

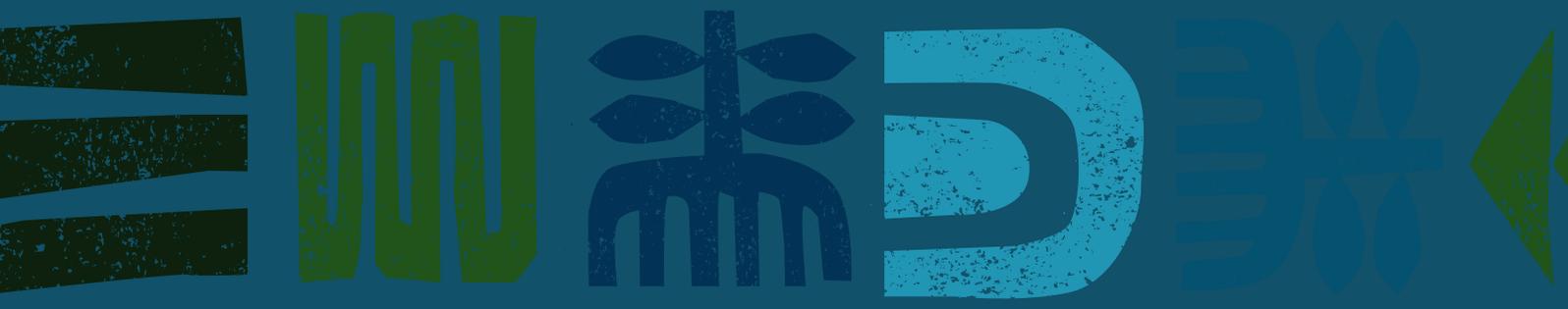


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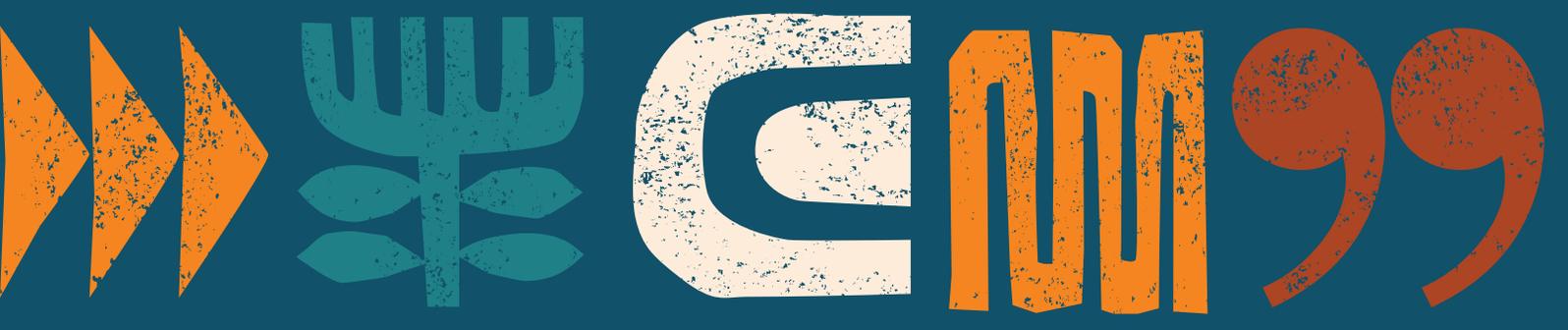
“
Frequently
discussed
queries”

The Ark of Return





*What is the
resource
about?*



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This resource:

- commemorates the 10th anniversary of The Permanent Memorial to Honour the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade at the United Nations, which is known as the Ark of Return.
- increases awareness about the United Nations Outreach Programme on the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Slavery.



*Why a Permanent Memorial
to honour the victims of
slavery and the transatlantic
slave trade?*



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In 2007, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the African Union (AU) proposed to the United Nations General Assembly that a Permanent Memorial be installed on the grounds of UN Headquarters to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.





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What was the Permanent Memorial design supposed to achieve?

