

# PRESS RELEASE

Rastafari Millennium Council

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February 14, 2014

## **Pinnacle Reparations, Rastafari Intellectual Property & Ganja Legalization**

The Rastafari Millennium Council (RMC) as a registered All Mansion umbrella organization since 2007 has led representation and negotiations by the Rastafari Community on Pinnacle, as a Living Heritage, since 1996. This leadership role is related to the RMC's incorporation of and registration with the International protocols and conventions from WIPO and UNESCO on Indigenous Groups and Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) that have become the Rastafari Community's primary platforms in national and international negotiations. The Government of Jamaica is signatory to these protocols and conventions. The negotiation facts are:

1. Since 1997 the Rastafari community has been lobbying the GOJ to protect and restore Pinnacle. Since 2007 the RMC has facilitated discussions within the Rastafari community related to the protection and reclamation of Pinnacle as a Rastafari Heritage Site and prepared a Pinnacle Proposal which was presented in 2008 to several government agencies, including the Tourism Product Development Company (TPDCo.), the JNHT, the Ministry of Culture and the Office of the Prime Minister. Apart from TPDCo, none of the other GOJ agencies responded.
2. JNHT subsequently moved to declare three lots at Pinnacle as a national monument without any further reference to the prior discussions with the Rastafari community and the Millennium Council. The RMC objected on the basis that the Rastafari community was not adequately consulted and that the three lots were insufficient and incomplete to properly recognise and protect the Rastafari heritage at Pinnacle.
3. The information that formed the basis of the decision by JNHT as to which areas of the site to protect was inadequate for a proper assessment of the cultural heritage value of the site to be done because the process was rushed without adequate research and consultation. The three lots of land were inadequate to protect the cultural heritage of the site.
4. As a result of the objection, the RMC, the LPH Foundation and the JNHT visited the site in 2011 and identified several additional monuments of importance to be protected and agreed on 6 lots to be declared as national monuments - Lots 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, and 294 - and for more identification to be done professionally. However JNHT did not proceed to declare those lots as agreed. Subsequently, general elections took place and when the new government was formed and a new JNHT Board named, the JNHT decided to declare only one Lot, Lot 199, in 2013.

The Pinnacle negotiations is centered around how Rastafari Heritage is to be secured through the acquisition of lots related to significant heritage monument spaces surrounded by a private housing development including a proposed hotel and undeveloped acreage – now identified as 120 acres. Rastafari Heritage that must be owned, governed, and managed by the Rastafari Community while facilitated by the Government of Jamaica.

The heightened media coverage from the judgement of a five (5) year trial around the Land/Title ownership, ancillary to the framework of these negotiations, was found in the favor of the developer, Richard Lake, based on lack of supporting evidence that was suppressed and destroyed in the ensuing years. The issuing of an eviction notice, primarily for activists at the lots surrounding and including the Great House, has hit the nation and international audience like wildfire summoning the ghosts of past repression.

Rastafari Community repression and culture pivots on three facts:

- The claim for sovereignty under the Monarchy of Ethiopia and the deification of H.I.M. Haile Selassie 1<sup>st</sup>, JAH RASTAFARI!
- Repatriation – continuing Marcus Garvey’s ‘Back To Africa’ movement as a Right of Emancipation.
- The sacramental use and trade of Ganja.

Rastafari Heritage and Culture is misappropriated and misrepresented nationally and globally based on the immense cultural and economic value that it has generated and its interface with capitalist traders. Protection and preservation is needed not only for Pinnacle but for all Rastafari Communal Spaces throughout the Island that are subject to similar history of GOJ destruction. The focus on Heritage Tourism by the Government of Jamaica and Private Sector interests, and the Rastafari Culture’s major incorporation and stake-holding in Reggae Music demands keen and aggressive Intellectual Property and Heritage protections on behalf of the Community. This in keeping with the globally merchandised Ethiopic Monarchial symbols of the Red, Gold, and Green; Lion of Judah; Star of David; etc., and the Iyoric language and symbols such as Rasta, Irie, Ital, I n I, etc. by international lifestyle companies such as Hilco and Adidas.

The current land/culture proposal is a franchised approach incorporating the global Rastafari Villages and themed spaces developing all over the world taking their cues, heritage, and Intellectual Property (IP) development from our Community in Jamaica. The RMC is making approaches to have Pinnacle twinned with Ejersa Goro, the birthplace of H.I.M. Haile Selassie 1<sup>st</sup>, JAH Rastafari in Ethiopia.

The RMC has created IP contracts and is in MOU negotiations with the Government of Jamaica and her agencies over Rastafari Heritage such as the Rastafari Exhibit at IOJ, the inventorying process for Intangible Cultural Heritage for Reggae by UNESCO and Traditional Knowledge and Expressions by JIPO. .

The RMC’s platform is Community Reparations and is building out the institutional frameworks and self-governance structures. A Rastafari Trust Fund, a Rastafari Intellectual Property Authority and a Rasta Ganja commercial entity have been formed in support of the Rastafari Community’s objectives towards Pan-Africanism and Africa Resettlement in accordance with the United Nations Reparations Declaration of 2001 and the Africa Union 6<sup>th</sup> Region Initiatives. The Legalization of Ganja is shaping up as the next major issue where Pinnacle was the first industrial farming and exporter of Ganja in Jamaica and where Rastafari Intellectual Property including Sacramental Rights, historically suppressed, will be incorporated in its global merchandising and branding out of Jamaica.

A government Team headed by Ambassador Burchell Whiteman and officiated by the Office of the Prime Minister is actively engaged with these negotiations that have now come under the national scrutiny and media attention. The greatest need for the Rastafari Community is airtight legal representation to affect National Laws and Policies that have historically repressed the Community.

**RASTAFARI: Unconquerable – Inaugural Exhibit at The National Museum Of Jamaica**