SA Reconciliation Barometer

REIMAGINING APARTHEID REPARATIONS

IJR THE INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION

2024 REPORT

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A group of students participating in #FeesMustFall raise their hands in the air to signal that they have come in peace.

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Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
ATJLF	Africa Transitional Justice Legacy Fund
AU	African Union
BIG	basic income grant
BLM	Black Lives Matter
CPI	consumer price index
CSO	civil society organisation
EA	enumerator area
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
FDI	foreign direct investment
G20	Group of 20
GCRO	Gauteng City-Region Observatory
GNU	Government of National Unity
HNWI	high-net-worth individuals
HR	House of Representatives
HRV	human rights violations
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IES	Income and Expenditure Survey
IJR	Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
MK	Umkonto we Sizwe
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEA	not economically active
NEET	not in employment, education or training
NLI	Neighbourhood Lifestyle Index
NP	National Party
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
R&R	Reparations and Rehabilitation
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SARB	South African Reconciliation Barometer
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SONA	State of the Nation Address
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNU-WIDER	UN University World Institute for Development Economics Research

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Executive Summary

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 post-conflict 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.

Despite the "political miracle" of the democratic transition, the lack of economic change is a fundamental obstacle to reconciliation

Despite the "political miracle" of the democratic transition, the lack of economic change is a fundamental obstacle to reconciliation and jeopardises prospects for an equitable, cohesive and peaceful future. Opaque data on the state of the macroeconomy obscures the reality that black South Africans still bear the disproportionate consequences of centuries of structural inequality that continues to reproduce itself unabated. This reality demonstrates how, as framed by Alasia Nuti (2019), historic and present injustices are in fact the same injustice.

Conversations about South African reparations – including on how to use the unspent billions of rand in the President's Fund – have been largely dormant since the end of the TRC, save for the dedicated calls of small groups of activists and civil society organisations (CSOs).

However, elsewhere there is a growing movement for accountability and reparations for colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade, including in the US, the Commonwealth and the Global South more broadly. The African Union (AU) named 2025 the year of "Justice for Africans and people of African descent through reparations."

This report revisits the South African reparations debate by looking at the persistent challenges confronting the country; the missed opportunities of the path taken; and what it could mean for the future to chart a new course forward. Recognising the profound complexities of seeking justice for mass historical crimes, Section III of the report looks to other countries and regions for practical examples of implementation. After prolonged armed conflict, the Colombian Victim's Law put in place measures to pay cash reparations to millions of people throughout the country. Encouraged to invest in improving their own livelihoods, reparations payments have been linked with positive developmental impacts, including better educational, health and employment outcomes.

Support in the US for a national Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans has fluctuated in recent years, but in the interim, a number of cities and states have established regional and local bodies analysing the impacts of slavery and racial segregation. Reparative measures have included sector-focused programmes in areas such as housing and higher education.

A third approach has been through negotiations and litigation between groups of claimants in countries such as Kenya, Indonesia and Namibia, and former colonising states, including the UK, Netherlands and Germany. These have produced reparations in the form of cash settlements as well as measures including formal apologies, development assistance and the return of stolen artifacts, among others.

In Section IV, the report delves into South Africa's current social and economic context, highlighting the urgent need for a new policy approach. Although measures differ, the World Bank estimates that 63% of South Africans lived below the international poverty line, with little change over the past 15 years. Data from the South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB), conducted by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) since 2003, confirms that black people report higher levels of lived poverty than others of different historically defined race groups.

Economic inequality, entrenched through centuries of colonialism and apartheid, remains among the highest in the world – with an estimated Gini Index of 67% in 2020. South Africa is home to 19,700 dollar-millionaires alongside tens of millions of people living in poverty, and the richest 10% of people possess 85% of net personal wealth in the country.

Opportunities to participate in the formal economy are also severely constrained. As of October 2024, the expanded unemployment rate was 42%, and this is even higher within specific groups, such as youth and black women. Even when jobs are created, these are simply not enough to keep pace with growing demand.

Section V of the report then presents time series public opinion data from the Reconciliation Barometer from 2003 to 2023 – the most recent survey round. Results show that most South Africans still agree about the historical injustices of apartheid and the need to support survivors of human rights abuses. Overall, there is moderate majority support for a range of reparations measures – including the renaming of public places, removal of apartheid and colonial symbols, and compensation for black South Africans. However, support tends to be lower on average among white people than those of other race groups.

Looking to the future, Section VI presents four hypothetical narrative pathways envisioning different directions for the country over the next ten years. *Pathway 1: Growth First, Justice Later* explores a future in which the government continues prioritising growth and macroeconomic stability, with restitution and economic change as a by-product. *Pathway 2: A Nation Invested* imagines a decade of increased social spending to achieve a more equitable country, including through a basic income grant (BIG) and free tertiary education. *Pathway 3: Champion for Global Justice* sees South Africa assuming a leading role in the international reparations campaign, strengthening its relations within the Global South, entering into its own reparations negotiations and redefining norms and systems of justice and accountability worldwide. Finally, *Pathway 4: A New Political Order* explores a decade in which public discontent and a fractured Government of National Unity (GNU) creates a leadership vacuum, opening up space for a surge in far-left party support. The purpose of these narratives is to encourage dialogue about the future of the country and the changes we would like to see.

The report concludes with the finding that structural injustice works against reconciliation, social cohesion, stability and peace. While South Africa was once pressed to consider how the country could afford to fund reparations, we must now ask whether we can afford not to.

I. Introduction

Almost 30 years have passed since the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) launched its first investigations into apartheid atrocities and human rights abuses, specifically committed between 1960 and 1994. The Commission's work was carried out by three dedicated committees that focused on Amnesty, Human Rights Violations (HRVs), and Reparation and Rehabilitation (R&R). The TRC, and South Africa's reconciliation process more broadly, has been upheld as a beacon of peaceful post-conflict transformation and democratic transition throughout the world.

However, despite the significance and enormity of these achievements, South Africa is still not the reconciled country that many envisaged after the TRC's conclusion. The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), established with a vision of bringing the TRC's recommendations into practice, has conducted the national South African Reconciliation Barometer survey since 2003, which measures the extent of progress and change in the country. Over this period, the survey has consistently found that most South Africans view economic inequality as the leading source of social division in the country and the area of least progress since the 1994 democratic transition. Underpinning this finding is the reality that the structure of the national economy has not fundamentally changed with democratisation. Instead, it has continued to reproduce historic inequities. Most South Africans still live in poverty and are excluded from opportunities to earn decent livelihoods, provide for their families, save for the future or invest in the next generation.

South Africa is still not the reconciled country that many envisaged after the TRC's conclusion

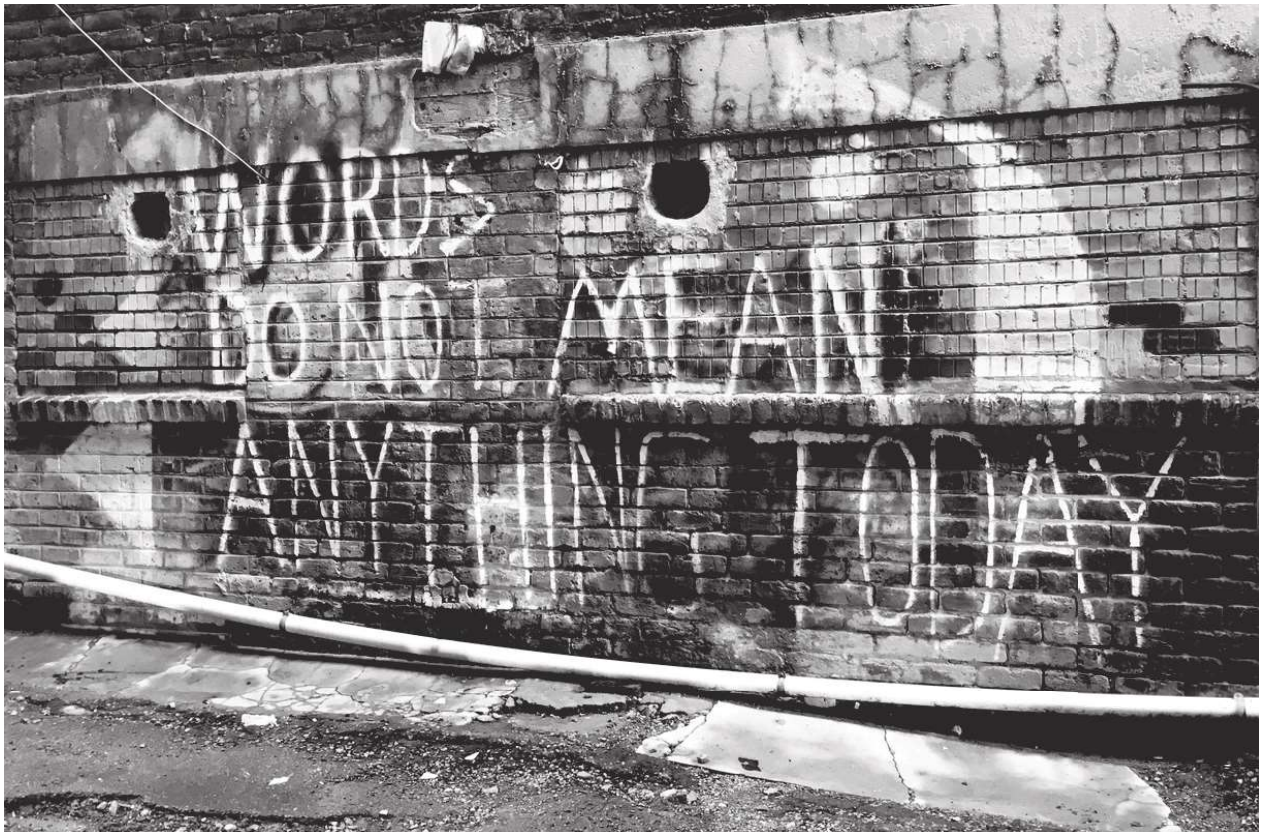
The TRC's R&R Committee was mandated to explore and understand the needs of survivors of apartheid gross human rights violations and make recommendations of both individual reparations and community and societal measures for "rehabilitating and restoring the human and civil dignity of victims."[1] The practice of paying reparations is used in many countries as well as after international conflicts, and broadly refers to"restoring to good condition of something that has been damaged."[2] Reparations can range in form from apologies to memorials, restitution, rehabilitation, and compensation for individuals or groups of people.[3]

The TRC Report recommended a range of reparative measures and was tabled in Parliament in 2003. These included individual cash grants payable over six years as well as urgent interim reparations for individuals with immediate needs; symbolic measures such as erecting memorials and renaming places; community rehabilitation programmes; and institutional reform to prevent the recurrence of human rights abuses.[4] The Commission's recommendations, however, were met with resistance from the government of then-President Thabo Mbeki.

In his response to the TRC Report, Mbeki suggested that the "nobility of the human spirit would be demeaned, denied and degraded by any suggestion that these heroes and heroines are but mere 'victims', who must receive a cash reward for being simply and deeply human." The president urged lawmakers to instead focus on the "continuing challenge of reconstruction and development", including "deepening democracy and the culture of human rights, ensuring good governance and transparency, intensifying economic growth and social programmes, [and] improving citizens' safety and security."[5]

As a result, the government ultimately adopted significantly diluted versions of the reparations recommended by the TRC. Instead of annual payments of between R17,000 to R23,000 for six years, set at the level of the median household income at the time (about R48,000 to R65,000 in 2024), around 17,000 people received once-off grants of R30,000 – the equivalent of just over R84,000 in 2024. The President's Fund was also established to finance additional reparations but despite accruing nearly R1.9 billion by 2022, had only paid out about R98 million over the preceding five years.[6]

Retrospectively, these reparations appear to have achieved little impact for either survivors of human rights abuses or the millions of other South Africans directly affected by apartheid but excluded from the narrow eligibility criteria for cash grants.[7] Further, the currency of their symbolic value has eroded as many of apartheid's intransigent social and economic structures remain unchanged.



Professor Jaco Barnard-Naudé (2024) suggests that Mbeki's "bold promises" of reconstruction and development are today "belied by an apartheid landscape that harrowingly reflects systemic and endemic poverty, unemployment, deprivation, ongoing *de facto* segregation and destitution."[8] Quoting the late activist and politician Joe Slovo, Barnard-Naudé cautions that "without reparation, no law will stop the apartheid ghost from haunting our society."[9]

Yet revisiting the issue of apartheid reparations – as was the case in 2011, when late TRC Chairperson and Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu resurfaced calls for a wealth tax payable by white South Africans – is generally met with emotive responses of discomfort, outrage and incredulity.[10]

Therefore, reparations discussions have remained largely relegated to South Africa's past, save for the ongoing efforts of a few dedicated activists and civil society organisations (CSOs).[11]

However, while the South African debate is relatively dormant, new questions about fair compensation for grave injustices and harm have gained traction worldwide, advancing support and undercutting conventional "impracticability" objections.[12] Cities and states in the US, for example, established reparations commissions and task forces after the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement shifted national attention to the ongoing and profound effects of racial discrimination in areas including policing, housing, education and mass incarceration.[13]

Reparations discussions have also entered bilateral and multilateral international relations, particularly focused on atrocities and injustices committed by colonisers and perpetrators of the transatlantic slave trade. Countries including the UK, Netherlands, Germany and Italy have paid reparations to groups of survivors and former colonies, including Kenya, Indonesia, Namibia and Libya respectively.[14]

In October 2024, Commonwealth member states – most former British colonies – announced that the "time has come for a meaningful, truthful and respectful conversation towards forging a common future based on equity."[15] The African Union (AU) has also adopted an annual theme of "Justice for Africans and people of African descent through reparations" for 2025 following the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Africa Transitional Justice Legacy Fund (ATJLF) as well as a partnership with Caribbean countries aimed at intensifying compensation claims.[16]

Calls for accountability and fair compensation are also growing louder in relation to other harms committed. In recent years, activists have lobbied for reparative mechanisms through which leading polluters compensate vulnerable communities that bear the disproportionate consequences of climate change.[17]

The purpose of this report is to revisit questions about the adequacy and efficacy of South Africa's apartheid reparations. This is within a changing international context and greater understanding and commitment to work towards "restoring to good condition something that has been damaged", even when it may be ethically, fiscally and administratively challenging to do so. [18] The report presents examples of how this has been approached in practice through large-scale cash grants in Colombia, regional and local interventions in the US, and international litigation (Section III).

