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*Territorial Acknowledgement Statement for Memphis, TN*

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We begin today by recognizing and acknowledging that we are on the historic Homeland of the Chickasaw Nation of which they inhabited. Memphis, and all of Tennessee, was the long established territory for many indigenous peoples prior to their forced removal and unforeseen extinction. We have a responsibility to acknowledge the peoples and histories of these lands. Our ability to live here is the result of direct coercion, forced dispossession, and deliberate colonization. To ignore that is to perpetuate injustice to populations of people that no longer exist in this state, yet, have established major societies elsewhere in this country. The City of Memphis respects the diverse communities it touches, including those who occupied this territory originally, those brought to it by force, and those who settled here in search of better circumstances. We understand that territorial acknowledgement is only a gesture, but it represents the beginning of our commitment to justice and reconciliation in the United States.