture methods included raids by Arab and Swahili traders, often in collaboration with local African leaders, and warfare among African communities, where captives were sold to coastal merchants.

Slaves were marched to the coast, often in chains, enduring grueling journeys with high mortality rates.

At Zanzibar, they were held in crowded, unsanitary conditions—sometimes on Prison Island—before being shipped across the Indian Ocean.

Key figures included the infamous Tippu Tip (Hamed bin Mohammed el Murjebi, c. 1832–1905), an Afro-Arab trader who dominated the slave trade in the East African interior, and Sultan Barghash bin Said (1837–1888), who ruled Zanzibar during its peak as a slave-trading hub.

EXPANSION INTO WEST AFRICA

During the 8th century, the practice of Arab and Berber traders transporting slaves from sub-Saharan West Africa across the Sahara to markets in the Maghreb, Egypt, and beyond began to take off.

Founded by Tuareg nomads, the city of Timbuktu (in present-day Mali) became the key hub in this trade by the 11th century (and from where it is now falsely claimed that the “first African university” was founded—in fact this was an Islamic madrasah, or school, and had nothing to do with Africans).

Timbuktu earned its status through the exchange of gold, salt, and slaves. Slaves were captured through raids, warfare, or tribute systems, often targeting non-Muslim communities in the Sahel and savanna regions.

The Almoravid dynasty (c. 1040–1147), led by figures like Abu Bakr ibn Umar (d. 1087), and the Almohad dynasty (c. 1121–1269) further integrated West Africa into Islamic trade networks, increasing slave exports.

The trans-Saharan journey was arduous, lasting months and crossing

harsh desert terrain. Slaves, shackled and malnourished, faced death from exposure, thirst, or exhaustion, with estimates suggesting up to 50% perished en route.⁹

Survivors were sold in markets like Fez, Marrakesh, or Cairo, destined for domestic service, agriculture, or military roles. The trade’s reach extended to the Middle East, Central Asia, and even Islamic Spain (Al-Andalus).

Notable figures in this region included Mansa Musa (c. 1280–1337), the Mali “emperor” whose wealth indirectly supported the trade, and Ahmad al-Mansur (1549–1603), the Moroccan sultan whose invasion of Songhai in 1591 disrupted but did not halt the trade.

EXPANSION INTO CENTRAL AFRICA

By the 16th and 17th centuries, the Islamic slave trade penetrated Central Africa, driven by demand for slaves in the Middle East and the Indian Ocean world.

Arab and Swahili traders, like Tippu Tip, established networks in the Congo Basin, capturing slaves from Bantu communities through raids and alliances with local chiefs.

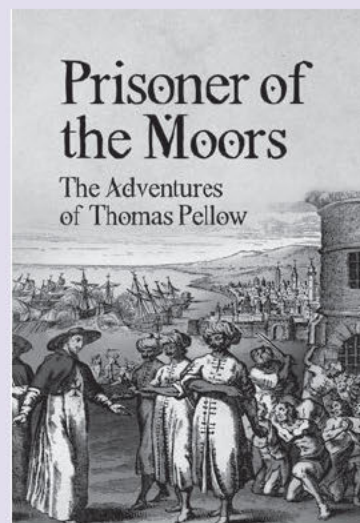
The Congo Basin’s dense forests and river systems made slave capture challenging but lucrative. Slaves were transported via the Congo River to the East African coast or across Central African routes to the Nile Valley. The trade intensified in the 19th century as Zanzibar’s demand for plantation labor grew.

ARABIC RECORDS OF THE ISLAMIC SLAVE TRADE

Arabic sources provide valuable insight into the Islamic slave trade at its height.

The Baghdad (Iraq)-born scholar, al-Masudi (d. A.D. 56), spent much of his life traveling across the Islamic world, including Persia, India, East Africa, and the Levant, before settling in Fustat (modern-day Cairo), Egypt.