Reparations were not designed to achieve economic transformation in South Africa, but given the shortcomings of three decades of policy in deconstructing apartheid economic structures, it is not too late to revisit such measures with greater developmental purpose. This is a particularly opportune momentum given the establishment of a multi-party Government of National Unity (GNU) following the May 2024 elections, and prospects for a shift in the national policy agenda. Section IV of the report presents recent data on poverty, economic inequality and employment as evidence of both the lack of structural economic change and their continued discriminatory effects. These data evidence the continued need for reparations and are presented within Alasia Nuti's (2019) framing that "historical and present injustices should be regarded as the *same injustice*." [19]

The Reconciliation Barometer survey is now conducted every two years, and Section V of the report presents nationally representative public opinion data from 2003 to 2023 on how South Africans understand the history of the country and perceptions about reparations measures that have variously been proposed and implemented after apartheid.

These results, as reported in 2023, reveal a broad consensus about the truths of South Africa's past and the importance of supporting survivors.[20] There is also moderate majority support for interventions including renaming, memorialisations, and a compensation fund or wealth tax.

Opposition to reparations, however, tends to be higher among white South Africans than people of other historically defined race groups.

Section VI, co-developed with IJR programme manager Jan Hofmeyr, brings together global practices and South African contextual and public opinion data in a set of high-level scenarios to reimagine the national reparations conversation.

What could happen if South Africa prioritised reparations as a means of remedying deep structural injustices and creating a more fair, inclusive and reconciled country? What could happen if we don't?

II. Survey Methodology

The South African Reconciliation Barometer is the longest-running national survey tracking public opinion on post-conflict reconciliation in Africa. The IJR has partnered in the development of reconciliation barometers in Rwanda and Sri Lanka, and peer projects have been established worldwide, including in Australia, Colombia and Canada.[21] This report presents and analyses data from 2003 to 2023, with the next survey round scheduled for 2025.

Conceptualising reconciliation

Reconciliation is a complex social concept that is challenging to measure. Since the first round of the Barometer in 2003, the IJR has defined reconciliation in terms of multiple related concepts or "dimensions", each with distinct indicators that are tracked through the survey. These dimensions and indicators have been periodically reviewed, confirmed and updated, for example, through data analysis and psychometric validation, qualitative focus groups and expert consultations over the 20 years of the project thus far. The six dimensions of reconciliation measured through the Barometer are shown in Figure 1 (for full hypotheses, see Annex A).

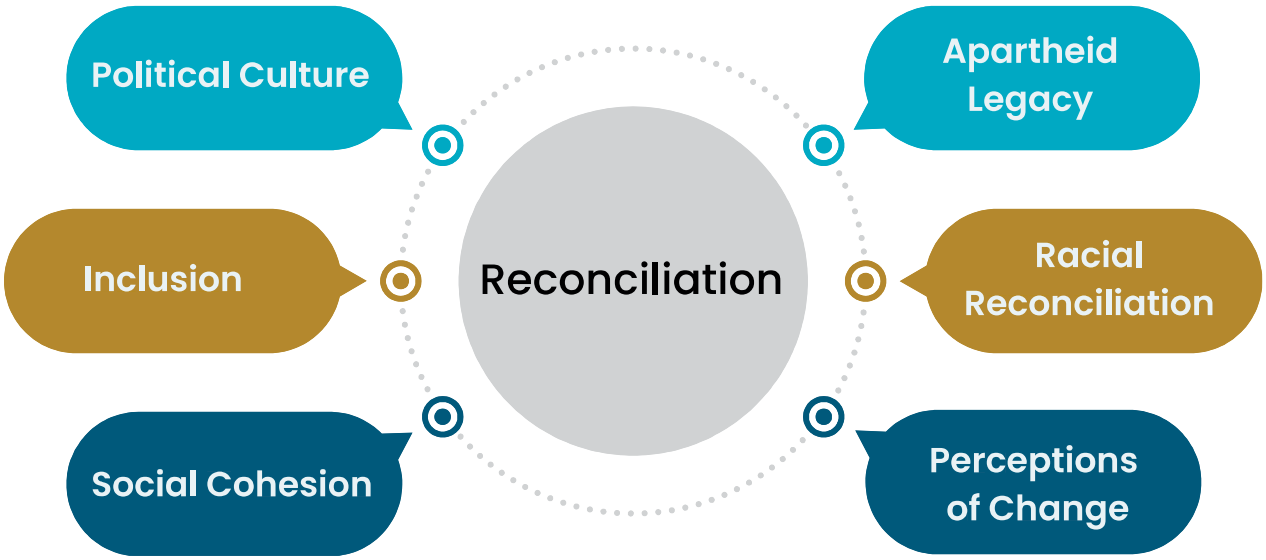
Reconciliation is a complex social concept that is challenging to measure

Survey design

The Barometer is a time series survey that currently consists of over 200 closed-ended questions – more than double its original length. Most of the survey questions are in the form of 5-point Likert scales, which has allowed the IJR to develop composite indices constructed using multiple indicators.

Figure 1

Dimensions of reconciliation



The survey has evolved and expanded over time while still retaining its core conceptual dimensions, indicators and methodology. The changes include:

- **Reducing the frequency of iteration:** In 2003 and 2004, immediately following the release of the final TRC Report, the Barometer was conducted twice annually to monitor attitudinal trends in a dynamic and transitional socio-political environment. The survey was then conducted once every year between 2005 and 2013 and thereafter every second year between 2015 and 2023. At the outset, the longevity of and support for the project were unknown – as, indeed, for the reconciliation process as a whole. The transition from a biannual assessment of short-term change to a study of the long-term, big picture of reconciliation is also evident in some survey questions. These have been adapted from their original formats of assessing change over a period of months to several years.
- **Strengthening the questionnaire:** The IJR has continually worked to strengthen the Reconciliation Barometer as a robust research instrument, and one that is regularly validated, replicable and that generates high-quality results that are available for secondary data analysis by researchers, students, academics, CSOs, government officials and practitioners worldwide. This process has included periodic revisions and updates to the survey questions, as well as increasing the consistency and reliability of the indicators and scales used.

- **Adapting with changing demographics**: With the passing of time and an increasing proportion of the population born after the democratic transition in 1994, some survey questions have been revised and adapted to ensure their continued relevance for all respondents.

Data collection

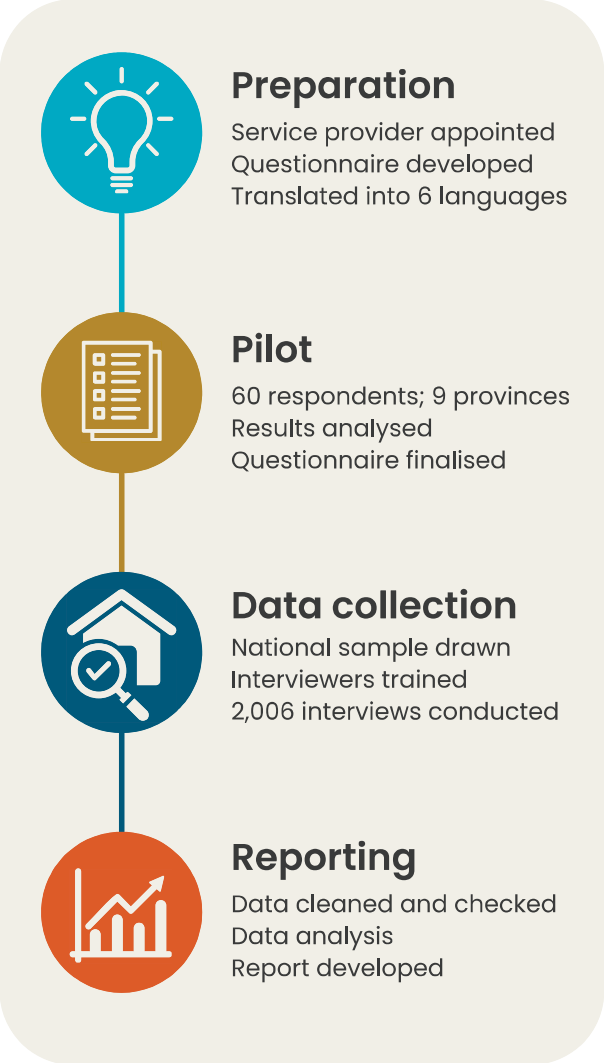
The Barometer is conducted through in-person interviews with adult South Africans in all parts of the country. In previous rounds, data collection was conducted by Ipsos and Kantar Public. MarkData was appointed to conduct data collection for the 2023 survey round, following a competitive bidding process.[22]

The draft questionnaire was developed comprising a combination of new and legacy survey questions. It was piloted across all nine provinces of the country, and the results were subjected to psychometric validation testing. The questionnaire was then finalised and translated from English into Afrikaans, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Setswana, Sepedi and Sesotho (Figure 2).

The Barometer is nationally representative, meaning that every adult South African has an equal chance of being selected to participate. On this basis, and with the application of post-survey weighting, the data can be used to draw conclusions about the entire South African population.

Figure 2

Methodology and data collection, 2023



The sample frame was developed based on Census enumerator areas (EAs) and using the following key variables:

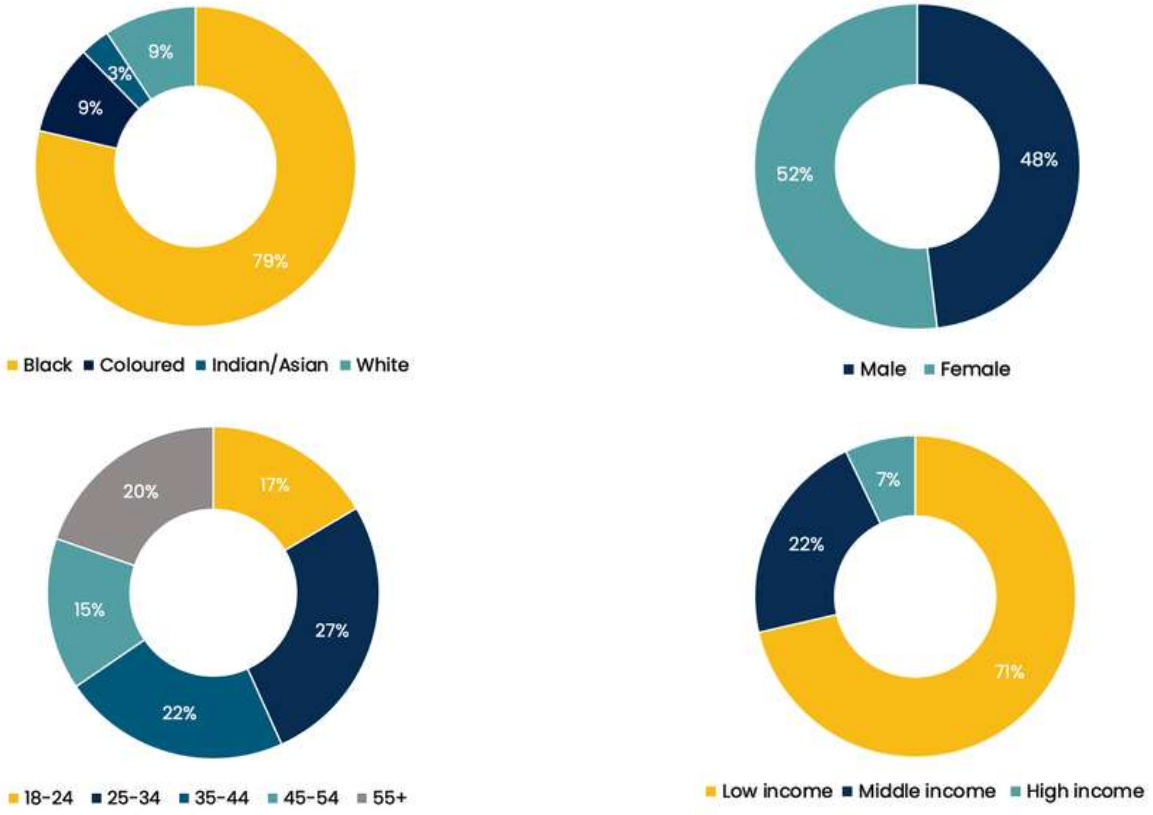
- **Urbanisation**, including 60% metro area respondents, 25% in non-metro urban areas and 15% in rural areas;
- **Province**, with national coverage and oversampling in less populous provinces such as the Northern Cape;
- **Race**, with oversampling of minority race groups (coloured, Indian/Asian and white) to ensure sufficient representation; and
- **Neighbourhood Lifestyle Index (NLI)** based on a multidimensional income segmentation model.[23]

Data collection started on 14 August 2023 and concluded on 5 September 2023, and a total of 2,006 South Africans were interviewed (Figure 3). The full sample is included in Annex B. All previous survey data and documentation are freely available through the IJR, and descriptive analysis can be conducted through our dedicated online portal.[24]

Figure 3

Survey sample, 2023

7	9	114	334	2,006
languages	provinces	interviewers	enumerator areas	participants



Notes on reporting

The following relates to the presentation of all data throughout the remaining sections of the report.

Margin of error: The margin of error of 2023 survey data using a 95% confidence level is 1.09%.

Weighting: All data are weighted, allowing for conclusions about the entire national population.

Rounding: Due to rounding, reported values may not always total 100%. Data is rounded to the nearest percentage point and no decimals are used in reporting.

Sex: Participants were asked whether they described themselves "as a man, a woman or in some other way", but no responses were received other than these binary categories.

Race: The IJR continues to use race as an important variable in analysing Barometer results, given its historical relevance and continued importance in relation to redress, socio-economic transformation and personal and group identity, among others.

Missing data: Research participants are always able to refuse to answer any question, respond that they "don't know", or indicate that a question is not applicable to them. Given the low refusal and "not applicable" response rates, these are reported cumulatively with "don't know" responses in the graphs and charts presented in the report.

For specific queries or assistance accessing Barometer data, please contact info@ijr.org.za.

Analyse the data

Share your feedback


YOU STOLE US
YOU SOLD US!
YOU OWE US!
REPARATIONS
NOW!

III. Rethinking Reparations Globally

Discussions about efficacy or the need for further apartheid reparations have largely been closed in South Africa since the end of the TRC, aside from the dedicated and ongoing efforts of a small number of CSOs and activists. Yet elsewhere calls for justice, accountability and reparations have grown stronger, including for atrocities and human rights abuses committed by colonisers and countries participating in the transatlantic slave trade.

Reparations measures necessarily involve addressing complex questions about the nature and impact of harms caused, of the individuals or groups affected, and about responsibility. These challenges can become even greater with the passing of time – and can bolster arguments that reparations are too technically, ethically, administratively and/or financially unfeasible to attempt.[25]

This section of the report presents recent examples of how reparations measures have been designed and implemented in other contexts and could inform future discussions in South Africa.

