



## PRESS RELEASE

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**Attorney General Frosh, Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission Announce Grant to Research Unsolved Lynchings in Maryland**  
*Commission Will Develop Recommendations for Restorative Justice and Racial Healing*

**BALTIMORE, MD (October 28, 2020)** – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh, together with the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission (MLTRC), announced the commission has received a \$300,000 Department of Justice grant to research and address the legacy of unsolved lynchings that occurred in the State of Maryland. The grant will be used to support the Commission’s project, *Justice in the Aftermath: Documenting the Truth of Racial Terror Lynching in Maryland to Support Restorative Justice Among Affected Communities*.

In 2019, the Maryland General Assembly unanimously adopted HB307, creating the MLTRC. The charge of the Commission is to hold public hearings where a lynching of an African American by a white mob has been documented; receive recommendations from the public; and make recommendations for addressing the legacy of lynching that are rooted in the spirit of restorative justice. The Commission may also research cases of racially motivated lynchings that are not documented but are brought to its attention, and the involvement of government entities and news media in racially motivated lynchings.

The Office of Attorney General applied for the grant through DOJ’s Emmett Till Cold Case Investigations Program. In 2016, then-President Barack Obama signed the Emmett Till Civil Rights Crimes Reauthorization Act, extending the responsibilities of DOJ and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to prosecute civil rights violations that occurred before 1980. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, 43 racially motivated lynchings were committed in Maryland. In each of these cases, no person has ever been tried, convicted, or otherwise brought to justice for their participation in these crimes. The Office of Attorney General will work in partnership with MLTRC and its [member organizations](#) to fund the investigation of these unsolved racially-motivated lynchings.

“The grant will allow the Commission to acknowledge and address the brutality of lynchings that occurred in our own backyards,” said Attorney General Frosh. “Lynchings were witnessed, tolerated and, too often, encouraged by leaders in our state. It is our obligation to do the difficult work to expose these harsh truths and address the harms to families, communities, and our state.”

“I am excited to see funding for this important work,” said Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnyk, sponsor of HB307. “Our legacy of slavery affects us all to this day. Dealing with it is long overdue.”

“It really speaks to this moment of revelation, both culturally and historically, that our efforts have been recognized and granted this significant support,” said MLTRC Chair David Fakunle. “We always intended to complete our charges to the best of our abilities, and now we no longer have the biggest hurdle towards that goal. That said, watch us leave a legacy of justice worth remembering and building upon.”

“This grant is not only historic, but it is also transformational and speaks to the current moment that we find ourselves in as a nation, a time when the historical trauma that has plagued Black people in the United States for over 400 years has visually been exposed to the nation and the world in the midst of a global pandemic,” said MLTRC Vice-Chair Charles L. Chavis. “The Commission will pursue and honor the victims of these human and civil rights murders, because we believe that the descendants and relatives are owed this truth.”

In making today’s announcement, Attorney General Frosh thanked the John Mitchell, Jr. Program for History, Justice, and Race (JMJP) at George Mason University’s Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution for its support in preparing the grant application.