

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia Office of the Chief Clerk Room 402, City Hall Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 250447)

RESOLUTION

Declaring May 13th, 2025, the 40th Anniversary of the MOVE Bombing, as a day of reflection and remembrance in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, On May 13th, 1985, the City of Philadelphia, as part of an effort to forcefully evict MOVE, a Black liberation group, from their home at 6221 Osage Avenue, fired over 10,000 rounds of ammunition in under 90 minutes at a rowhome containing children; and

WHEREAS, City officials then made the unconscionable decision to drop a military-grade bomb on the home, the first and only time an American police force bombed those they are sworn to protect and serve. The resulting explosion sparked a fire, which the authorities let burn; and

WHEREAS, By the time the decision was made to fight the fire, it was already out of control. Five children between the ages of seven and thirteen, along with six adults, perished in the MOVE house. Two full City blocks were burned to the ground, destroying 61 houses and leaving 250 Philadelphians homeless; and

WHEREAS, An investigatory commission set up by Mayor Wilson Goode concluded that the City of Philadelphia's decision to bomb the MOVE house was "reckless, ill-conceived and hastily approved;" and

WHEREAS, Five years ago, 35 years after it occurred, the Council of the City of Philadelphia formally apologized for the first time for the decisions leading to the devastation of May 13, 1985, and acknowledged the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of the MOVE Bombing; and

WHEREAS, Even though 40 years have passed, the community still lives with the consequences of this tragedy every day. For instance, the City of Philadelphia Medical Examiner's Office and Penn Museum admitted to secretly holding onto remains from the MOVE Bombing, ripping open old wounds decades later; and

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WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Philadelphia acknowledges the enduring pain caused by the unfortunate and unnecessary eleven deaths of five children and six adults:

- Netta Africa, age 12,
- Tree Africa, age 14,
- Phil Africa, age 12,
- Delisha Africa, age 12,
- Tomaso Africa, age 9,
- John Africa,
- Conrad Africa,
- Raymond Africa,
- Frank Africa,
- Rhonda Africa, and
- Theresa Africa,

on May 13, 1985, at 6221 Osage Avenue; and

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Philadelphia acknowledges the damage inflicted on 250 innocent bystanders who lost their homes in the fire caused by the bombing and the City's decision to let it burn out of control, many of whom remain traumatized; and

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Philadelphia acknowledges the harm caused on May 13, 1985, to first responders and their families because of those first responders following official orders issued by City leadership; and

WHEREAS, It is essential that we remember and reflect on this tragedy, so that the City of Philadelphia never again feels empowered to use such excessive force against its own residents; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby declares May 13th, 2025, the 40th Anniversary of the MOVE Bombing, as a day of observation, reflection, and recommitment in the City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this Resolution be presented to the Africa family to further evidence the sincerity of this legislative body.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the eighth day of May, 2025.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Gauthier

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Gauthier, Phillips, Gilmore Richardson,
Landau, Lozada, Brooks, Harrity, O'Rourke, Driscoll and
Ahmad