Reparations measures necessarily involve addressing complex questions about the nature and impact of harms caused

Colombia: Reparations for development

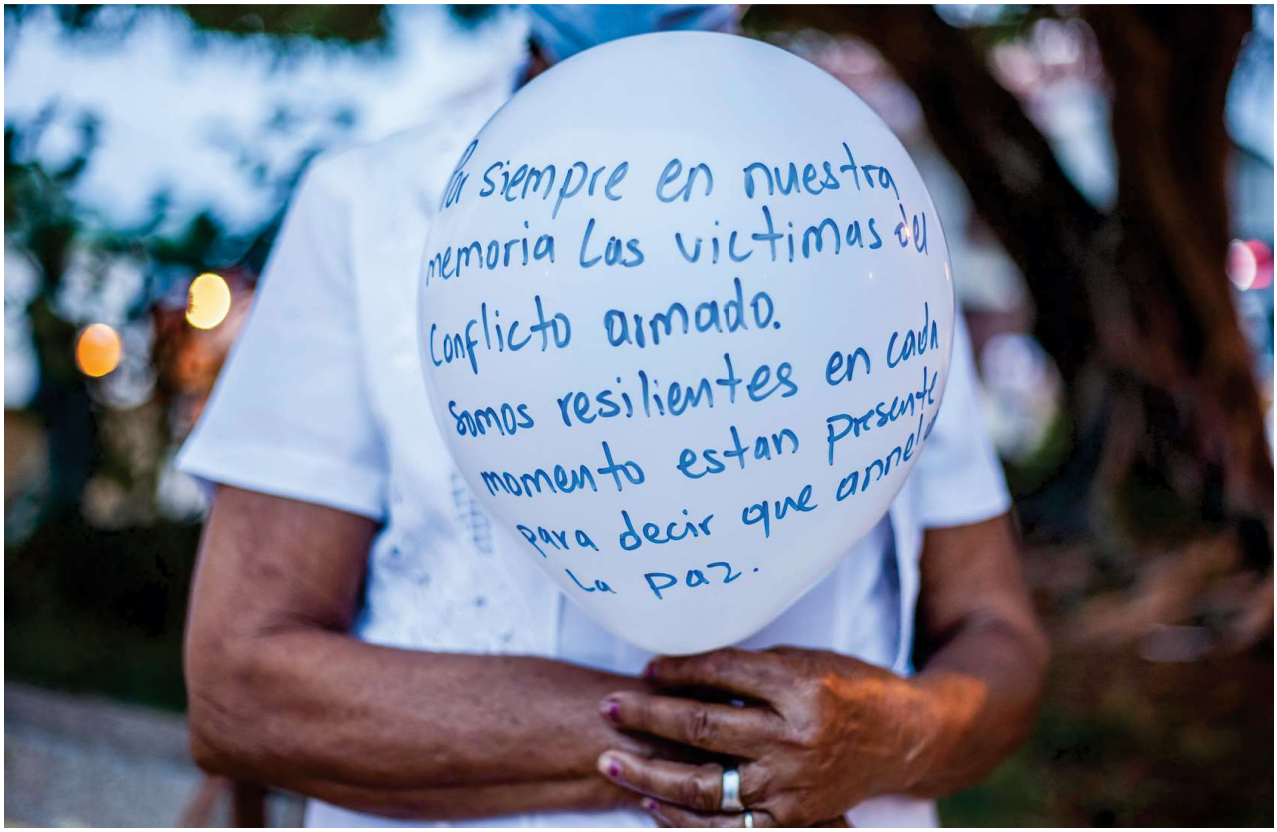
As described in Section I, the South African government paid reparations to survivors of apartheid gross human rights violations, in the form of in the form of once-off cash grants of R30,000 to about 17,000 people. Equivalent to about R84,000 in 2024, this approach has been retrospectively criticised for reasons including the narrowly defined group of eligible recipients; the diminished value of the grants paid, compared with the TRC's recommendations; and the very limited progress

in accompanying community reparations measures.[26] Government delays in making payments also frustrated recipients, with many in need of urgent support and financial assistance in the aftermath of physical and psychological trauma.[27] As one survivor explained during an interview in 2004,

> *"...I need medical treatment and psychological treatment, and these things require of me to use money. So, with the R30,000 that I received I am trying to buy myself the best treatment ever available, but the money is about to finish. What is going to happen is when that money is all gone, I will once again be confronted with realities that the pain is still here."[28]*

Reparations appear to have only partially contributed to "rehabilitating and restoring the human and civil dignity" in the short-term and achieved little in terms of improving livelihoods or catalysing economic change.[29]

Elsewhere, however, more ambitious direct cash transfer interventions have achieved greater societal impact. After decades of armed conflict, in 2011 the Colombian government passed the Victims' Law – considered to be one of the world's largest and most comprehensive peace-building and recovery initiatives. In addition to providing multi-sector support ranging from emergency assistance to housing subsidies, land restitution and micro-credit, the Victim's Law aims to pay cash reparations to 7.4 million individuals (about 14% of the population) by 2031.



Calculating the value of these individual payments required the challenging task of analysing and assigning monetary compensatory values according to a range of human rights violations, including internal displacement, forced disappearances and homicide.[30] Cash payment values are also indexed to the monthly national minimum wage, echoing the South African TRC's original recommendations of payments linked to median household income. According to Guarin (2022), in some cases, this has resulted in large, once-off payments of approximately $10,000 (around R180,000): about 40 times the minimum wage and, on average, three times the average annual household income of recipients.[31] Notably, the Colombian government has urged recipients to consider using reparations payments towards investment in long-term household well-being through, for example, establishing small businesses, securing housing and funding post-secondary education.[32]

The Victim's Law programme has been the subject of some criticism, including over the slow pace of implementation and the risk that the government has "over-promised and under-delivered."[33] Guzmán *et al.* (2023) point out that the programme has been extended by a decade from its original deadline of 2021, and the large number of outstanding payments has raised new questions about its sustainability going forward.[34]

At the same time, the authors note that payments to about 1.5 million recipients by 2023 already far exceed those achieved in other countries such as Peru (182,350 individuals and 7,678 communities), Guatemala (54,000 survivors) and Indonesia (collective reparations paid to an estimated

233,282 individuals in 1,724 communities, as well as 30,000 people receiving individual cash payments).[35] In addition, cash reparations payments have been shown to have a transformative socioeconomic effect on recipients. A study by Guarin, Londoño-Vélez and Posso (2021) using Colombian government microdata found a range of positive effects among recipients, including better working conditions, higher wages, improved business survival rates, increased educational attendance and less health care utilisation, "consistent with improved health due to better working and living conditions."[36]

USA: State and local reparations

The US government has been called to account and paid reparations and financial settlements following human rights violations dating back to the 1700s.[37] These include, among many others, a $9 million out-of-court settlement for the subjects of the Tuskegee syphilis experiments, in which black men's illnesses were left untreated, and $117 million to survivors of radiation exposure from nuclear testing.[38]

The Indian Claims Commission operated between 1946 and 1978 and oversaw the payment of approximately $800 million for stolen land.[39] In the late 1980s, Congress issued an apology and awarded payments of $20,000 each to Japanese Americans and immigrants imprisoned in internment camps during World War II.[40]

In 2020, the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent rise of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement also increased the momentum of a longstanding national dialogue on reparations for formerly enslaved black Americans and their descendants. US House Resolution 40 (H.R. 40) was reintroduced to Congress in 2023 and seeks to establish a Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans.[41]

As described by Human Rights Watch, black Americans "continue to feel the impacts of enslavement today in the form of structural racism, violence, discrimination and disparities in health, housing, environmental outcomes, education, economics, policing and law enforcement."[42] A 2020 study by Citi GPS estimated that failing to close the racial wealth gap "has cost the US economy up to $16 trillion over the past 20 years."[43]

The current prospects of H.R. 40 passing may be limited, given opposition from Republican lawmakers.[44] However, some advances have been made at the state and local levels, where reparations commissions and task forces have been established to focus on issues including housing discrimination, mass incarceration, community investments and financial support measures.[45]

California was the first state to establish a Reparations Task Force in 2020.[46] After more than two years of investigations and public hearings, the

Task Force issued a report to the state legislature recommending payments of up to $1.2 million each to eligible recipients, as well as far-reaching proposals to remedy issues including housing segregation, unequal education, environmental racism, legal injustices and mental and physical harm.[47]

Twenty-two cities and towns and 10 other states have also taken steps to establish reparations commissions or task forces.[48] Many of these have focused on sector-specific discrimination and reparations. Evanston, Illinois, established the first city reparations programme, pledging $10 million in support over ten years. Its first initiative was a Restorative Housing Programme that paid grants of up to $25,000 to eligible black residents who experienced housing discrimination between 1919 and 1969, to be used towards home purchases or repairs.[49]

Focusing on higher education, Virginia state lawmakers established a scholarship fund for eligible residents and their descendants who were "locked out of public schools for five years during Massive Resistance, in which the district and others in the state refused to comply with the Supreme Court's desegregation order." [50]

Global South: Negotiations and litigation

While South Africa, Colombia and the US have investigated and paid reparations for domestic human rights violations, there are also increasing calls for accountability and compensation for the atrocities of the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism. Although dialogue and negotiations are underway, some claimants have turned to litigation to remedy past harms.

The British Empire was one of the largest colonisers in history, controlling more than 60 now-independent states throughout the Caribbean, Africa and Asia.[51] In 2009, the British government was taken to court by a group of Kenyan nationals over acts of torture and abuse committed during the 1952 State of Emergency, known as the Mau Mau Revolution. More than a million Kenyans were displaced from their homes, thousands were killed, and many others were detained in concentration camps where "abuse and torture was commonplace." Over 5,000 survivors were awarded £19.9 million through an out-of-court settlement, although the government stopped short of apologising or proposing further reparations.[52]

The Kenyan case may be just one of others to come for the UK. In October 2024, Commonwealth member countries – many former British colonies – agreed that the "time has for a meaningful, truthful and respectful conversation" about the transatlantic slave trade and moving towards "forging a common future based on equity." African, Caribbean, and Pacific nations are calling for talks on financial compensation, although thus far, the UK has been unwilling to participate.[53]

Britain is not the only former coloniser to be called to account for past atrocities. German colonisers in Namibia seized ancestral lands and killed an estimated of 75,000 indigenous Herero and Nama people between 1904 and 1908 in what is known as one of the first genocides of the 20th century.[54] After calls for justice began in the early 2000s, Germany ultimately recognised the genocide for the first time in 2021 and pledged a billion euros in funding to Namibia over a 30-year period, although

this agreement was framed as a gesture of reconciliation rather than direct reparations.[55] This agreement, however, has been criticised by affected community members excluded from the consultation process, who have subsequently filed a case in Namibia's High Court calling for the terms to be renegotiated.[56]

In 2020, a Dutch court ordered the Netherlands government to compensate the survivors and children of Indonesian nationals massacred in South Sulawesi province in the 1940s in an effort to suppress the growing independence movement.[57] In 2022, then Prime Minister Mark Rutte apologised to Indonesia after a historical review confirmed that the "Dutch military had engaged in systematic, excessive and unethical violence during Indonesia's 1945-1949 struggle for independence, and this had been condoned by the Dutch government and society at the time."[58]

As within the Commonwealth, AU member states are intensifying efforts to collectively call on colonisers and countries involved in the transatlantic slave trade to pay reparations for historic mass crimes. In 2023, the AU entered into a partnership with Caribbean countries to create a "united front."[59]

The AU has also signed an MOU with the ATJLF that includes cooperation and support in areas such as Transitional Justice, Reparatory Justice and Racial Healing.[60] The announcement of a 2025 annual theme of "Justice for Africans and people of African descent through reparations" is further evidence of the AU's growing pursuit of "reparations owed to Africans both on the continent and in the diaspora, acknowledging the profound harm caused by the transatlantic slave trade, slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonialism."[61]

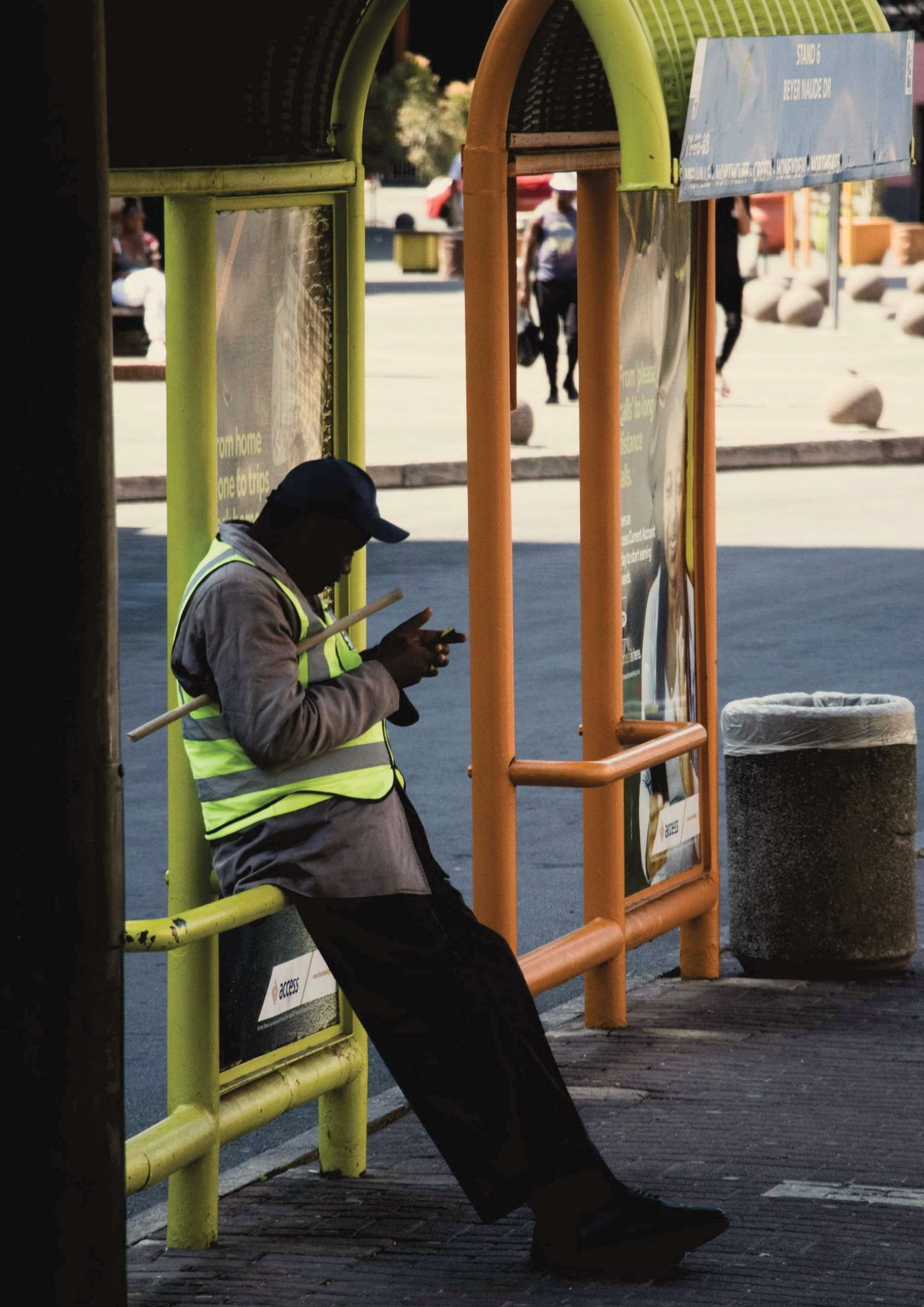
> "The entire continent of Africa deserves a formal apology from the European nations involved in the slave trade. No amount of money can restore the damage caused by the transatlantic slave trade and its consequences. But surely, this is a matter that the world must confront and can no longer ignore."
>
> Nana Akufo-Addo
> President of Ghana

Key Findings

Post-conflict economic transformation:
In spite of fiscal constraints and administrative challenges, Colombia is implementing a large-scale reparations programme targeting millions of survivors. Emerging evidence shows that cash reparations have contributed to improved livelihoods, educational, and health outcomes.