A competition was launched by a Permanent Memorial Committee in 2013 to select a design for the Memorial that could achieve the following:

convey the experience and significance of the transatlantic slave trade

combine the traditional idea of how we memorialize, with something that inspires hope for the future

provoke questions like **“is this really what happened?”** and **“how do we prevent this from happening again?”**

offer an experience that is both educational and spiritual



Who designed the Permanent Memorial?

Rodney Leon, an American architect of Haitian descent.

His design, entitled Ark of Return, was selected by the unanimous decision of a panel of five international judges. They considered proposals from **310** contestants, from **83** countries and **5** continents.

The monument constructed from this design was unveiled on the grounds of United Nations Headquarters on March 25, 2015.



Rodney Leon with a model of the Ark of Return.



Why was the monument named Ark of Return?

Rodney Leon was inspired by the powerful imagery and tragic symbolism of the Door of No Return at the House of Slaves on Gorée Island, Senegal; the point from which millions of Africans were sold into slavery and transported to colonies around the world.

The Memorial's title was chosen to deliberately contrast with the Door of No Return. By walking through the monument and intimately experiencing its storytelling elements, visitors have a *"spiritual, psychological and emotional opportunity to return and heal."*



Views of slave castle and Door of No Return at Gorée Island, Senegal.

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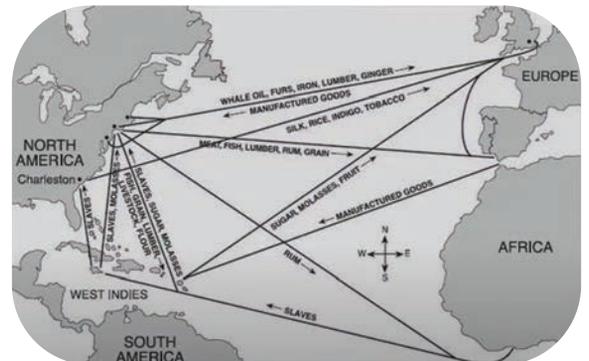
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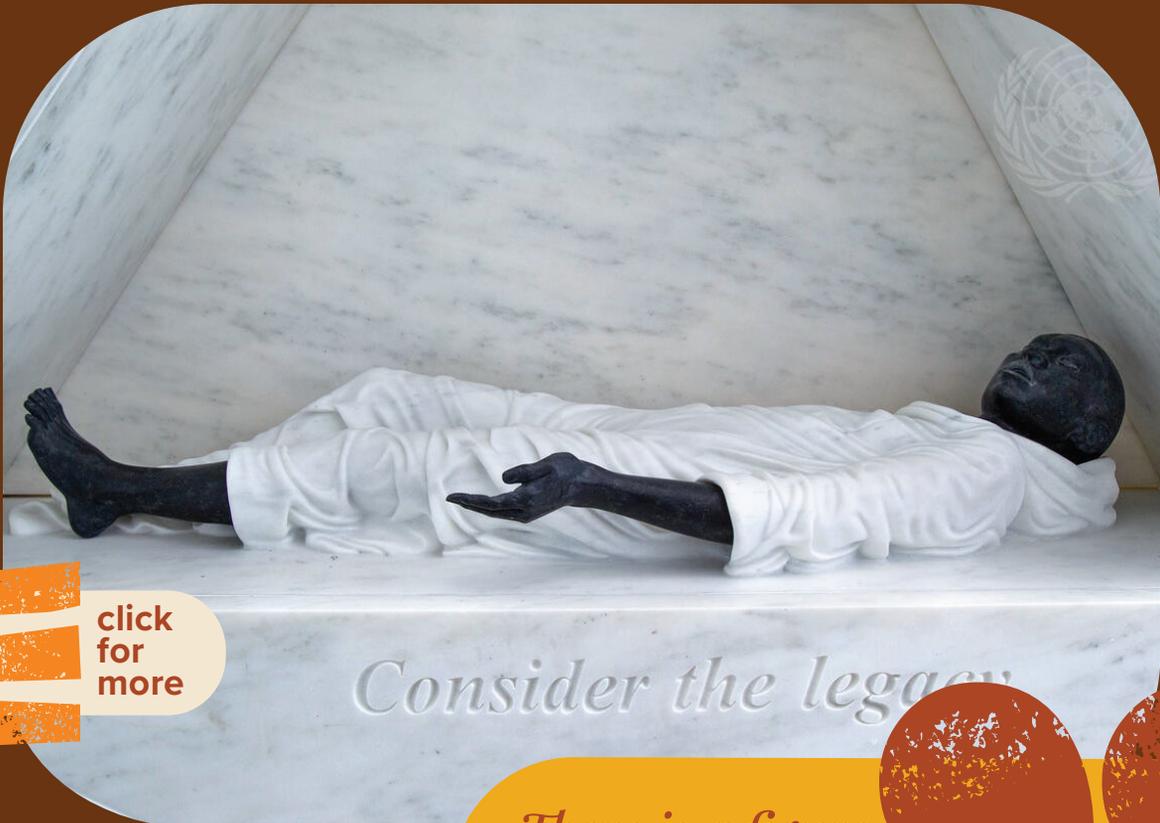
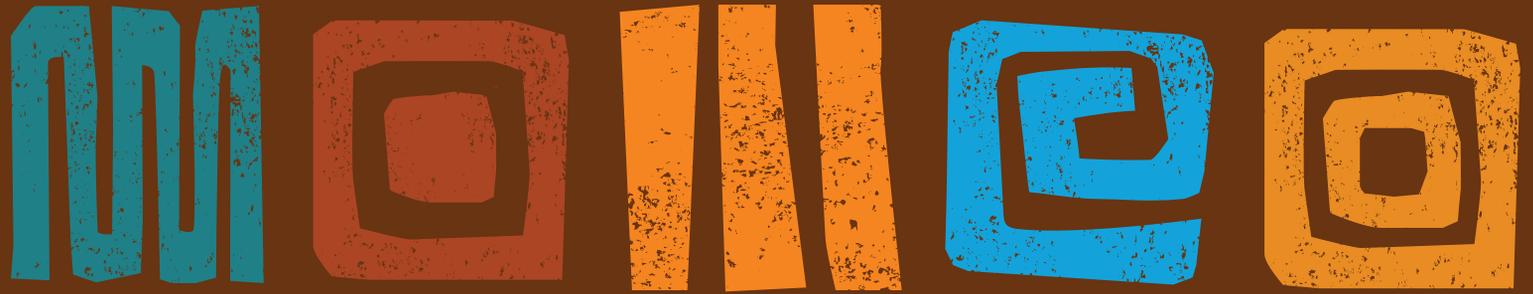
Why is the Memorial triangular?



The triangular designs and patterns of the Memorial are inspired by triangular slave trade routes between the Americas, Africa and Europe.

This design is also reminiscent of a vessel or ship.





