

#### **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

- African Union's Summit on Reparations: IJR Interventions on the Margins of the Assembly
- 2024 IJR Annual Review: Resetting Peacebuilding in Africa
- Government of National Unity and National Dialogue: The Unfinished Business of Reparations
- African Perspectives on the Emerging Global Order
- Legal Standing on Memorialisation
- The University Housing Crisis: A Barrier to Equitable Education
- Human Rights Are Under Threat: What Can Be Done?
- Publication: South African Reconciliation Barometer: Reimagining Apartheid Reparations
- New IJR Policy Briefs



Building fair, democratic, inclusive and peaceful societies

#### Note from the IJR Executive Director

As we step into 2025, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation continues to uphold its commitment to fostering inclusive peace, democracy, and reconciliation. This year carries profound significance— IJR proudly celebrates 25 years of impactful interventions across Africa.

From supporting transitional justice processes across the continent to driving national dialogues on reconciliation, we remain at the forefront of shaping policies and practices that contribute to just and inclusive societies. The themes explored in this edition of IJR Connect reflect the critical issues of our time —reparations, memorialisation, youth and democracy, and decolonising peacebuilding. As global dynamics shift, Africa's agency in shaping its future is more important than ever.

Our engagements in peacebuilding, governance, and policy advocacy are geared towards ensuring that Africa's voice is amplified on the world stage as we continue to push for accountability and justice, advocating for meaningful reparations and addressing structural inequalities that hinder reconciliation and development.

We are deeply grateful for the support of our partners, friends, and stakeholders who walk this journey with us. - **Prof Cheryl Hendricks** 

### African Union's Summit on Reparations: IJR Interventions on the Margins of the Assembly

**By Prof Tim Murithi** 



In February 2025, the African Union (AU) convened its annual summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and IJR convened a series of interventions relating to the theme of the year which is: Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations.

At the Thirty-Sixth Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held between 18 and 19 February 2023, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a landmark decision was taken by the Union towards "building a united front to advance the cause of justice and the payment of reparations to Africans."[1] The AU Assembly directed the "AU Commission, in consultation with Member States, ECOSOCC and other AU organs as well as the RECs to ... develop a Common African Position on Reparations."[2]

On 13 February 2025, at the margins of the 38th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the IJR, in partnership with the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), based in Addis Ababa, Amani Africa Media and Research Services and the African Union Network of Think-Tanks for Peace (NETT4Peace), also based in Addis Ababa, jointly convened a Diplomatic Briefing on the "African Union Common Position on Reparations: Strategies for Policy Implementation."

 African Union, Decisions, Declarations, Resolution and Motion, Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, 36th Ordinary Session, Assembly/AU/Dec.847 (XXXVI), 18 to 19 February 2023, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, p.I.
African Union, Decisions, Declarations, Resolution and Motion, Assembly/AU/Dec.847 (XXXVI), p.I.

**READ MORE>** 

### 2024 IJR Annual Review: Resetting Peacebuilding in Africa

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation held its annual review meeting on 30 January, 2025 in Pretoria, South Africa. The event reaffirmed the organisation's steadfast commitment to fostering justice, reconciliation, and peace across the continent in 2024.

The meeting commenced with a panel discussion titled Resetting Peacebuilding in Africa, chaired by Nyasha Mpani, IJR's Project Leader for the Data for Governance Alliance. The panel featured prominent experts in peacebuilding. Professor Cheryl Hendricks, Executive Director of the IJR, spoke on Resetting the Agenda and Structures for Peacebuilding in Africa, setting the stage for a critical examination of the evolving peace and security landscape.

Professor Tim Murithi, Head of IJR's Peacebuilding Programme, highlighted Transitional Justice and Reparations as core components of sustainable peace. Professor Antoni van Nieuwkerk from the University of South Africa, provided insights into Key Issues for Peacebuilding in Southern Africa, while Dr Faith Mabera from the University of the Witwatersrand explored Trends in the Peacebuilding Scape: Normative and Practical Implications.