Regional, sector-specific reparations:
While the outcome of efforts to establish a national Reparations Commission in the US remains unclear, states and cities have established regional and local commissions and task forces. Reparations payments and programmes have included sector-specific measures to remedy discrimination in areas including housing and education.

Securing reparations through litigation:
Amid calls for accountability by colonisers and countries active in the transatlantic slave trade, survivor groups have successfully taken perpetrators to court and received compensation for past atrocities. Such successes may bolster emerging advocacy and claims from other groups, countries and regional organisations in the Global South.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access

IV. An Unshifting Economy

In spite of the democratic advances achieved since 1994, many of the fundamental structures of the economy have remained largely unchanged in the post-apartheid period. As a result, the unjust patterns established and reinforced through hundreds of years of colonialism and apartheid continue to be "reproduced in a different fashion, even [though] the original form of injustice may appear to have ended." [62]

> "Historical and present injustices should be regarded as the *same injustice*"

Apartheid reparations – whether in the form of individual cash grants, investment in community programmes or other complimentary interventions - were not intended as a tool of economic transformation. However, the limited economic change achieved to date and evidence of the developmental potential of reparations programmes elsewhere suggests that South Africa may have missed an opportunity to more directly fund interventions aimed at reform and inclusion.

This section of the report presents recent economic data on poverty, income inequality and employment as evidence of this lack of change and the continued and disproportionate consequences for black South Africans.

Poverty

The National Party (NP) enacted apartheid as official state policy following its victory in the 1948 elections. Apartheid built on the foundations created by colonists to purposefully privilege white South Africans and keep black people poor. As documented extensively elsewhere, this included Dutch and British colonisers enslaving Indigenous people as well as

centuries of forced removals, land seizures, segregation, labour control and exclusion from amenities and services such as decent housing, education and healthcare.[63]

Vimal Ranchhod and Miquel Pellicer (2020) confirm that these policies were "explicitly designed to induce productivity advantages and disadvantages for white people and black people respectively" and the "number of ways and ruthlessness with which this was achieved is quite overwhelming." These included, among others, racial wage differences for individuals performing the same job and restrictions on "property ownership, the right to start businesses, geographic mobility, access to healthcare, access to public transport, residential segregation, and access to educational opportunities."[64]

That the incoming GNU established after the 1994 elections inherited a deeply unequal and fractured country has never been in question. The late Emeritus Professor Sampie Terreblanche characterised the democratic transition as a "political miracle", yet one that also "unleashed pent-up expectations of a restoration of social justice and a dramatic improvement in the living conditions" of black people.[65]

Measuring poverty

In his 2024 February State of the Nation Address (SONA), President Cyril Ramaphosa commended the democratic government for implementing policies that have "lifted millions of people out of dire poverty." Ramaphosa cited World Bank data estimating that the percentage of poor

people in South Africa fell from 71% in 1993 to 61% in 2010 and 56% in 2020.[66]

Measuring, analysing and reporting on current poverty levels is challenging and complex, and this is compounded by the lack of recent national data.[67] Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) last conducted the Income and Expenditure Survey (IES) in 2014/15, although an updated survey is scheduled for release in early 2025.[68] South Africa also uses three different poverty lines (upper-bound, lower-bound and food poverty) in addition to the ultra-low international poverty line linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[69]

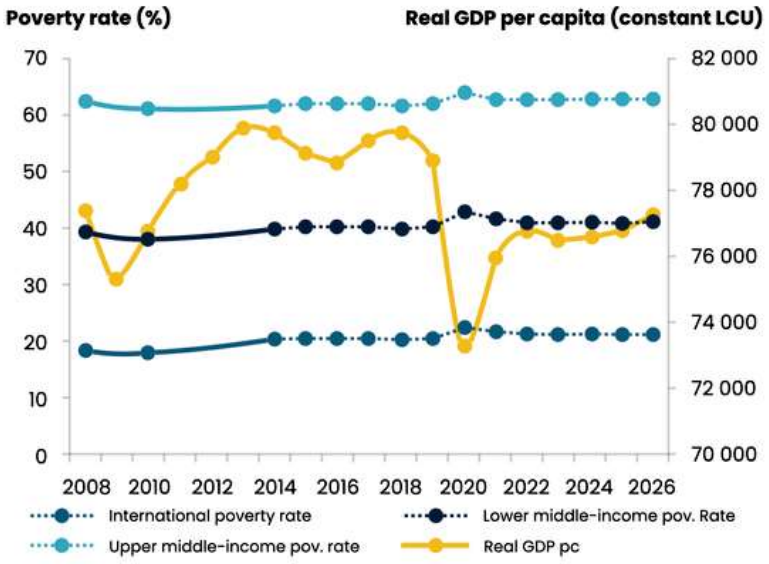
David Francis and Edward Webster (2019) of Wits University describe a "general consensus that money-metric poverty [had] declined in South Africa" but add that Stats SA data shows an increase between 2011 and 2015, when more than half (56%) of all South Africans were poor.[70]

Poverty does not affect all South Africans equally. Almost two out of every three South African children (64%) were poor in 2015. In the same year, only 4% of white people were poor, compared with 21% of Asian/Indian, 57% of coloured and 71% of black South Africans. [71]

More recent World Bank projections also show relatively unchanging poverty rates rather than improvements over time (Figure 4). The Bank estimates that in 2023, 63% of South Africans were poor, using the 2022 upper-middle-income poverty line of $6.85 per person per day. [72] Using the average 2023 exchange rate(about R18.45/$1), this is equal to about R126 per day or R3,791 per month.

Figure 4

Actual and projected poverty rates and real GDP per capita



Source: World Bank 2024

Experiences of poverty

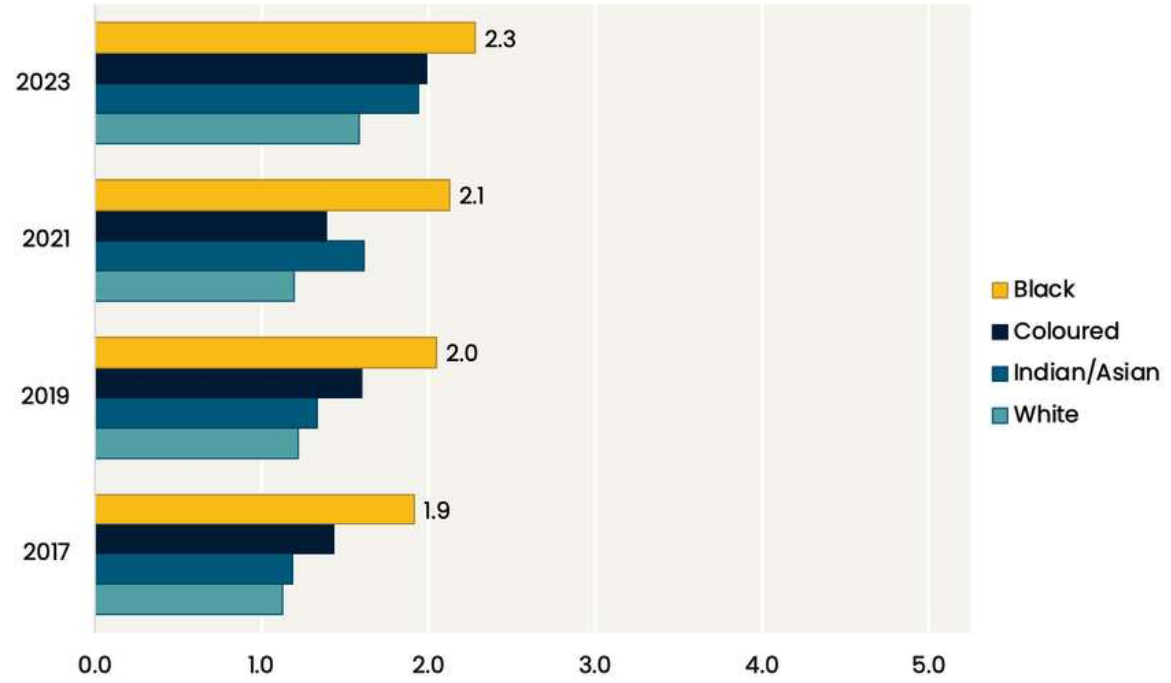
Data on poverty rates can seem opaque. The ways in which data is presented can reinforce the belief that poverty affects all people in the same ways, as do other macroeconomic trends such as the global slowdown in growth rates or the international cost-of-living crisis. It is important to continually foreground people's experiences of poverty, and how these can differ by geography, gender, physical ability, age and race, among other factors.

The Reconciliation Barometer survey includes a composite Lived Poverty Index (LPI). It is calculated based on responses to six survey questions that measure how often people have gone without the following basic necessities over the previous year: enough food to eat, clean water for home use, medicine or medical treatment, fuel to cook food, a cash income, and electricity (excluding load-shedding). LPI values range from one to five, in which one represents the lowest level of lived poverty and five represents the highest.

The Barometer has included the LPI since 2017. Over this six-year period, which included the COVID-19 pandemic, average lived poverty scores have increased among South Africans of all races (Figure 5). However, there are statistically significant differences ($p<.001$) in average LPI scores between South Africans of different races, with black people experiencing higher levels of poverty than others in every survey round since 2017.

Figure 5

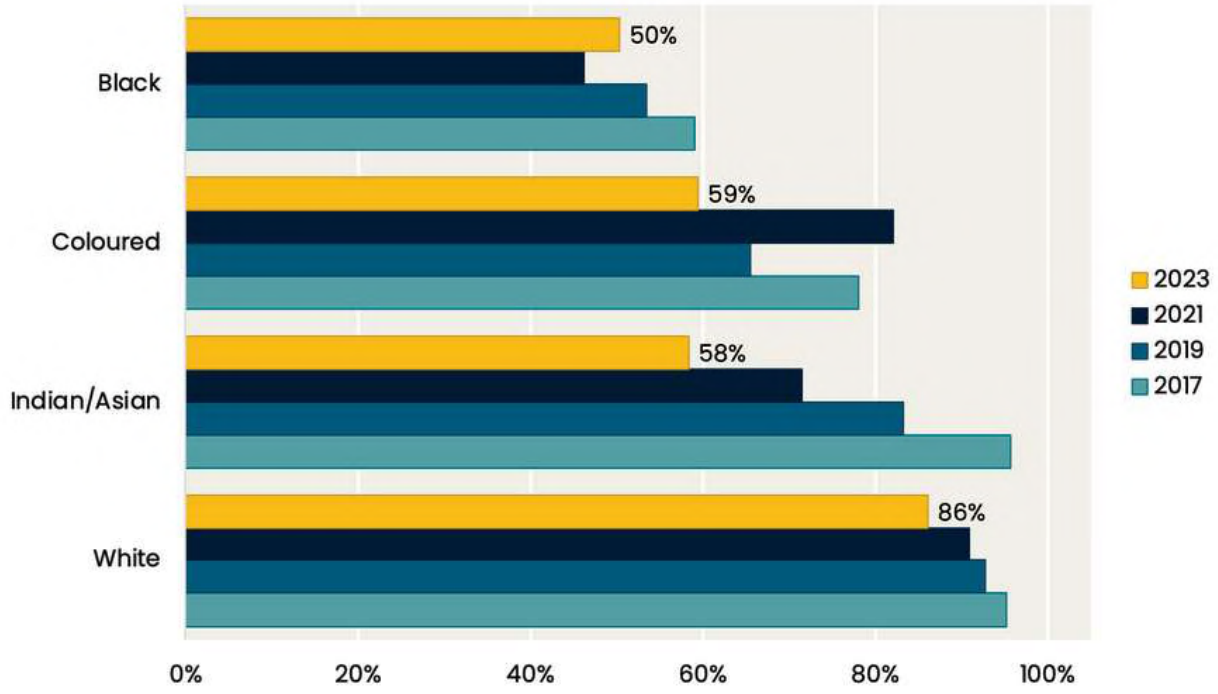
LPI by race, 2017 – 2023 (mean)



Source: SA Reconciliation Barometer

Figure 6

Never gone without enough food by race, 2017 - 2023



Source: SA Reconciliation Barometer

Analysing responses to the individual LPI questions also offers additional perspectives on racialised differences in experiences of poverty. In 2023, 86% of white South Africans had never gone without enough food to eat in the past year (Figure 6). Comparatively, consistent food security was far lower among black (50%), coloured (59%) and Indian/Asian (58%) South Africans.

The Household Affordability Index published by the Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group offers further insight into lived poverty and food insecurity. Developed with women living on low incomes in cities and towns across South Africa, the Index tracks typical retail pricing using data on the types and volumes of food that women purchase for their households on a monthly basis. While noting that this is not representative of all communities, the Index provides an innovative and insightful alternative to the consumer price index (CPI).[73]

In one of a series of scenarios published in October 2024, the Household Affordability Index highlighted challenges and competing costs confronting low-income earners. The average monthly income of a full-time worker earning minimum wage was R5,075. Black workers support 4.1 people on average per single wage while white workers support 2.6 people. The estimated cost of basic food for a family of four (nutritionally incomplete) was R3,751 per month.

