

SAfA Statement on Anti-Racism

SAfA (Society of Africanist Archaeologists) is an international society whose mission is to promote the discovery and conservation of archaeological and cultural heritage in Africa. Throughout its history, SAfA has traditionally confined its activism to matters that relate to the protection of cultural and archaeological heritage. Even so, recent unprecedented events in the United States call for reflection on the broader context in which SAfA members operate, and the importance of Africanist archaeology in global struggles for justice and human rights.

Our diverse membership is all too familiar with the brutal history of racism and its impact on African peoples and scholarship. Some of us have personally experienced racism directly and indirectly in its diverse and pernicious forms; some are descendants of nations that are confronting painful chapters in their colonial history. Today, we are all appalled and sickened by violence that is rooted in racism and denial of common humanity. While SAfA mourns these tragic events of the distant and recent past and their enduring effects on people today, we are determined that our membership, through research and teaching on African archaeology and cultural achievements, will continue to provide counterweights to the racist narratives that have fed this violence, and in so doing, amplify African voices.

We stand with people of African descent calling for systemic reform in criminal justice, in education, and in other spheres essential to establishing a world where equal rights and opportunities exist for all. We encourage our membership to redouble individual efforts professionally and personally, globally and in the communities where we live and work, via donation, education or other forms of activism – to build a future with greater justice and mutual understanding.