In one of his most famous writings, the *Maruj al-Dhahab wa Ma’adin*



Prisoner of the Moors

The Adventures of Thomas Pellow

By Thomas Pellow. Introduction and notes by Dr. Robert Brown. First published in 1740, this astounding book details Pellow’s life as a slave in the Muslim world, starting from his capture at sea at the age of 11. Kidnapped by the Barbary pirates at the peak of their power, Pellow’s account of the 23 years spent serving the Sultan of Morocco and his successor became one of the most important eyewitness accounts of this period.

His book contains astounding details of the day-to-day terror that was White Slavery in the Muslim world. It tells of the intimate court affairs of the sultan, and the vicious nature of Barbary society.

Pellow also spares no expense explaining the major role Sephardic Jews played in the slave trade—revealing that they were ever-present as interpreters, bankers, and high-level Barbary government officials.

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SUDANESE SLAVE MARKET

The Muslim slave market at Khartoum, Sudan, as depicted in a 19th-century engraving. The Muslim slave trade in Egypt and the Sudan was only halted by the British occupation of those regions late in the 19th century. (J. Ewing Ritchie, in *The Life and Discoveries of David Livingstone*, London: A. Fullarton, 1876.)

al-Jawhar (Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems), he referred explicitly to the “Zanj” as being victims of the Islamic slave trade in the Indian Ocean region:

The Zanj are brought from their country to Zabaj [the East Indies] and other islands of the Indian Ocean, and they are sold there as slaves. Their men are strong and endure labor, and they are used for heavy work.¹⁰

The “Zanj” (from Arabic, meaning “black”) were the sub-Saharan Africans of that continent’s central and east coast, and were part of the Bantu peoples. The Arab slave-hunting grounds for these people included a vast region ranging from the Horn of Africa to northern Mozambique.

The Moroccan-born Islamic scholar Ibn Battuta (d. circa 1369) recounted his travel to the East African coast (specifically Kilwa, in present-day Tanzania) in his journal titled *Rihla (The Travels)*. There, he also noted the slave trade in the Zanj:

In the city of Kilwa, I saw many slaves who were brought from the land of the Zanj. They are sold to merchants who take them to Oman, Hormuz, and other places in the lands of Islam.¹¹

The 15th-century Egyptian historian al-Maqrizi also recorded the trans-Saharan slave trade, describing how West Africans from Takrur (in the present-day states of Senegal and Mali) brought slaves to Mecca for sale during the annual Hajj, or pilgrimage:

In the year 816 [A.D. 1416], the pilgrims from Takrur [West Africa] arrived in Mecca with 1,700 slaves, whom they had brought to sell, and they exchanged them for goods and provisions.¹²

The noted 9th-century Persian historian Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. 923), in his work *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk (History of the Prophets and Kings)*, reported on the large number of African slaves imported into Iraq, where they were

used for hard labor and farm work:

The Zanj slaves were brought to the marshlands of Iraq, where they were employed in draining the salt flats, and their numbers were so great that they rose in rebellion against their masters.¹³

THE ZANJ REBELLION (A.D. 869–883)

There were so many African slaves present in the territory controlled by the Abbasid Caliphate in southern Iraq, centered around Basra, that they were able to engage in a mass slave revolt from A.D. 869 to 883.

The rebellion was started by the Kharijite sect, a dissident Islamic group that opposed Abbasid rule and preached equality among Muslims, including slaves who had converted.

This logic appealed to the African slaves, and, under the leadership of long-standing dissident Persian Muslim Ali ibn Muhammad, also known as Sahib al-Zanj (“Leader of the

Zanj”), they rose up alongside other disaffected groups in the Abbasid Caliphate, including Arab and Persian peasants and Bedouins.