In this scenario, return taxi fares to work total R1,840 and prepaid electricity purchases amount to R1,043. Taken together, these costs result in a shortfall of -R1,559 per month before any other expenses – such as housing, healthcare or education – are even taken into account. As a result, households ultimately "secure non-negotiable expenses like transport and electricity" and underspend on food (Figure 7). [74]

With many families unable to buy enough nutritious foods, children in particular are experiencing malnutrition and its physical, emotional and developmental consequences. A nationally representative survey conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) found that one in four South African children under five years old experience stunting due to malnutrition. These figures rise to almost half of all children under five in the Northern and Western Cape provinces. [75]

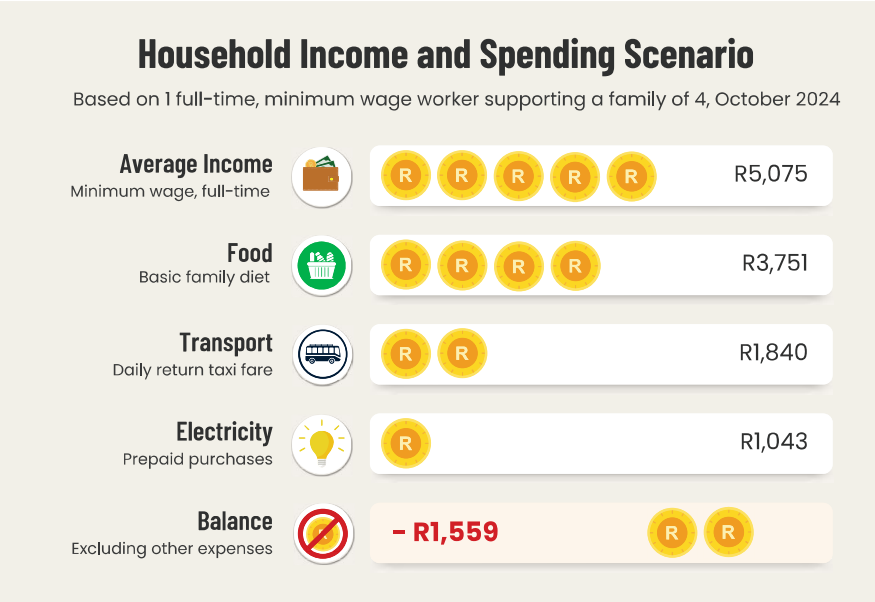
Income inequality

Levels of income inequality have also remained among the highest in the world since 1994. Inequality, as described by Francis and Webster (2019), is "maintained by several structural forces which cannot be understood in isolation from the structures of economic and social power that were entrenched under apartheid, many of which persist today."[76]

Once again, the lack of an IES since 2014/15 limits available national data on inequality. Extensive new analyses will likely be conducted when Stats SA releases its next round of results.

Figure 7

Household income and spending scenario, October 2024



Data source: Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group Household Affordability Index

The United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) has also developed a Gini Index compiled from multiple data sources. The Index measures overall income inequality from zero to 100, with zero representing perfect equality. The results show income inequality levels ranging from 67% to 74% in South Africa, with relatively little variation between 1994 and 2020 (Figure 8). According to UN-WIDER, in 2020 the top 10% of earners in South Africa brought home 54% of national annual income, while the bottom 40% received only a 5% share.[77]

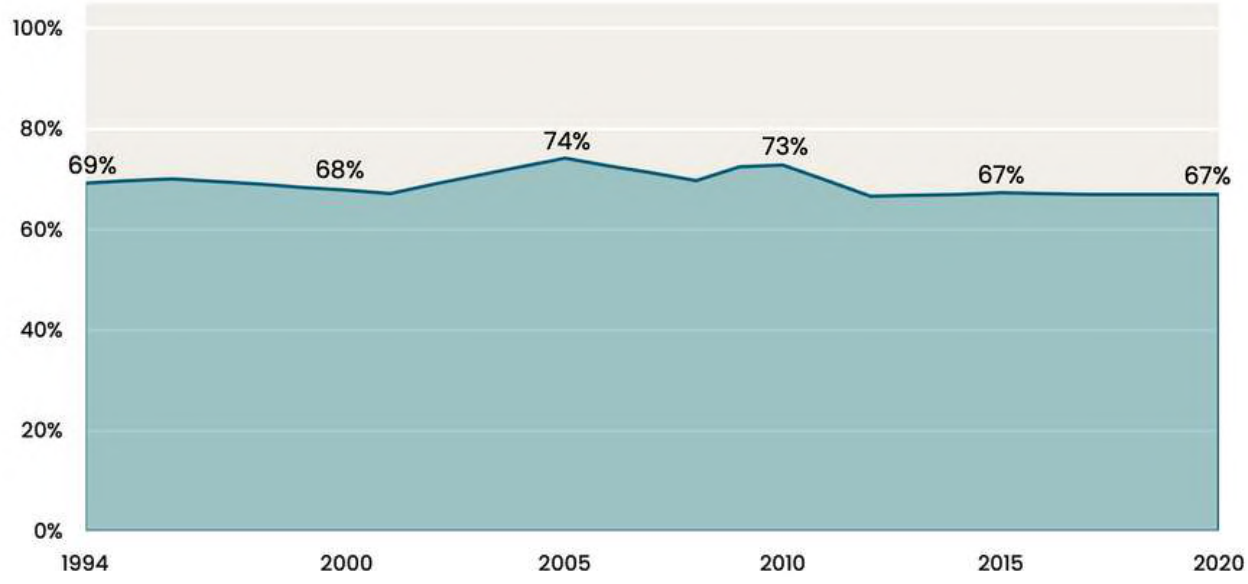
Experiences of wealth

What does it mean to be part of the top 10%? Or the top 1% in South Africa? Johannesburg and Cape Town, where many families underspend on food and thousands of children are malnourished, are also the two wealthiest cities in Africa and home to 19,700 US dollar millionaires.[78] The average income of the top 10% of earners in 2020 was R93,453 per month (based on an average annual income of $68,110 and an average annual exchange rate of R16.47/$1), according to the World Inequality Database. This is 40 times higher than the average of the lowest 40% of earners (Figure 9).[79]

Also in 2020, the richest 10% of South Africans possessed 85% of net personal wealth. In comparison, the least wealthy 50% shared -2% of net personal wealth, meaning that their debts and liabilities were higher than the value of their savings or property (Figure 10).[80]

Figure 8

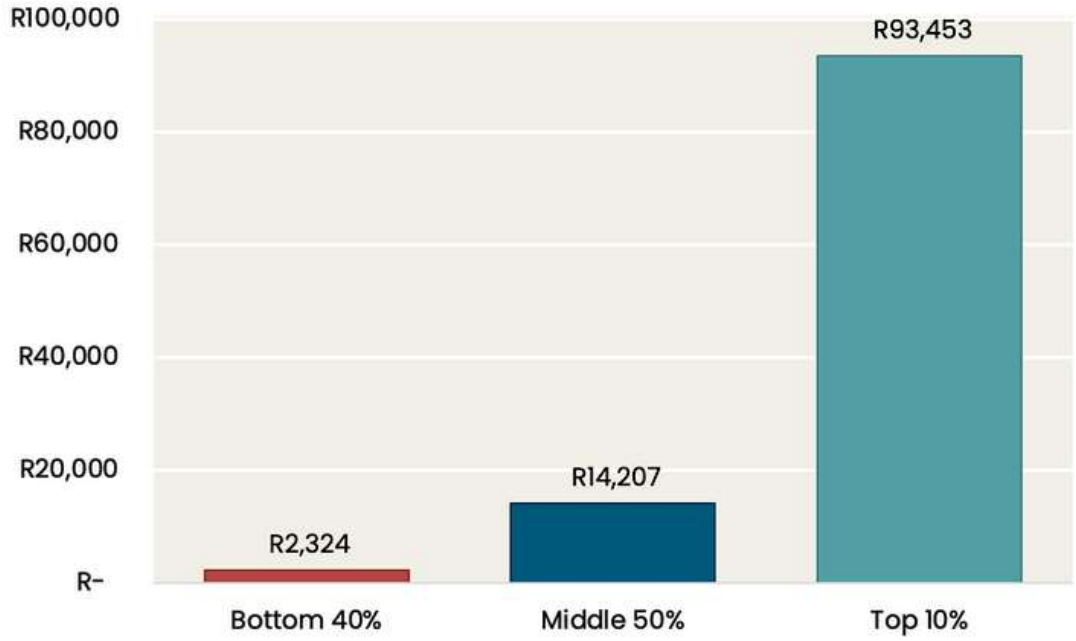
South African income inequality as measured by Gini Index, 1994 – 2020



Source: UNU-WIDER

Figure 9

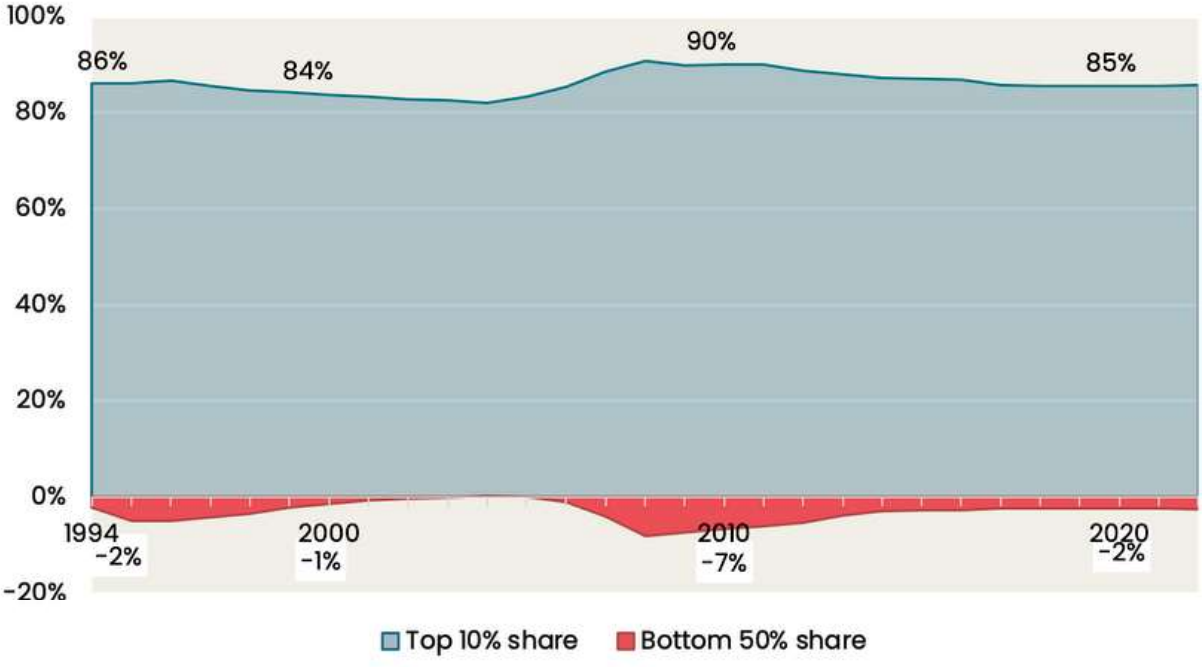
Average monthly income 2020



Source: World Inequality Database

Figure 10

Net personal wealth 1994-2022



Source: World Inequality Database

Social consequences

Severe inequality and its differential consequences reinforce experiences and feelings of injustice in society. Excluding people from participating in economic and social life threatens growth, social cohesion and democracy and is "conducive to increasing distrust and the generation of conflict and violence." [81]

The Reconciliation Barometer has consistently found that South Africans view inequality as the biggest source of social division in the country (Figure 11). More than a third (36%) answered in this way in 2023, followed by the gap between members of different political parties.

Survey results also show that economic inequality is a more pronounced and growing concern for black South Africans than other groups of people. In 2023, black South Africans (39%) were almost twice as likely as people of other races to identify inequality as the biggest source of division (Figure 12).

In comparison, South Africans of other race groups tended to select inequality as one of two main identified sources of social division in relatively similar shares. For coloured South Africans, inequality (23%) was closely followed by the divide between people living with infectious diseases (such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis) and the rest of the community (21%). Inequality (24%) was secondary to the division between citizens and migrants (26%) among Indian/Asian people. Equal percentages of white people identified inequality (22%) and race (22%) as the leading sources of division in the country. While results have fluctuated over time, the percentage of black South Africans identifying inequality as the leading source of division increased by 10 percentage between 2003 and 2023 (Figure 13).

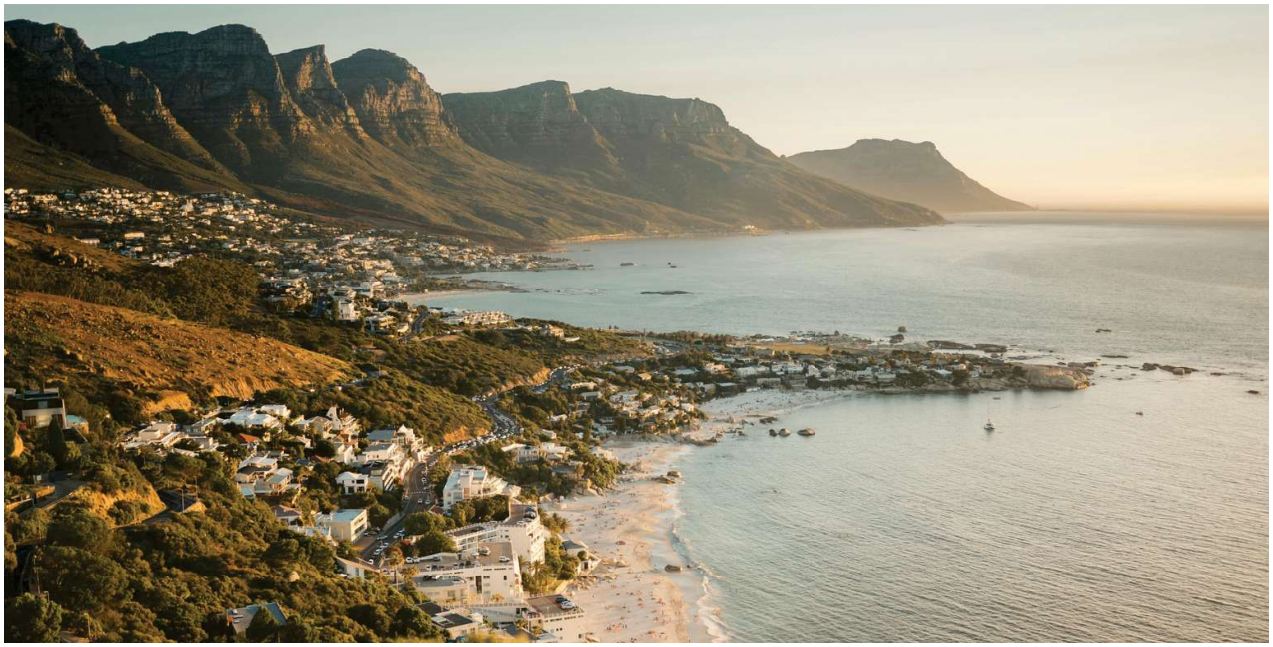
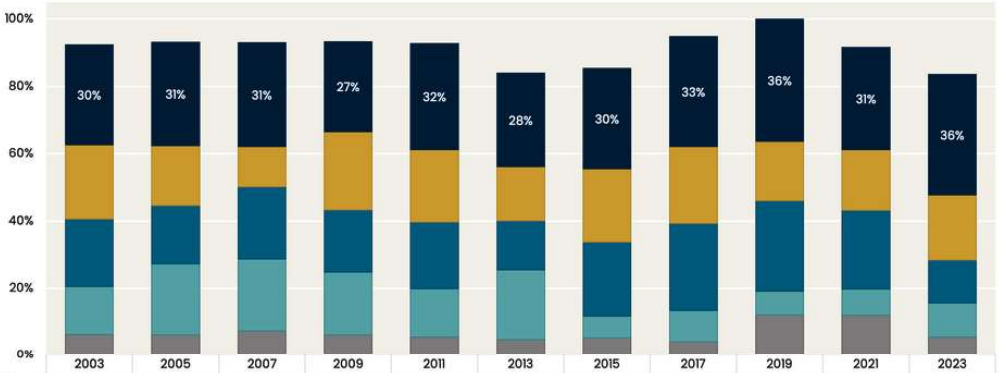


