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# National monument honoring freed enslaved Black people slated for 2024



Russell Contreras, author of [Axios Latino](#)



A sculpture of enslaved Black people sits at the site of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice on Montgomery, Alabama on Aug. 5, 2023. Photo: Russell Contreras/Axios

Alabama will see a new monument honoring 4 million enslaved Black people [who were emancipated](#) at the end of the Civil War.

**Why it matters:** The "National Monument to Freedom" expected to be open next year, would mark the closest the U.S. has come to a

national monument to the victims of enslavement.



**Details:** The 43-foot tall and more than 150-foot long monument will sit near the Alabama River in Montgomery, the EJI said.

- The monument will celebrate "the courageous survivors of this horrific era" by recognizing the families enslaved people created and millions of their descendants, EJI said.
- It also will feature writings from activists Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass and James Weldon Johnson.
- Visitors can honor formerly enslaved people by placing flowers in a stream next to the monument.

**The monument will be** part of the planned Freedom Monument Sculpture Park — set to open in early 2024 — which is a 17-acre site of large-scale sculptures that will tell the story of enslaved Black Americans.

**Zoom in:** Freedom Monument Sculpture Park and National Monument to Freedom will be part of EJI's [Legacy Sites](#), which currently include [The Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration](#) and [National Memorial for Peace and Justice](#) in Montgomery.

- The Legacy Museum — located on a site where enslaved people once were sold — features holograms, interactive videos and artifacts connected to the history of enslavement and mass incarceration.
- The nearby National Memorial for Peace and Justice memorializes the thousands of Black people killed in lynchings.

## What they're saying: "We don't see what we're doing as being about

**AXIOS**

- "I think about it as education. I think about it as engaging people. We see coming to our sites as a pilgrimage. And it's a journey that I believe every American should take to reckon with."
- He said EJI will invite everyone to visit Freedom Monument Sculpture Park to confront our past and inspire a more hopeful future shaped by "truth and justice."



The Alabama River, photographed from the Edmund Pettus Bridge, site of the conflict of 'Bloody Sunday' on March 7, 1965, when armed police officers attacked Civil Rights Movement demonstrators. The river in Montgomery will be the site of the "National Monument to Freedom." Photo: Raymond Boyd/Getty Images

**Context:** The site at the Alabama River is the place where tens of thousands of enslaved Black people were trafficked by boat and rail.

- The Alabama River also passes under the [Edmund Pettus Bridge](#)

## AXIOS

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**Between the lines:** New museums dedicated to Black history have opened in recent years in [Washington](#), DC, and [South Carolina](#).

- Those museums cover the story of enslavement but also civil rights and art.
- Other countries have opened museums or erected memorials to enslavement. [International Slavery Museum](#) operates out of Liverpool, England, and [Lagos, Portugal](#), has a small museum confronting the international slave trade as the spot where it began.



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