The discussion addressed key challenges and future directions for peacebuilding in Africa. Speakers underscored the necessity of forging a new consensus between and within states, guided by values, principles, and ethics that uphold peace and security. They stressed the urgency of tackling inequalities in global power structures and domestic contexts, advocating for renewed focus on disarmament and the decolonisation of peace. Furthermore, the panel emphasised the importance of local community involvement and thought leadership in peacebuilding efforts, alongside sustained investment in economic development and capacity building.

READ MORE>



#### Government of National Unity and National Dialogue: The Unfinished Business of Reparations



The IJR convened a diplomatic briefing on the sidelines of South Africa's State of the Nation Address (SONA) on February 4, 2025, in Cape Town. The event provided a platform for policy discussions on the Government of National Unity (GNU) and the proposed National Dialogue initiative, with a particular focus on the oftenoverlooked issue of reparations.

The briefing took place in the context of the African Union's (AU) adoption of reparations as its theme for 2025, alongside the development of an AU Common Position on Reparations for Africans and People of African Descent.

IJR's Executive Director, Professor Cheryl Hendricks, opened the discussion by providing an overview of the organization's ongoing work. She emphasized the significance of reparations, highlighting that IJR's South African Reconciliation Barometer would also focus on this issue in the current year. Prof. Hendricks underscored the importance of exploring the various forms that reparations can take and acknowledged that while SONA would likely address a range of global concerns—including the US Trump administration and the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo—the main focus will be on pressing domestic challenges such as unemployment and crime.

Providing an analysis of the Government of National Unity, Ms. Sanusha Naidu, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Global Dialogue, explained that the GNU will be held together by a statement of intent—an acknowledgment that no one party can govern alone.

#### **READ MORE>**

### African Perspectives on the Emerging Global Order

The IJR and the International Peace Institute (IPI) convened a high-level focus group discussion and policy seminar in Pretoria, on 28 January, bringing together governmental, academic, and civil society experts to examine African Perspectives on the Emerging Global Order. The meeting provided a platform for thought leaders to reflect on Africa's positioning in a shifting global landscape.

The discussion, moderated by Dr. Faith Mabera, a post-doctoral fellow at the University of the Witwatersrand, engaged participants in a dynamic exchange on Africa's agency amid geopolitical realignments.

As the world transitions into a multipolar order, African agency has become increasingly crucial in defining the continent's role beyond being a passive recipient of global trends. Discussions explored how Africa can assert itself by strengthening regional integration, leveraging multilateral institutions like the African Union (AU), and diversifying economic partnerships beyond traditional Western and Chinese alliances. Experts also emphasized Africa's growing diplomatic influence, with countries increasingly engaging in South-South cooperation, advocating for United Nations reforms, and positioning themselves as key players in climate negotiations and peacebuilding efforts. The need for homegrown policy solutions was reiterated, with calls for African states to proactively shape global governance rather than merely adapting to external forces.

A key takeaway from the discussion was the need for a stronger, unified African voice in global decision-making spaces. Institutions like the AU must be empowered not just in rhetoric but in action, ensuring that they serve as effective platforms for negotiation rather than mere symbolic entities. Speakers also underscored Africa's bargaining power in global climate negotiations, urging leaders to push for policies that reflect the continent's unique vulnerabilities and strengths.

Following the focus group, the policy seminar on Africa and the emergence of multipolarity featured key insights from renowned scholars and policy analysts. Prof. Tim Murithi, Head of IJR's Peacebuilding Interventions Programme, moderated the session, guiding an in-depth exploration of how Africa can navigate and leverage emerging global power structures.

Participants acknowledged the need for African-led strategies in global decision-making, emphasizing the role of knowledge production and policy engagement in ensuring the continent's perspectives are adequately represented on the international stage.

### Legal Standing on Memorialisation

#### By Asemahle Tshoni

War/conflict memorialisation is not merely the act of remembering, preserving, and commemorating past events; it is deeply connected to transitional justice as it aligns with its four pillars. Memorialization plays a crucial role in justice, as forms of memory serve as acknowledgements of past wrongs. Justice requires accountability, which is tied to acknowledgement from perpetrators (Ruwanpathirana, 2016:9).