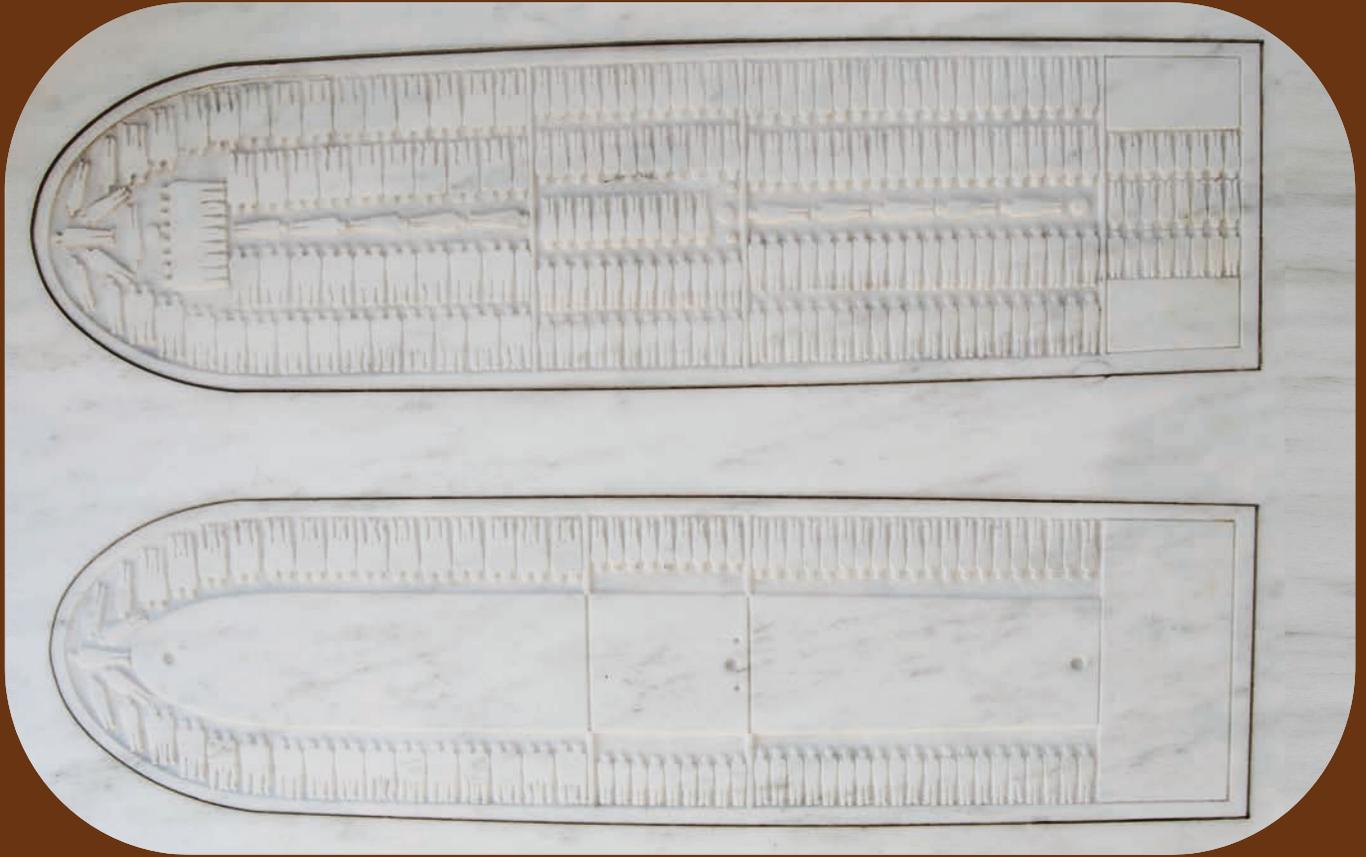
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There is a figure in the Memorial? Who is this?



Trinity Figure and its hand of welcome.

The Trinity Figure represents the spirit of those who died during the transatlantic slave trade, specifically during the Middle Passage. This full-scale human replica, sculpted using black Zimbabwean granite, has a hand 'reaching out' to welcome visitors into the chamber of the Memorial. The Trinity Figure's robe was carved out of a single block of white marble.

