



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Communications and Public Relations

Press Release

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**BRITISH SOCIAL AND POLITICAL COMMENTATOR LOLA ADESIOYE TO
SPEAK AT RAMAPO COLLEGE ON FEBRUARY 2**

MAHWAH, NJ -- Lola Adesioye, a prominent British social and political writer, commentator and activist, will speak at Ramapo College on Monday, February 2 at 5 p.m. in the Sharp Theater at the Berrie Center on campus. In an address entitled *Modern Black Britain and Its Parallels with the Contemporary Obama-Era African American Experience*, she will examine the experience of people of African descent who were born and are living in the United Kingdom today with how that experience compares to the African American experience in the United States today.

The event is sponsored and funded by the Schomburg Visiting Scholar Program. The event is co-sponsored and coordinated by the African Ancestry Month Planning Committee at Ramapo. It is free and open to the general public.

Adesioye will explore current notions of race and identity, the experience of black Britons within a shifting socio-political landscape and interactions with law enforcement and the justice system. She will also address how people of African descent have influenced popular culture, arts, and music and used these latter forms of expression as a vehicle for collective struggle. She will also participate and speak in two classes on campus as part of her visit.

Adesioye earned a bachelor's and a master's degree in social and political science from Cambridge University. The British Broadcasting Corporation asked her to participate in *Black Ambition*, a six-part television series which followed and charted the experiences of eight Cambridge University students of African and Caribbean descent in an institution in which black students make up less than one percent of the entire university population.

Despite growing up in London, England, as the daughter of Nigerian immigrants, Adesioye always had an interest in African-American culture. Her first exposure came through music, media and popular culture. At age 10, she accidentally picked up a book in her local library about the transatlantic slave trade. A fascination with American history was sparked. A family vacation to New York at age 16 sealed Lola's passion for and an interest in contemporary American society and politics. She began to study and pay close attention to American current affairs, as well as making regular trips to other parts of the United States.

She has written for publications including *Forbes Africa*, *the New Statesman*, *the Guardian*, *Economist*, *the Huffington Post*, *EbonyJet*, *CNN.com*, *TheGrio* and *TheRoot*. Adesioye has also

appeared regularly on the *BBC*, *CNN*, *BET*, *MSNBC* and the UK's *Sky News and Channel 4*. She is the former deputy editor of award-winning NBC site *TheGrio.com*, having joined the site in its inception and building up the commentary/opinion part of the site. Adesioye is a former contributing editor to *AOL Black Voices (now Huffington Post Black)*. She has been described as “one of Nigeria’s top 10 wordsmiths”, “an emerging face to watch” and “one of 11 sharp black commentators in America.” Now living between Boston and New York, she brings a unique global perspective to her work.

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Ranked by U.S. News & World Report as sixth in the Best Regional Universities North category for public institutions, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes mistaken for a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,008 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor’s degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers seven graduate programs as well as articulated programs with Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.