Truth-telling is also integral to memorialization, much like in transitional justice, through the use of archives, history books, and dialogues, all of which contribute to both processes (Ruwanpathirana, 2016:9). Reparations, including symbolic reparations through sites of memory, are a form of memorialization, offering remembrance and fostering reconciliation (Ruwanpathirana, 2016:9). Memorialization also supports the guarantee of non-repetition, as sites of memory and other forms of commemoration serve as constant reminders of past atrocities and the need to prevent their recurrence. Memorials thus play a key role in reparations, which are not only material but also symbolic, such as sites of memory and the renaming of significant locations tied to conflict or war.

In South Africa, efforts to memorialize are governed by legal instruments such as the constitutional framework, including the South African Constitution, the legislative and policy landscape like the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999), and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommendations on memorialization efforts.



### The University Housing Crisis: A Barrier to Equitable Education

**By Danielle Hoffmeester** 



South Africa's higher education system is facing a serious challenge. There is not enough affordable and safe student accommodation, leaving many students between three unfavourable possibilities: 1) homelessness, 2) settling for substandard housing and/or 3) travelling long distances and incurring high costs as a result.

This situation affects their ability to concentrate on studies and ultimately hinders their academic success.

<u>Research</u> has shown that demand for student housing far exceeds available supply. A report compiled by the <u>International Finance Corporation</u> says that hundreds of thousands of students struggle every year to secure a decent place to live. When students do not have dignified accommodation, they are forced into costly commutes or into renting off-campus properties that may compromise their safety and well-being. The result is added financial stress and distractions from academic responsibilities.

A further complication is the funding crisis that now threatens the smooth operation of student residences. A recent article in <u>Daily Maverick</u> reports that the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) currently owes student accommodation providers R44-million in overdue rental fees. With these delayed payments, providers are left uncertain about their rental income. This uncertainty could result in them denying students access to their accommodation or raise rent prices further, putting severe strain on students, especially those from low-income backgrounds.

**READ MORE>** 

### **Human Rights Are Under Threat: What Can Be Done?**

**By Felicity Harrison** Human rights are under attack, but this is not the first time in our history that we have seen them assaulted; nor, sadly, will it be the last. While we are experiencing a new forms of threat, this time emerging from the West, it is important for us to ensure that we don't lose perspective, or hope: we would do well to not let a good crisis go to waste.

We should also not romanticise the past and assume that there was some halcyon era where human rights were the basis of the international system and domestic politics. Human rights have always been contested and frequently used for utilitarian purposes in transactional ways. Even in the post war era, it took Raphael Lemkin three years to lobby for the UN Convention on Genocide at a time when one would have thought that the horrors of the Shoah (holocaust) would have spurned the world into action.

The notion of human rights is profoundly rooted in ideas of human dignity which arise from religious traditions. Placed as they are in the realm of politics, which often eschews such ideas in favour of "pragmatic," "real" issues such as the pursuit of power. The contradictions are obvious, since in a human rights paradigm, people are always and end in themselves; whereas in the Realist way of thinking, people are a means to an end.

In a time when world leaders are challenging not just the structures of democracy, but they are also questioning its very foundations, it is important for those who defend human rights not to be caught up in the miniature of the sound and fury which at the end of the day, signifies nothing.



## South African **Reconciliation Barometer: Reimagining Apartheid Reparations**



Almost three decades after the conclusion of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), South Africa's vision of a reconciled and equitable nation remains unfulfilled.

While the TRC was a groundbreaking institution that inspired transitional justice processes in postconflict societies around the world, the government of the day only partially accepted its recommendations of reparations for apartheid survivors. Neither the reparations paid nor their accompanying policy programmes succeeded at disrupting the country's deep economic and social inequalities rooted in colonialism and apartheid. More than half of all South Africans live in poverty today, income inequality levels are among the highest in the world, and almost two-thirds of young adults of working age are unemployed.