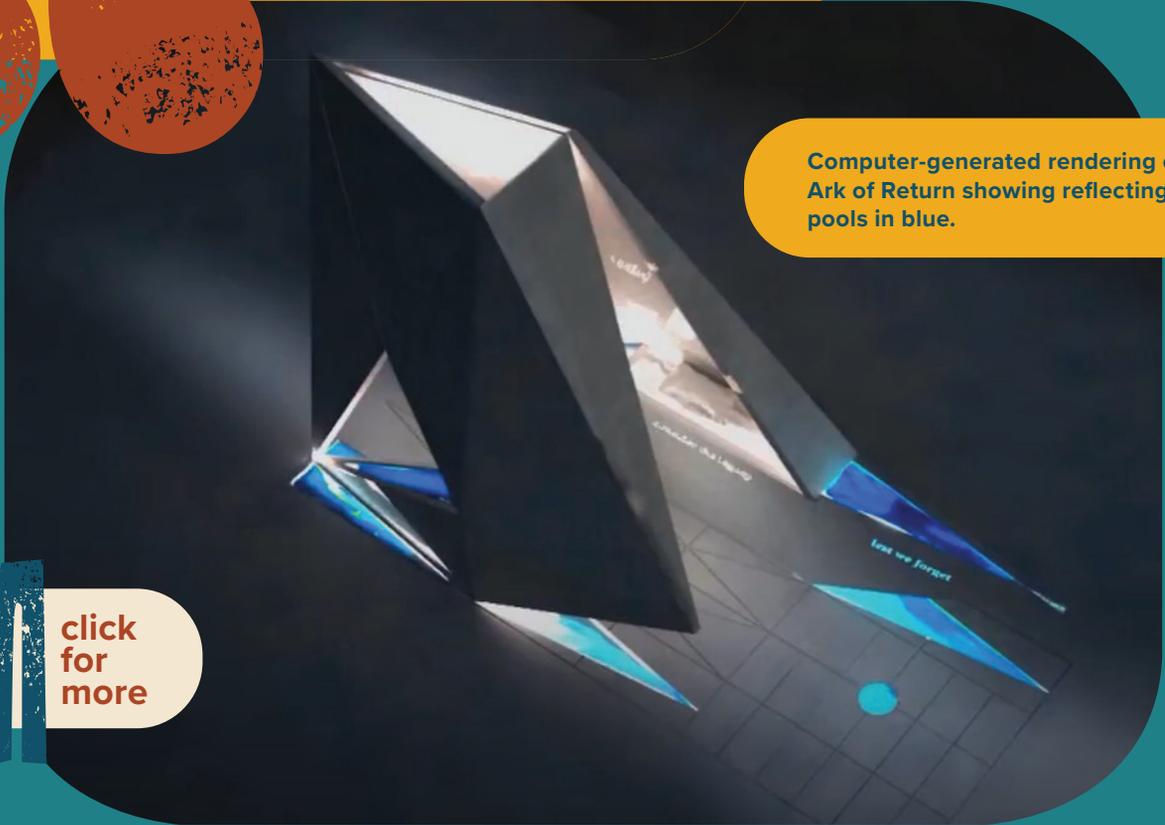


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Accompanying the Trinity Figure in the chamber, is an engraving of a plan of the hull of a slave ship which shows how slaves were held below the deck in tight and confined spaces while they were being transported across the Atlantic Ocean during the Middle Passage – a powerful reminder of that horrific experience.



*What is the significance
of the water in and
around the Memorial?*



Computer-generated rendering of
Ark of Return showing reflecting
pools in blue.



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The incorporation of water in the Memorial's design prompts visitors to pause and reflect on their power to cause reaction and change.

The act of walking through the Memorial initiates a reaction that causes a tear to flow from the eye of the Trinity Figure. This tear triggers a triangular waterfall that fills two small, triangular reflecting pools in the monument.



