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KHALIF J. RAINEY
ALDERMAN, 7TH DISTRICT

Council approves Libya slave trade condemnation measure

**Statement of Alderman Khalif J. Rainey
December 19, 2017**

Today my colleagues and I unanimously approved Common Council file #171285 -- Resolution expressing the City of Milwaukee's condemnation of the slave trade in Libya and urging the United States government to take the steps necessary to eradicate this practice.

I sponsored this legislation and yes – you are reading those words correctly: “Slave trade.”

It is 2017 but the truth of what is happening on the ground in Libya is horrifying and real. As recently as last month CNN published cellphone and hidden-camera footage from slave auctions conducted in Libya showing West African migrants being sold as merchandise by smugglers operating in illicit trafficking networks. Other networks have reported that hundreds of African refugees are being bought and sold in slave markets across Libya every week, with many of them held for ransom or forced into sexual exploitation to pay their captors and smugglers. Many of these migrants are being murdered by their smugglers in the open desert or dying from thirst or car accidents in the Libyan desert.

Sadly, the refugees and migrants are smuggled into Libya from West African nations by a network of criminal gangs on the promise of reaching European shores, and many of the refugees and migrants are forced to live in either open courtyards or ramshackle rooms without proper sanitation.

The resolution approved today states that the City of Milwaukee agrees with U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's statement that “slavery has no place in our world and these actions are among the most egregious abuses of human rights and may amount to crimes against humanity.” It also directs the city's Department of Administration - Intergovernmental Relations Division (IRD) to include the substance of the resolution in the City of Milwaukee's Federal Legislative Package for the 115th United States Congress, and directs IRD to actively support all efforts to end the Libyan slave trade within the purview of its capacity and urge the United States government to take the steps necessary to eradicate the practice.

I want to thank Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs, Alderman Ashanti Hamilton, Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II, Alderman Mark A. Borkowski, Alderman Terry L. Witkowski, Alderman José G. Pérez, Alderwoman Chantia Lewis, Alderman Nik Kovac, Alderman Robert Bauman and Alderman Cavalier Johnson for co-sponsoring this important file.

By our action on this matter today, we are telling the world that these horrific atrocities must end as quickly as possible.

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