> DOWNLOAD THE FULL REPORT HERE>

Youth and Democracy in S	OLICY BRIEF	POL	ICY BRIEF		Social dialogue in agricult	ACTICE NOTE Number 11 January 202 June - Western Cape
but Engaged					Lacretie Awardod	
Danade submeether		Decolonising peacebu	ildina:	7	Introduction	These environment are interpreted and inclusion
		Decolorinsing persons		S	The increasibles and reparisons of concentrate and assorbatic resulted in many black South Alexand	
Introduction Traditionally, political (articipation is divided 100	of these interviewed, and it's safe they were	A policy perspective				activity the rest which and he promotion of Automatike rand counterpresent.
	tabuled adh thei pottor waters	Ter Marthi			land autorities. The 1913 feature ( and we	Their sim is for 1 anomale freed security and create employment
have subspines the second descent and the second participation, washing to a net centre decision in participation, washing to a net centre decision from the second decision of the second decision.	Moding for the Daily Movembe, Eablett MyHold, advectored a titrat value in 2004 that coplaned on				broking land contacting to only server percent and	In the operation productor and heat orbits
performance, many in posts arrive, trained, they youth value formed in Douth arrive, trained, they are increasingly forming forward reforms of	Internet a transmission Parameter Samples and a subary biot notae weating as Assamption Re-					I Country by manufactor other chain theory
		100 C			March Track African for home of datasets in	paraler market annexe. 4 Promote an inclusion rand at several
Registered such as provide encody provide becalls Basis to a growing respective among provide becalls towards political tradems and multipleces.	woman, an unanginger package, managemented,		replacementation has been challenged by the completely of the nextly on the ground. The UAIS			
	Peter and the second and a second sec	a second second second sectors and the second sectors and the	up the a name to decive a gent			In loss with these cityselbore, the Westlery Cope Department of Agroundury's (MCDOA), the
Over of the most screens for the deductorened in the 350x regional electrons as well as in the						
	the instruming discovered between purchasing their dead		report on the fact, in address smalling the during of any iteration of the UNL restance for United States UNL manifests of the UNL restance for United States UNL in the UNL restance for UNLINE States UNLINE		provided the input beam for facular anterials of Rouge and a fact water beam South Atsuant	provided and of the transfer last forms, and in the patrix, planned to transfer last forms, and in the Supervised Land Workshell's and one in the
Inclusion in decision making shutharm. Democracy female when its citizens are actively	the shapper of party makes in a feature of the state of the	of steamy, interfactory, software protocols, and the	other surgices (1.8) and hence (see and other		Rose and A fail which make their best between their and their (2), when the abustatement of adults control measures in 1996 and the Group	
	in Deale Altrea, the descente sign of publicants in the					to their imperitue communities.
Arrest for excluded from patients of preser and decrementations, with their answers when grownil	Rational Assessibly a 14 prost procession of Test	printy that and a first the case for decempent	then two the more parameters and integer to administrative science of personality and integers or of measurings science the world. As interruptions of		which more if equipped to dry the owner of	Name commanders are spice with company, internal lines of Conflict and manual behavior.
despensionality, with the Center for Second In 2010, is study constanted by the Center for Second Development in action at the University of		is particul representation.	he intellectual topic of status from prevent to status			
	whether the country's south of a standard of the				promits, formation of the last fail of	challenging the communities and incommunities of the
Advertising the set over allow proceeds on a logith. They and proceeds and barries and the set of t	or represents the period of the functions, many peak-periods. Additional the functions, many comes that descare are formy fully a demonstry.	peacebuilding	dacholy income to be plot prevaled by satisfied which this fee plot prevaled by special			
	to a substant of procession.	The name team approach of participants	and a second state to		light was represent to breat South altern	formal profile allow they had be been allowed in special property four-file had be been allowed in model form confidence and been
assaulterowheth The point strate program (if					Annalisty, the South Allow processed	
	10 Second per 2010, Mar 20, Way in Start of South	way and referred these strength on a first of	polytocal in outcome reason of the state and which day an almochet at spectrum (the state and which day arguted at reproduct a freework) consider army (		Accordingly, the South Sourceprese Page 2010 subpled The National Sourceprese Page 2010 (N2D), in 2012, which is a southing to reduce	The INCIDA-decided to period on a social because on process in address the desp-social because on the social sectors and the sector of the sector is social to be address the social sector of the sector is social to be address the social sector of the sector is social to be address the social sector of the sector is social to be address the social sector in the sector is social to be address the social sector in the sector is social to be address the social sector in the sector is social to be address to be address the social sector is social to be address to be address the social sector is social to be address to be address the social sector is social to be address to
and active to the Name of Sources and American		Galled Marth, Marth All Annual A	subgetent groups. Dublication of the Percentually		sequely and poser's The Department of	Carded sames and ull and first lots into the control of
Name of American's reported that the protocol	Parana Parana Terra Japan Deleman (M. A. Bardan Bardan) (M. B. 2019) Marchan Bernard (M. Bardan) (M. Bardan) (M. Bardan) Marchan Bernard (M. Bardan) (M. Bardan) (M. Bardan)	Pages 1 to particular, the Approx of Pages of	Assigned to be the franchistory of Figure 1 and			the station of the endowing or to facilitate the process that the station of the
Names Warper (2018 New 7) attraction and South South South South Statements for Personal State		stration delivery publication of	In a solution of scrattering prior research of		many intended sphering the Approximate inter-	the process the LM parameter age of the process of the parameter and the age of the parameter
	1 Parametery Borners, Burners, Automative	parabulating it as a subject to approximately in	bard denotatio principal and the baready drive			
and a second frame over (21). Note that I	the data of address to address the	a many permanent accurs from beautions in	personal this basis before appendix in a new and rest and all almost the appendix in a applicant surface of observations percent the world.		agreedantal service (2).	
Nuclearne Astronom Trang Institutions of the States Paralog in Reduct of the Local and States Index (	Constant and Constant	Including behavior from the set of the set	And the second s			
No the second se						
- Lester	1 M H		and the of			
Fit was a					ULPater	NR 1