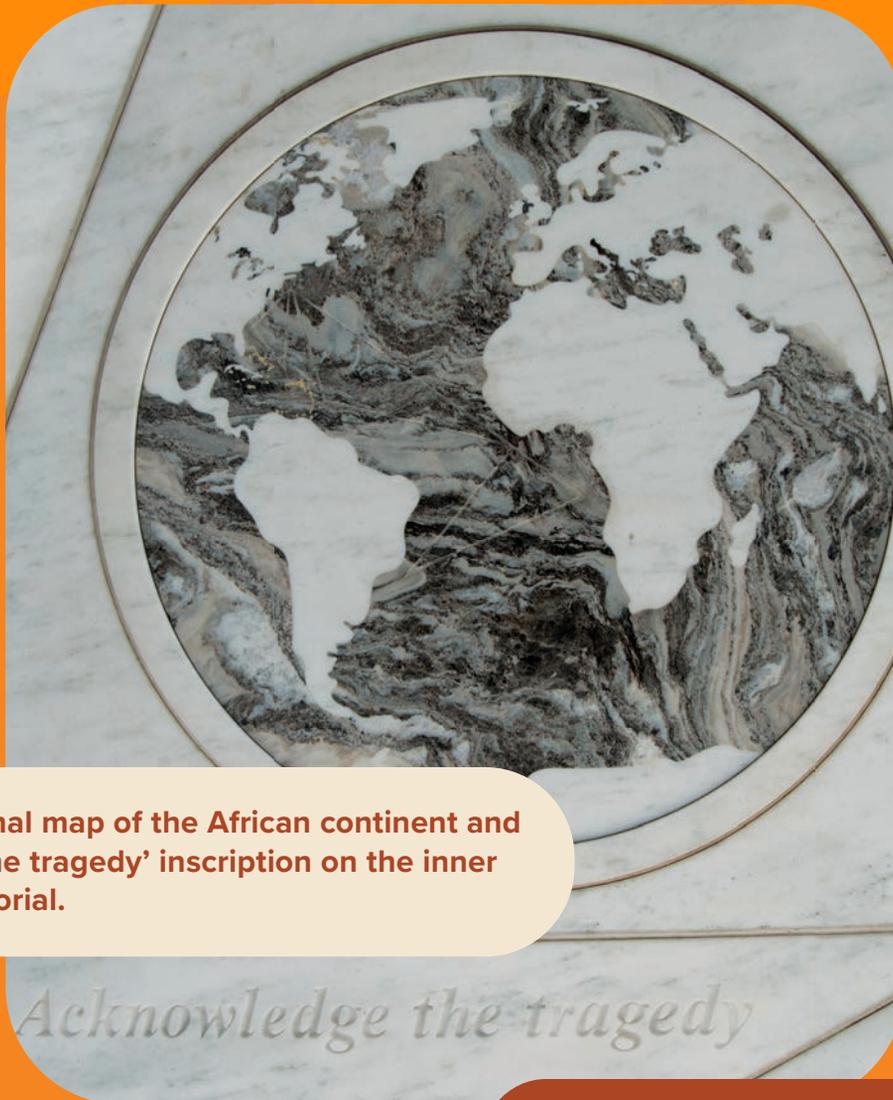


There are 3 phrases that appear on different parts of the Memorial – what do they mean?



The three phrases on the Memorial:
Acknowledge the tragedy,
Consider the legacy and
Lest we forget articulate calls to action from the Memorial's designer to the global community.