Figure 11

Biggest source of division in the country, 2003 - 2023



	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2021	2023
Income inequality	30%	31%	31%	27%	32%	28%	30%	33%	36%	31%	36%
Political party support	22%	18%	12%	23%	21%	16%	22%	23%	17%	18%	19%
Race	20%	17%	21%	19%	20%	15%	22%	26%	27%	23%	13%
Disease	14%	21%	21%	19%	14%	21%	6%	9%	7%	8%	10%
Language	6%	6%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	12%	12%	6%

Figure 12

Biggest source of division in the country by race, 2023

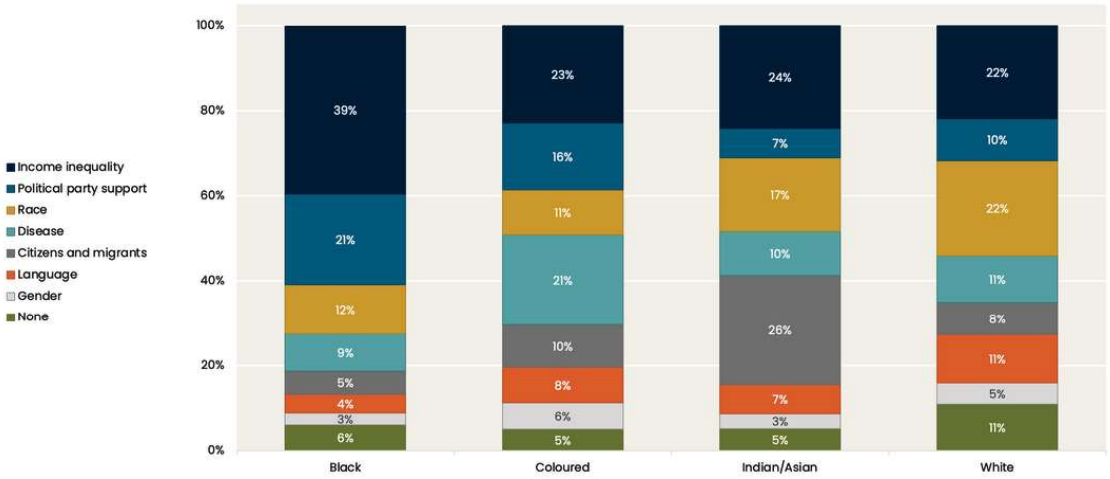
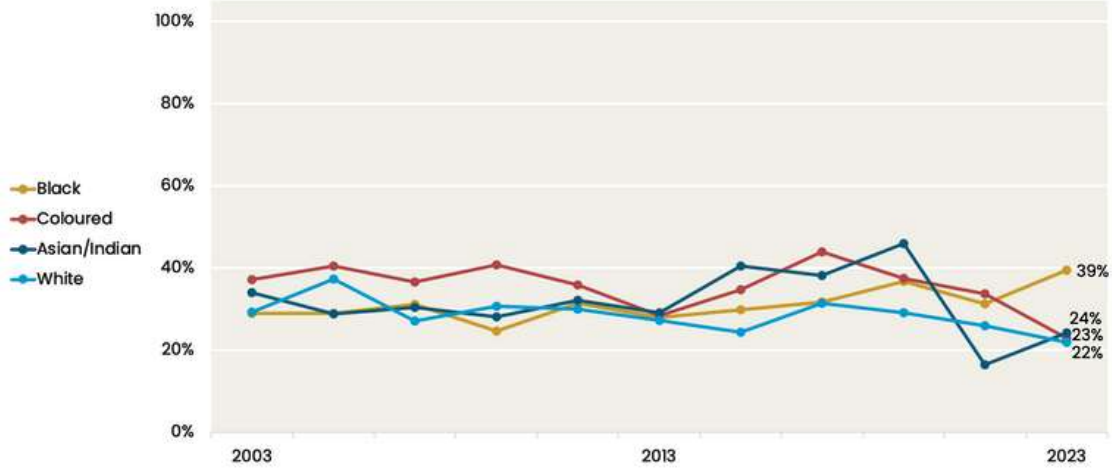


Figure 13

Inequality as biggest division, by race



Source: SA Reconciliation Barometer (all)

Remedies for inequality?

Francis and Webster (2019) suggest that while the government has focused on poverty alleviation through national policy, such as through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) launched in 1994, remedies for economic inequality have not been prioritised. Effectively addressing economic inequality, the authors suggest, would require a purposeful and multi-sectoral strategic approach and would necessitate addressing the longstanding "distribution of economic power" in the country.[82]

The late former finance minister Pravin Gordhan established the Davis Tax Committee in 2013, which aimed to "the tax policy framework to assess how it could better support the objectives of inclusive growth, development, employment growth and fiscal sustainability."[83]

One of the interventions considered by the Committee was a wealth tax, as called for by Tutu and by Sampie Terreblanche in a 1997 testimony to the TRC.[84]

Although the Davis Committee ultimately concluded that more work was needed to assess the feasibility and impact of a wealth tax, this approach has been used to reduce inequality in other countries.[85] France, for example, levied a wealth tax (impôt de solidarité sur la fortune) on high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) between 1982 and 2018, at rates ranging from 0.5% to 1.5%.[86]

Although it was abolished and replaced with a targeted real estate tax, in October 2024 French lawmakers again voted in favour of a new levy taxing assets above the €1 billion threshold at 2%, which is expected to generate at least €13 billion for the state.[87] Norway has maintained a wealth tax since 1892, and Spain reintroduced a similar measure following the 2008 financial crisis.[88] Economist Gabriel Zucman suggests that because ultra-HNWIs pay less tax relative to their income than other groups, a "coordinated worldwide minimum standard ensuring that dollar billionaires pay at least 2% of their wealth in individual (income plus wealth) taxes each year" could generate $200–250 billion per year that would assist in meeting the SDGs by 2030. Beyond revenue alone, Zucman suggests, such a tax "is expected to increase social trust and cohesion and perceptions of fairness."[89]

Employment and economic participation

A third crucial area in which the structure of the South African economy has not changed enough is employment and economic participation. Stats SA administers the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) and reports on unemployment rates in two ways: the

the official (narrow) unemployment rate; and the expanded rate, which includes "discouraged" job seekers who have not actively looked for work in the previous four-week period. These rates include South Africans between the ages of 15 and 64 years old.[90]

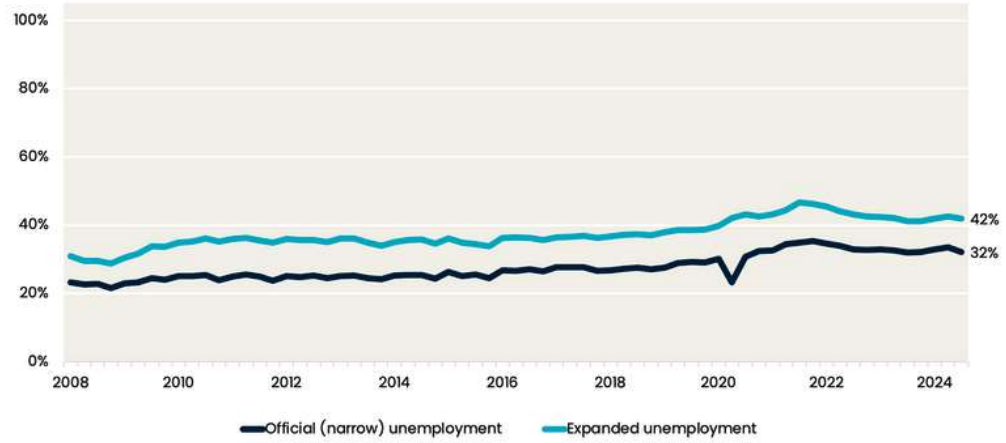
The official unemployment rate for the third quarter of 2024 (from July to September) was 32%. Of the more than 41 million South Africans of working age, about 17 million were employed, 8 million were unemployed, 3 million were "discouraged", and 13 million were "not economically active" (NEA). The NEA group includes students, home-makers, and persons unable to work due to illness or physical ability, among others. The expanded unemployment rate was even higher, at 42% (Figure 14).[91] Even when jobs are created – including about 790,000 in 2023 – the pace of job creation is not keeping up with growth in the labour force.[92]

As with poverty and inequality measures, looking only at national rates obscures the reality that these differ for the many groups of people in the country. Black women, for example, experience the highest rates of unemployment (39%), while white men experience the lowest levels (8%) (Figure 15).[93]

Unemployment levels are also unsustainably high for young South Africans finishing education and seeking to enter the workforce. Six in ten (60%) young South Africans between the ages of 15 and 24 who were available and actively looking for a job were unemployed in the third quarter of 2024. Four in ten (40%) aged 25 to 34 were unemployed during the same period. Comparatively, unemployment rates were only 11% among people 55 to 64 years old (Figure 16). According to Stats SA, more than 3 million young South Africans ages 15 to 24 are not in employment, education or training (NEET).[94]

Figure 14

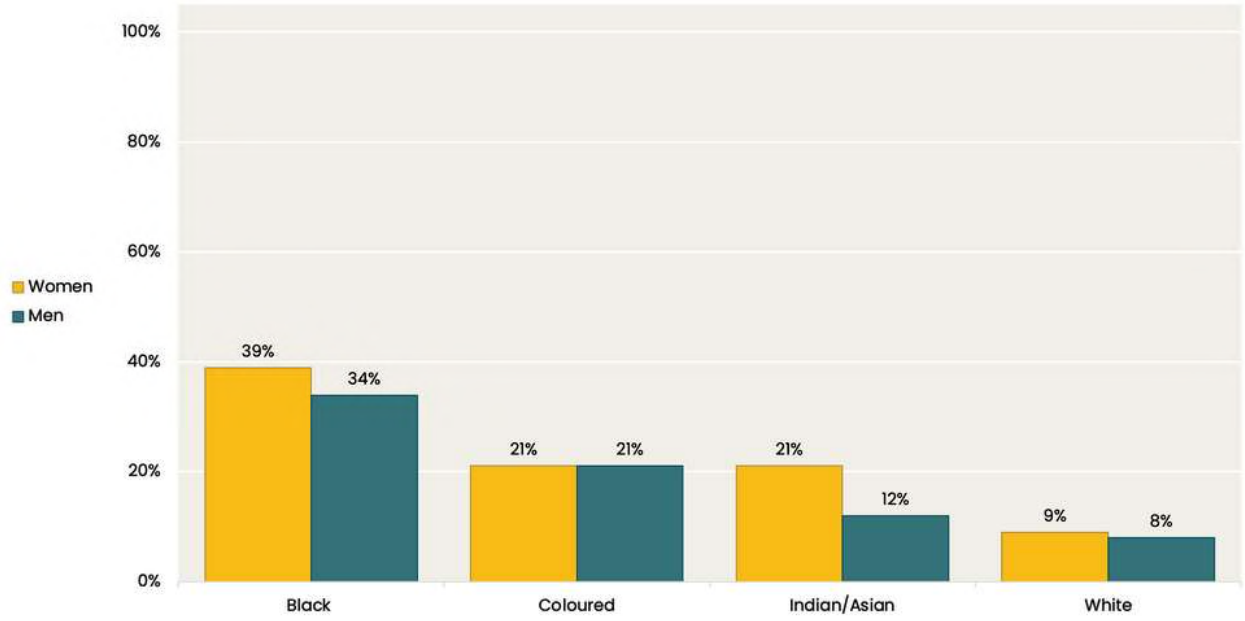
Unemployment rates, 2008-2024



Source: Stats SA QLFS via Outlier Insights

Figure 15

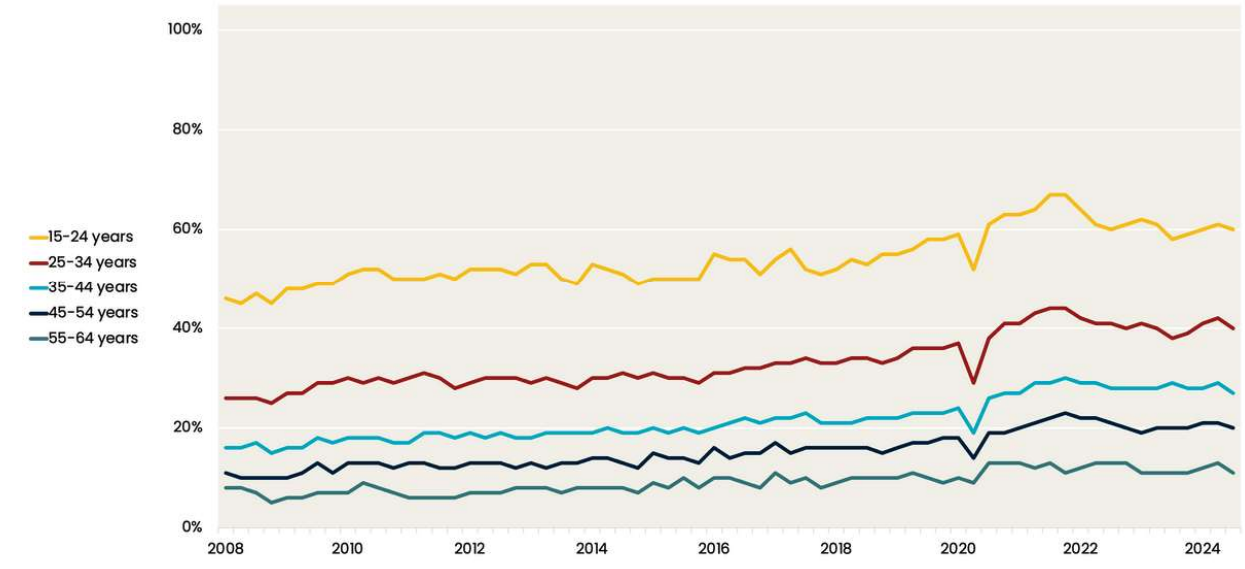
Unemployment (narrow) by race and sex, Q3 2024



Source: Stats SA QLFS

Figure 16

Unemployment (narrow) by age, 2008-2024



Source: Stats SA QLFS via Outlier Insights

Key Findings

Structural inequality:
Colonial and apartheid policies established structures and systems that continue to be reproduced in the economy today. These have led to consistently high rates of poverty, income inequality and unemployment that have not been reversed in post-apartheid South Africa.