#### **Policy Brief - Youth and Democracy in South Africa:** Disillusioned but Engaged

#### by Danielle Hoffmeester

South Africa's youth face a complex reality, caught between the promises of a democratic future and the harshness of present socio-economic challenges. Many young people today feel deeply disillusioned and are disengaged from democratic processes. Persistent inequality, unemployment, violence, and the erosion of collective values have led to a growing sense of detachment from the systems meant to empower them. While young people increasingly turn inward—prioritising personal advancement through entrepreneurship, social media, and self-improvement—the tenuous connection between the individual and the community raises concerns about the sustainability of democratic participation.

**READ MORE>** 

# **Policy Brief - Decolonising peacebuilding: A policy perspective**

#### by Prof Tim Murithi

The pursuit of a decolonial peacebuilding is an urgent agenda given the failures and inability of statecentric liberal peacebuilding in achieving and consolidating peaceful societies across the world, notably in the post-colonial regions of the world. This policy brief assesses why an interrogation of the Eurocentric roots of state-centric liberal peacebuilding is necessary if strategies are to be developed to more effectively decolonise the Global North, which drives the global peacebuilding agenda.

READ MORE>

#### **Practice Note - Social dialogue in agriculture – Western Cape**

#### by Lucretia Arendse

This practice note describes the process that IJR embarked on to facilitate policy implementation in the agricultural sector in Western Cape, South Africa. It describes the process that IJR embarked on to facilitate policy implementation in the agricultural sector in Western Cape, South Africa.

**READ MORE>** 



### New IJR Social Media Platforms

We have new Instagram, Facebook and YouTube accounts:



Instagram @ijr\_official



Facebook Institute for Justice and Reconciliation - New



YouTube @InstituteforJusticeandReconcil

You can also continue to engage with us on X and LinkedIn:



X (Twitter) @\_IJR\_



**LinkedIn** Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR)