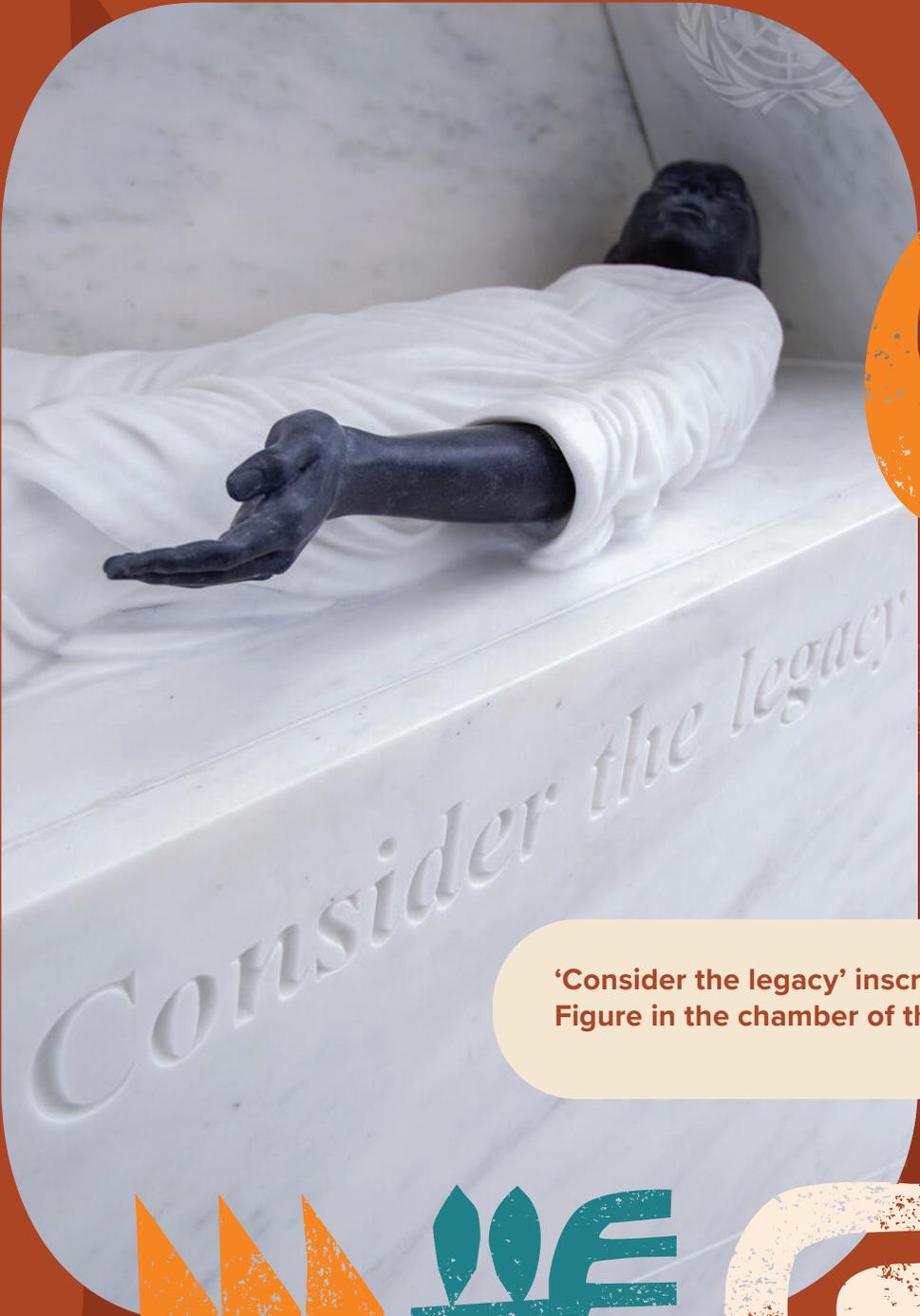


Three-dimensional map of the African continent and 'Acknowledge the tragedy' inscription on the inner wall of the Memorial.

**Acknowledge
the tragedy**



The Ark of Return is a permanent and public acknowledgment of the legacy of past and continued struggles for freedom. This phrase appears on an inner wall of the Memorial, under a three-dimensional map of the African continent that illustrates the global scale and complexity of the triangular slave trade.



Consider the legacy

'Consider the legacy' inscription under the Trinity Figure in the chamber of the Memorial.



The Memorial represents a beacon of hope for those still experiencing slavery and oppression. This phrase is inscribed under the Trinity Figure in the chamber of the monument, encouraging visitors to reflect on the experiences of victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.



**'Lest we forget'
inscription on the
Memorial.**

Lest we
forget



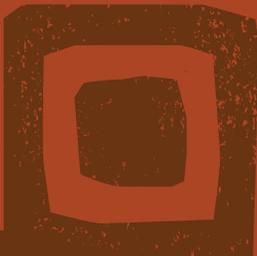
Located on the grounds of the United Nations Visitors Plaza, the Memorial is an enduring reminder to world leaders of their role and responsibility to prevent similar tragedies and to educate future generations so that there is no repetition of past mistakes.



How is the United Nations ensuring that there is ongoing education about the legacy and impact of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade?



The UN Department of Global Communications established the United Nations Outreach Programme on the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Slavery to raise awareness of this history and legacy, including its impact on the modern world.



click to visit the website