Poverty:
The World Bank estimates that about six in ten South Africans are poor, and this has remained relatively consistent since 2008. Poverty rates are lowest among white South Africans. Many South African children experience poverty, leading to malnutrition and high rates of stunting.

Income inequality:
South Africa has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world, and this is an obstacle to reconciliation and social cohesion. A small percentage of wealthy South Africans continue to possess most of the wealth in the country.

Employment:
About four out of ten South Africans are unemployed by the expanded definition, although unemployment rates are lowest among white men at around 8%. Job creation has not kept pace with population growth, and six in ten young jobseekers aged 15 – 25 are unemployed at a life stage when they should be finishing education and entering the workforce, suggesting that economic exclusion is likely to continue and increase.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DORA TAMANA
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FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN
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JUNE 16
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Jonathan Claasen
Michael Mirand
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LLE Civic
SAVE THE PATRIOTS
Khoyinga
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Djantjies
We also
Remember
Those on death row
Mc Bride
We say to the government
STOP THESE KILLINGS
OUR CULTURE OUR STRENGTH
CULTURAL EVENTS
ART EXHIBITION
DRAMA MUSIC DANCE
POETRY SPEAKERS
CRAFTS & MORE
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ADMISSION FREE
ORGANISED BY COMMUNITY ARTS PROJECT TO CELEBRATE ITS TENTH ANNIVERSARY
CROSSRO
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Detentions under emergency regulations in 1985 7 878
Detentions under security legislation in 1985 3 637
TOTAL DETENTIONS 1985
Children under 16 detentions 2 106
UCT Report
83 percent tortured
Number tried 1 409
Number convicted 35
Arrested for political reasons 25 000
Bannings 1985 16
Daily Death Rate
— prior to emergency 1,68
— since emergency 3,68
— since press clampdown 4,10
— for 1986 5,47
NATIONAL DETAINEES DAY
RELEASE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS NOW
SEPTEMBE
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DETENTIONS!!!!
UDF LEADERS DETAINED
BANNINGS!!!!!!
MEETINGS IN 22 AREAS BANNED
REPRESSION!!!
PEOPLE SHOT DEAD IN TOWNSHIPS
KHUMBULA
STOP APARTHEID WARS
AWAY WIT
THIS TERRIBLE
PREFECT SYSTEM

V. Public Opinion on Reparations

Beyond periodic media reports and the efforts of a small number of activists, the South African national dialogue on issues of reparations has been largely dormant in recent years. Most cash grants were paid out after the TRC concluded and the President's Fund, while accruing interest, has been slow to invest in community reparations.[95]

Twenty years after the IJR conducted the first round of the Reconciliation Barometer, survey respondents were once again asked their opinions about apartheid and its effects on South African people. Some of these findings were also published in the 2023 Reconciliation Barometer Survey Report.[96]

> In 2023, most "born-free" survey respondents have no lived memory of apartheid

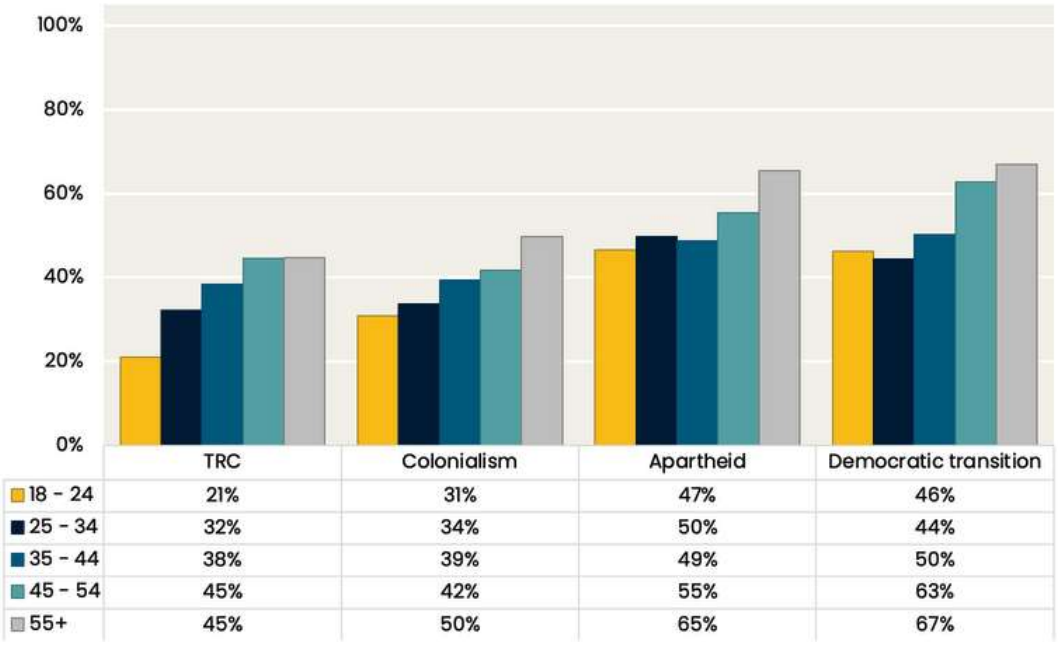
Knowledge of history

The first round of the Reconciliation Barometer was conducted in 2003, the same year that the TRC released its final report. In 2023, the youngest survey respondents were born a decade into democracy, popularly referred to as the "born-free" generation. Most have no lived memory of apartheid.

A series of new questions were introduced with the aim of understanding how much South Africans believe they know about the past, including colonialism, apartheid, the TRC and the democratic transition. Survey results show that self-reported knowledge about these key periods and events in history was lowest among young South Africans and highest among older people. Only a fifth (21%) of those aged 18–24, for example, answered that they knew quite a lot or a great deal about the TRC, while 45% of South Africans aged 45 or older answered in this way (Figure 17).

Figure 17

Knowledge of history by age, 2023*



	TRC	Colonialism	Apartheid	Democratic transition
18 - 24	21%	31%	47%	46%
25 - 34	32%	34%	50%	44%
35 - 44	38%	39%	49%	50%
45 - 54	45%	42%	55%	63%
55+	45%	50%	65%	67%

Source: SA Reconciliation Barometer
**Cumulative percentage, Quite a Lot + A Great Deal*

Our shared truth

The TRC sought to investigate and determine the official truth about politically-motivated gross human rights violations committed between 1960 and 1993. This process formed the basis for documenting the trauma of survivors, granting conditional amnesty and in some cases, paying reparations grants.[97]

The Barometer asks South Africans about the extent to which they agree or disagree with some of these truths about the past. The first of these relates to the designation of apartheid as a crime against humanity, as declared by the UN in 1966.[98] This is a legal term that refers to an intentional, widespread or systematic attack on civilians that includes a range of serious crimes, namely apartheid, enslavement, forced disappearances, murder, torture and sexual violence, among others.[99] A UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry recently found that Israel committed crimes of humanity in Gaza, including through targeted attacks on medical facilities and personnel; and in 2022, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released a report suggesting that the Chinese government "committed abuses that may amount to crimes against humanity targeting Uyghurs and other Turkic communities in the Xinjiang region."[100] Work is also underway within the UN to develop an International Convention on Crimes

Against Humanity. [101]

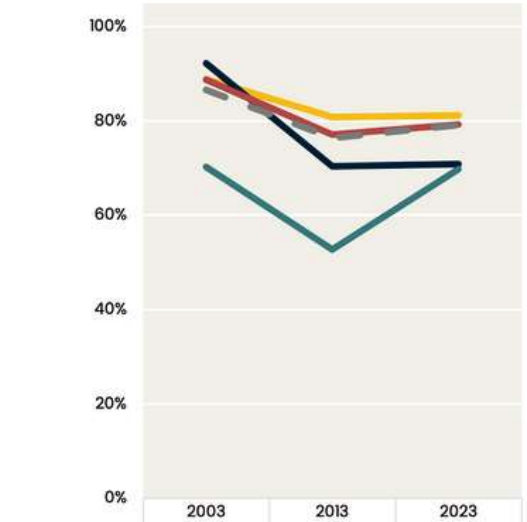
When asked about this in 2003, most South Africans (87%) agreed that it was certainly or probably true that apartheid was a crime against humanity – and a majority, although lower at 79%, still agreed with this characterisation in 2023 (Figure 18). Agreement, however, has always been lower among white South Africans than other groups, at 70% in 2003, falling to 53% in 2013 and then returning to 70% in 2023. Agreement in fact declined across all groups between 2003 and 2013 - consistent with a broadly negative turn in public opinion in the early 2010s, in this and other surveys – before recovering somewhat by 2023.

Similarly, 82% of South Africans agreed that the government committed atrocities against anti-apartheid activists - as investigated and documented through the TRC – but agreement was lower among white people than other groups in the country. Just over half (56%) of white South Africans agreed in 2003 that the government committed atrocities compared with 80% or more of all other groups. Agreement among white South Africans increased to 67% in 2023, but this remains below response rates for Indian/Asian (77%), coloured (78%) and black (84%) people (Figure 19).

Comparable results are evident in relation to results on apartheid crimes and exclusion. In 2023, a majority of South Africans (ranging from 74% to 81%, as shown in Figure 20) agreed that apartheid oppressed most people, inflicted racial violence and excluded black South Africans from education, land ownership and the ability to earn a decent livelihood. Agreement was lower among white people in response to all of these survey questions. The widest gap was in agreement with the statement that "black South Africans (this includes Black African, Indian and Coloured people) suffered violence because of their race." While 83% of black, 75% of coloured and 74% of Indian/Asian South Africans agreed, only 57% of white people answered in the same way.

Figure 18

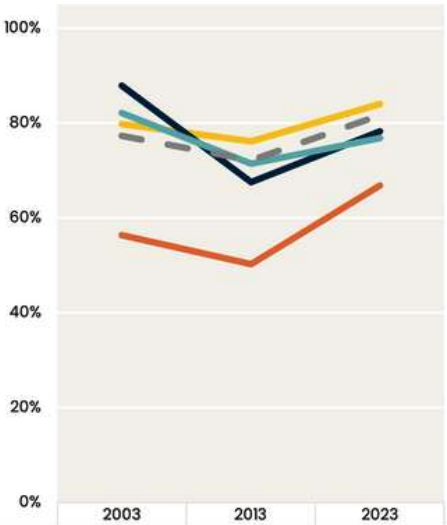
Apartheid was a crime against humanity by race, 2003-2023*



	2003	2013	2023
Black	89%	81%	81%
Coloured	92%	70%	71%
Indian/Asian	89%	77%	79%
White	70%	53%	70%
Total	87%	76%	79%

Figure 19

State committed atrocities against anti-apartheid activists by race, 2003-2023*

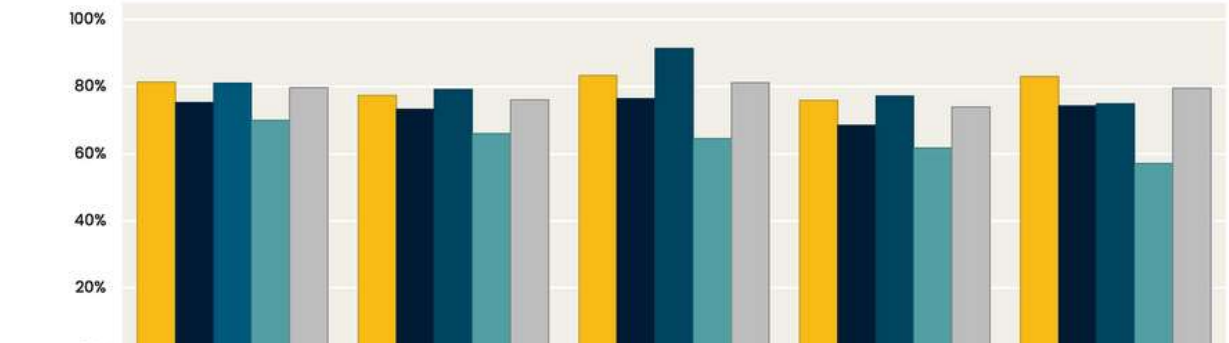


	2003	2013	2023
Black	80%	76%	84%
Coloured	88%	68%	78%
Indian/Asian	82%	71%	77%
White	56%	50%	67%
Total	77%	72%	82%

Source: SA Reconciliation Barometer
**In 2003 and 2013 these questions were asked using 4-point Likert scales with the following response categories: certainly true, probably true, probably untrue, certainly untrue. In 2017 these were converted to 5-point Likert scales, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Results show the cumulative percentage answering certainly true + probably true in 2003 and 2017; then strongly agree + agree in 2023.*

Figure 20

Apartheid exclusion and violence by race, 2023**



	Oppressed majority	Deprived of quality education	Deprived of land	Deprived of proper livelihoods	Inflicted racial violence
Black	81%	77%	83%	76%	83%
Coloured	75%	73%	76%	69%	74%
Indian/Asian	81%	79%	91%	77%	75%
White	70%	66%	65%	62%	57%
Total	80%	76%	81%	74%	80%

Source: SA Reconciliation Barometer
***Results show cumulative strongly agree + agree responses*

Commemorating the past

One of the main ways that South Africa has attempted to address the past is through the renaming of places and removal or replacement of symbols of apartheid and colonialism. William Nicol Drive in Johannesburg, for example, was renamed Winnie Mandela Drive in 2023 after the late anti-apartheid struggle activist. Nicol was a founding member of the Afrikaner nationalist Broederbond, which promoted white supremacy, and a proponent of apartheid racial segregation.[102]

Researchers at the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) have found that in spite of its reconciliatory aims, renaming has been meet with fairly negative reactions from a number of stakeholders. These have included protests and even a lawsuit in Tshwane "on the grounds that the ANC was erasing history and substituting it with its own politicised version of the past."[103] More name changes are still planned for the future, however, and the South African Geographical Names Council Chairperson Palesa Kadi has commented that it remains "critical that we show unity" and that everyone "embraces South Africa as a country for all people that live in it."[104]

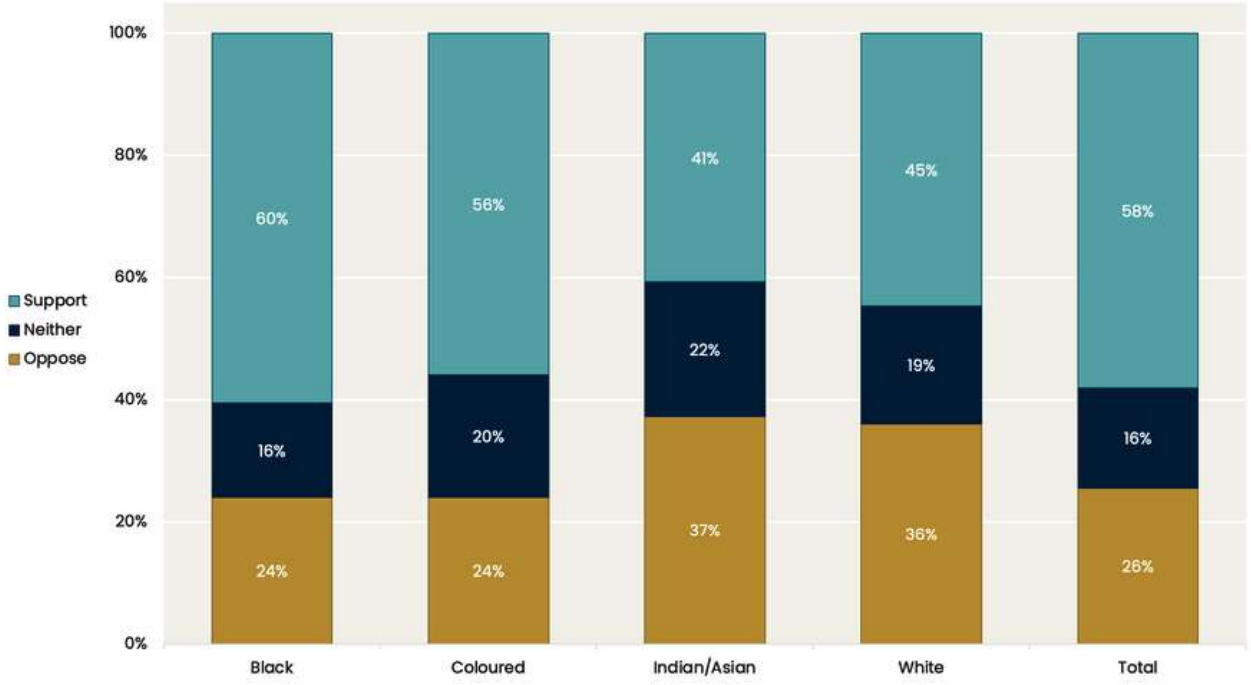
In 2023, the Reconciliation Barometer found that national support for renaming cities, streets and other public places was moderate overall at 58%.