Ali ibn Muhammad rallied thousands of Zanj slaves, who abandoned their labor camps, seized weapons, and attacked local landowners and overseers. Al-Tabar, in his *History of the Prophets and Kings*, recorded: “The Zanj slaves ... rose in rebellion against their masters.”¹⁴

By the year 871, the Zanj had sacked Basra, inflicting great damage and massacring the inhabitants. Al-Masudi described the sacking of Basra in this way: “Basra was plundered, and its people were put to the sword.”¹⁵

Finally, Ali ibn Muhammad was killed in battle, and the rebellion came to an end, with al-Tabar recording: “Ali ibn Muhammad was slain, and the Zanj were scattered.”¹⁶

THE ZANZIBAR SLAVE TRADE NEXUS

The island of Zanzibar had long been a major center of the Islamic Indian Ocean slave trade but, under Sayyid Said bin Sultan, ruler of Muscat and Oman (1804–1856) and Zanzibar, it was transformed into a commercial hub through the expansion of clove plantations and the expanding slave trade.

The ruler’s daughter, Sayyida Salme, became famous for her memoirs, written after leaving Zanzibar, converting to Christianity, and becoming known as Emily Ruete. Her book, titled *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess*, was very specific on the topic of slavery:

Slavery was a recognized institution in Zanzibar, and my father had many slaves, both for his household and for the clove plantations. These slaves were mostly brought from the African mainland, and their weddings were sometimes attended by my father, who took a patriarchal interest in their welfare.¹⁷

Omani administrative records maintained at Zanzibar’s Customs

House during Said’s rule documented revenue from the slave trade:

In the year 1258 [A.D. 1842], the customs dues from the trade in slaves and ivory at Zanzibar amounted to 40,000 Maria Theresa thalers, collected from vessels arriving from Kilwa and other coastal ports.¹⁸

During the time of British demands upon Zanzibar to halt the slave trade, Said wrote to the British Consul, Atkins Hamerton, stating that the ongoing slave trade was vital for Zanzibar’s plantations, but that they would in future refrain from selling slaves to Christians:

As for the trade in slaves, we have forbidden our subjects to sell them to Christians, as per the treaty with your government, but the trade among Muslims continues as it is our custom and necessity for the plantations of Zanzibar.¹⁹

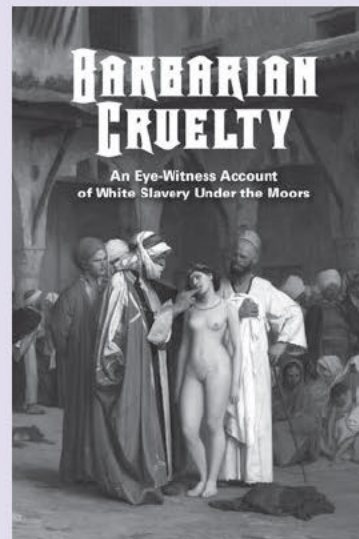
In his reports to the British government, Hamerton advised London that:

The trade in slaves at Zanzibar is very considerable, and I estimate that between 10,000 and 15,000 slaves are brought to this island annually, the greater part of whom are employed in the clove plantations or retained for domestic service.²⁰

EUROPEANS ACT AGAINST ISLAMIC SLAVERS

In 1884–1885, representatives of 14 European nations (including the United States) convened in Berlin, Germany, to regulate European trade in Africa, particularly in the Congo Basin. The discussions naturally turned to the Muslim slave trade in Central Africa, and, in terms of the General Act of the Berlin Conference (signed February 26, 1885), they committed themselves to suppress the slave trade in Africa.

The conference then established a region called the “Congo Free State” under the direction of King Leopold II of Belgium (1835–1909), with one of the express purposes of



Barbarian Cruelty

An Eyewitness Account of White Slavery Under the Moors

By Francis Brooks. An original eyewitness account of White slavery suffered under the Muslims of North Africa. Knowledge of the Muslim slave-trade in Europeans is deliberately suppressed. Europeans are continually “blamed” for African slavery, but no one ever dares “blame” the Muslim world for their slave trade in Africans and Europeans, which lasted for centuries longer than the Atlantic slave trade. It was during the 1600s that Barbary corsairs were at their most active and terrible. With the full support of the Moorish rulers of North Africa, these Muslim slavers raided Europe, the Atlantic European coast, Britain and Ireland at will. Very few ever managed to escape, and most ended their days dying of starvation, disease or maltreatment. A tiny number converted to Islam, and an even smaller number escaped. This remarkable book, first published in 1693, contains one of the few genuine eyewitness accounts written by a White slave who managed to escape. Softcover, 52 pages, #650, \$9 minus 10% for TBR subscribers plus \$5 S&H inside the U.S. from TBR, P.O. Box 550, White Plains, MD 20695. Call 1-877-773-9077 toll free to charge, Mon.–Thu. 8–4 ET.

stamping out Islamic slavery.

The resultant Congo-Arab War (1892–1894) saw Belgium’s “Force Publique” militia—made up of Belgian and other European volunteers, allied with local Africans—wage a war against Tippu Tip’s forces. The bitter conflict, which ended with the defeat of Arab-Swahili traders, significantly weakened the Islamic slave trade in the region.²¹

THE END OF THE ISLAMIC SLAVE TRADE

European powers, and Britain, in particular, then took on a leading role in suppressing the Islamic slave trade elsewhere in Africa. After approaching the Muslim ruling elite in Egypt, the Khedivate, in 1877, a treaty (“The Anglo-Egyptian Slave Trade Convention”) was signed in 1877.

In terms of this treaty, the Khedivate agreed to help suppress the slave trade in Egyptian territories, including in Sudan and along the Red Sea coast. The convention obligated Egypt to prohibit the import, export, and transit of slaves, particularly African slaves, and to implement measures such as patrols and inspections to enforce the ban.

Its effectiveness was limited by weak enforcement, corruption, and resistance from local traders, particularly in Sudan, where the slave trade persisted until stronger interventions in the late 19th century.

Ultimately, the refusal to enforce this convention led directly to the first British military interventions in the region, which culminated in the British occupation of Egypt.

ZANZIBAR SLAVE TRADE CLOSED DOWN, 1909

Between 1822 and 1909, a series of Zanzibar anti-slavery treaties were signed, primarily between the British Empire and the Sultanate of Zanzibar, to suppress the thriving East African slave trade centered on the island. The first significant treaty, the Morresby Treaty of 1822, prohibited Zanzibar’s rulers from selling slaves to “Christian powers” and restricted

slave exports beyond the sultan’s dominions, with British naval patrols authorized to enforce it.

The Hamerton Treaty of 1845 tightened restrictions, limiting the slave trade to within Zanzibar’s territories and requiring permits, while the 1873 Treaty, signed under Sultan Barghash, banned the export of slaves entirely, closed Zanzibar’s infamous slave market, and allowed British searches of dhows suspected of trafficking.

Subsequent agreements, culminating in an 1890 treaty and reinforced by decrees up to 1909, progressively abolished slavery itself, with the 1909 decree legally ending slavery in Zanzibar’s coastal regions.



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Although these treaties significantly reduced the East African slave trade, clandestine activities persisted, and full abolition eventually led to the British occupation of Zanzibar to finally stamp out the practice.

Even though the Ottoman Empire had, in theory, outlawed slavery earlier in an attempt to appease European powers, the practice of slavery within that empire only finally ended in 1922, when the last sultan was overthrown in an internal coup led by blue-eyed “European Turk” Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938).

Slavery was only finally officially outlawed in Bahrain in 1937, Kuwait in 1949, Qatar in 1952, Saudi Arabia/ Yemen in 1962, Oman in 1970, and Mauritania in 1981.

The Islamic slave trade profoundly shaped Africa’s demographic,

social, and economic landscapes. It depopulated entire regions, particularly in East and Central Africa, and, economically, entire regions became dependent on slave-based plantation systems, hindering diversification after the abolition of slavery.

Socially, the trade fostered ethnic tensions, as some African tribes collaborated with traders, and left a legacy of racialized hierarchies, with “Black Arabs” facing discrimination in the Middle East from their lighter-skinned compatriots.

DNA REVEALS EXTENT OF INDIAN OCEAN SLAVE TRADE

A 2017 genetic study was conducted on the Makranis, a community mainly found in the Pakistani state of Gujarat. Long suspected of being of Negro descent—based on their African physiognomy alone—the DNA study conclusively proved that they are indeed the descendants of Africans imported into the Indian subcontinent about 300 years ago.

The study found that the Makranis are the result of admixture between local Baluch tribes and Bantu-speaking populations from eastern or south-eastern Africa, likely from the Swahili coast. The Makranis exhibit 25.5% sub-Saharan African ancestry.²²

The study pointed out that the Makranis are not the only genetic evidence of the Indian Ocean slave trade. The Siddis of India, one of the lowest castes in that country, display in excess of 60% sub-Saharan ancestry, indicating a far higher slave input into that region.

SLAVERY PERSISTS IN ISLAMIC WORLD AND AFRICA

According to the 2023 “Global Slavery Index,” an international report sponsored by the International Labor Organization, which seeks to monitor and report on present-day slavery, at least 5.2 million Africans are still used as slaves, and a shocking 10.1 million people are used as slaves in the “Arab States.”²³ [See our article about slavery in the 21st century, starting on page 124.—Ed.] ❖

ENDNOTES:

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5. See, for example: "Successful indeed are the believers: those who humble themselves in prayer; those who avoid idle talk; those who pay alms-tax; those who guard their chastity except with their wives or those bondwomen in their possession, for then they are free from blame." *Surah Al-Mu'minun*, 23:1–6.

6. "If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to you, do not make them work as slaves. They are to be treated as hired workers or temporary residents among you; they are to work for you until the Year of Jubilee. ... Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves. ... You can bequeath them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly." *Leviticus* 25:39–46.

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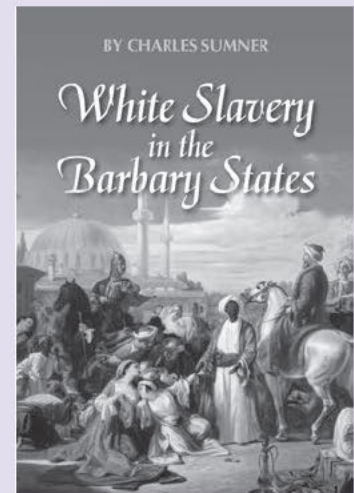
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White Slavery in the Barbary States

By Charles Sumner. This astonishing book provides a fascinating insight into a period of history now largely censored by political correctness—the time when at least 1 million Europeans were seized and sold into slavery by the notorious non-White slavers of North Africa. Sumner provides a full background to the Islamic slave trade in White people and explains how the Muslim pirates even seized groups of Pilgrims on their way to North America! The corsairs became the scourge of Christendom, while their dreaded system of slavery assumed a front of new terrors. Their ravages were not confined to the Mediterranean. They penetrated the ocean, and pressed even to the Straits of Dover and St. George's Channel. From the chalky cliffs of England, and even from the distant western coasts of Ireland, unsuspecting inhabitants were swept into captivity. Appalled, French King Louis XIV demanded action, which resulted in Algiers being twice bombarded by the French in 1684. The author also points out the evils of slavery worldwide, and of how Charles V of Spain fought Barbary slavers while granting European traders the right to export slaves to the Spanish colonies in the New World. Softcover, 75 pages, #1003, \$10 minus 10% for TBR subscribers plus \$5 S&H inside the U.S. from TBR, P.O. Box 550, White Plains, MD 20695. Call 1-877-773-9077 toll free to charge, Mon.–Thu. 8–4 ET.