As shown in Figure 21, more than one in four South Africans (26%) oppose renaming and this percentage is higher among Indian/Asian (37%) and white South Africans (36%).

Statues and memorials of apartheid and colonial leaders continue to be contested in democratic South Africa. The statue of British colonialist Cecil John Rhodes was ultimately removed from the University of Cape Town (UCT) campus following the Rhodes Must Fall movement, which, according to Professor Sophia Labadi, "opposed neoliberal economic systems which had failed to respond to fundamental change, especially in areas such as education."[105] The statue of Louis Botha, the first prime minister of the Union of South Africa (1910-1919), has been defaced on multiple occasions in its location just outside of Parliament.[106] However, comparable to renaming, support for removing these symbols is moderate overall at 56%. About one in four South Africans (26%) oppose the removal of memorials and symbols of apartheid and colonialism, with opposition once again stronger among white people at 35% (Figure 22).

Figure 21

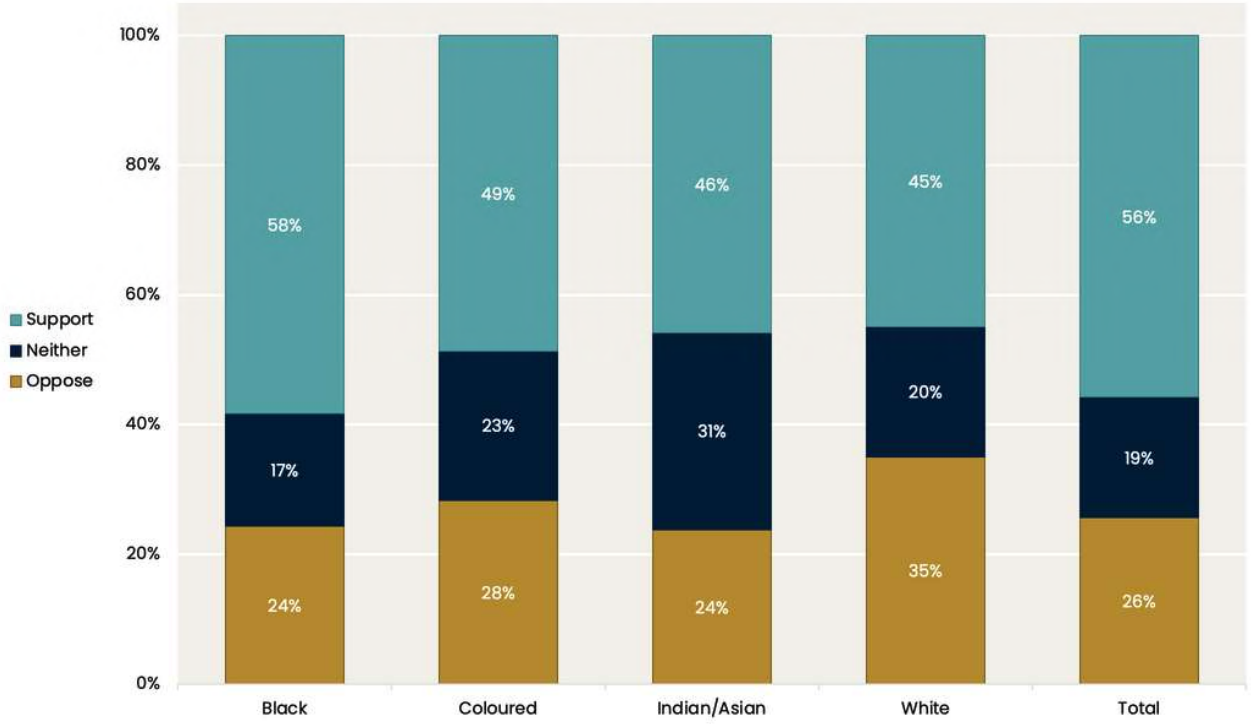
Support/opposition to renaming by race, 2023*



Source: SA Reconciliation Barometer
**Results show cumulative strongly support + support, and strongly oppose + oppose responses*

Figure 22

Support/opposition to removing apartheid symbols by race, 2023*



Source: SA Reconciliation Barometer
**Results show cumulative strongly support + support, and strongly oppose + oppose responses*

Mixed public support

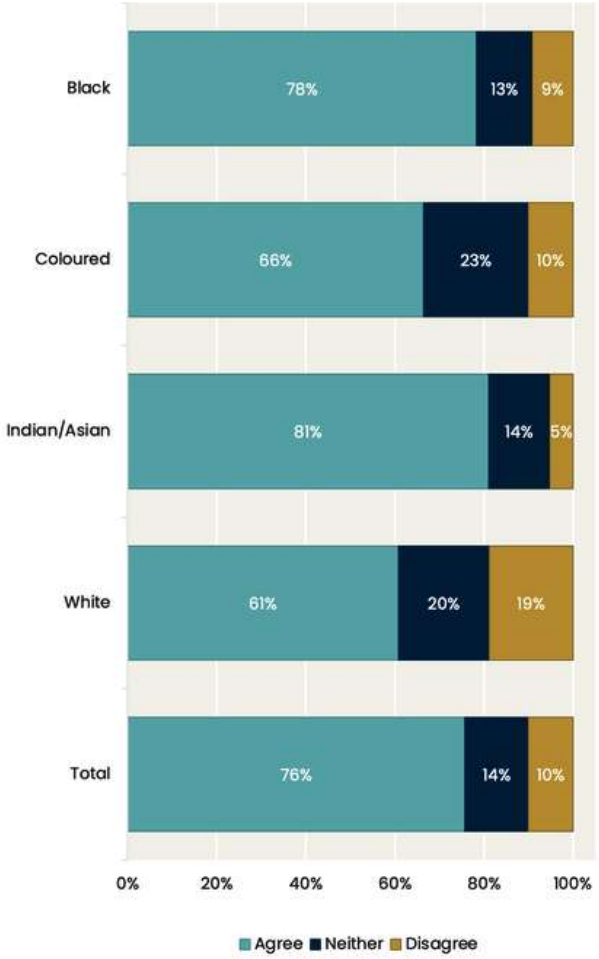
Given the increase in global and African momentum for reparations, the 2023 Reconciliation Barometer also asked South Africans their opinions on accountability, support and financial compensation.

Consistent with many of the other indicators in this domain, there was broad majority agreement (76%) that it is still important for the government to support people who experienced human rights abuses during apartheid. Survey results do not tell us, however, how South Africans understand the term "victims" and whether this includes individuals who testified before the TRC or a broader or narrower group of people. This may be a question for future rounds. Once again, with a context of overall moderate majority support, white South Africans were the least likely to agree (61%) and most likely to disagree (19%) that the government should provide continued support after human rights abuses (Figure 23).

Questions of accountability are central to reparations discussions but are complex and challenging, especially in cases of large-scale conflicts and crimes – and more so as time passes. Around six in ten South Africans (61%) are under the age of 35 and were born from the early 1990s onward, with little direct experience of official apartheid.[107] Yet apartheid social and economic

Figure 23

Support for survivors of human rights abuses by race, 2023*



injustices continue to be reproduced in the country today.

The Reconciliation Barometer asks whether or not white South Africans should take action to repair the damages of the past. Two-thirds of the country (66%) – a moderate majority – agrees that it is "essential that all white South Africans take action for repairing the damages of the past." Agreement was lower among Indian/Asian (51%) and white (50%) South Africans, however, and about a third of white people (33%) disagreed (Figure 24).

The Barometer also asks whether or not black people (including Black, Coloured and Indian/Asian South Africans) should be repaid in some way for colonialism and apartheid, through money or land. Here, stronger overall consensus was evident, with seven in ten South Africans (70%) agreeing about repayment. Agreement was highest among black (73%) and coloured (70%) South Africans. Less than half of all white people (49%) agreed that black South Africans should be repaid while about a third (31%) disagreed with repayment (Figure 25).

Compensation mechanisms

Finally, the Barometer measured support for versions of two of the reparative funding models discussed in earlier sections of the report, with results also showing moderate national support.

Figure 24

White South Africans should take action by race, 2023*

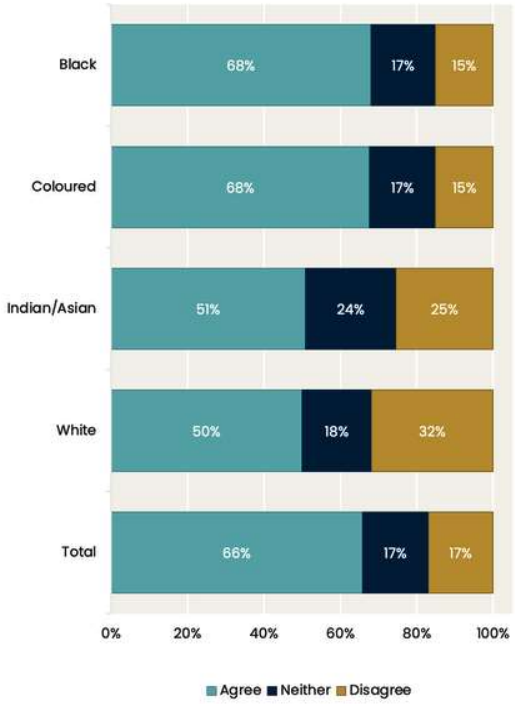
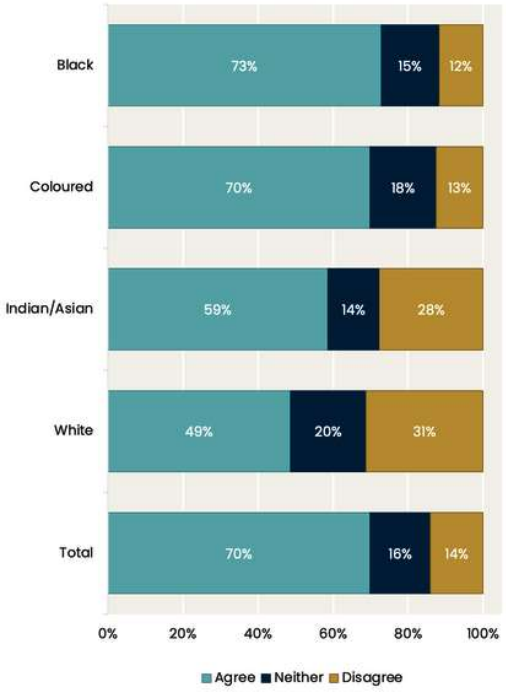


Figure 25

Repayment for colonialism and apartheid by race, 2023*



Source: SA Reconciliation Barometer
**Results show cumulative strongly agree + agree and strongly disagree + disagree responses*

South Africans were asked whether or not they agreed with the idea of setting up a dedicated fund should be set up to compensate black South Africans for what happened during colonialism and apartheid. This proposal is not very different from the President's Fund, although that structure operates within the relatively narrow mandate set out by the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act (1995) and seems to mainly accrue value from interest.[108] More recently, a Solidarity Fund was established in 2020 to support Covid-19 treatment and prevention efforts, and accepted contributions from businesses, organisations and international donors. [108]

Just over two-thirds (67%) of South Africans agreed with the idea of setting up an apartheid compensation fund. Agreement was once again highest among black South Africans at 70%, and lowest among white South Africans (50%)(Figure 26).

The Barometer also asked about support for the idea of a wealth tax, as used in countries including France and Norway and previously explored by the Davis Committee. More specifically, this wealth tax could fund compensation for black South Africans. The idea of a wealth tax was less supported overall, with 59% agreement nationally (Figure 27). Less than half of Indian/Asian (46%) and white (45%) South Africans agreed with the idea of wealth tax, compared with moderately higher agreement among black (62%) and coloured (57%) people.

Figure 26

Set up a compensation fund by race, 2023*

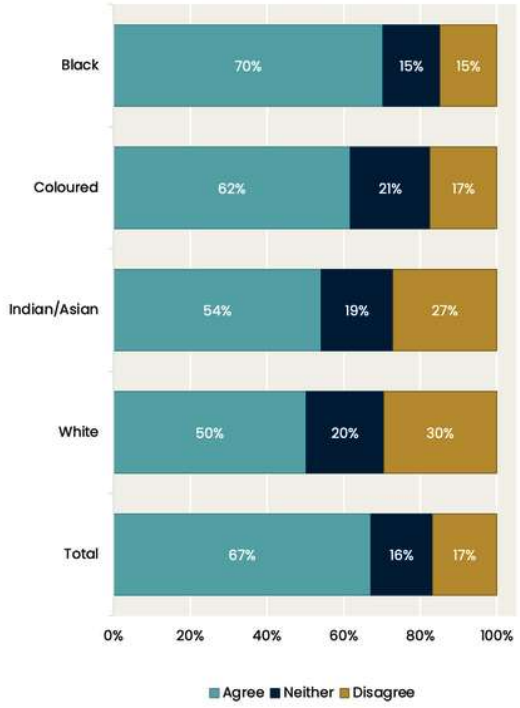
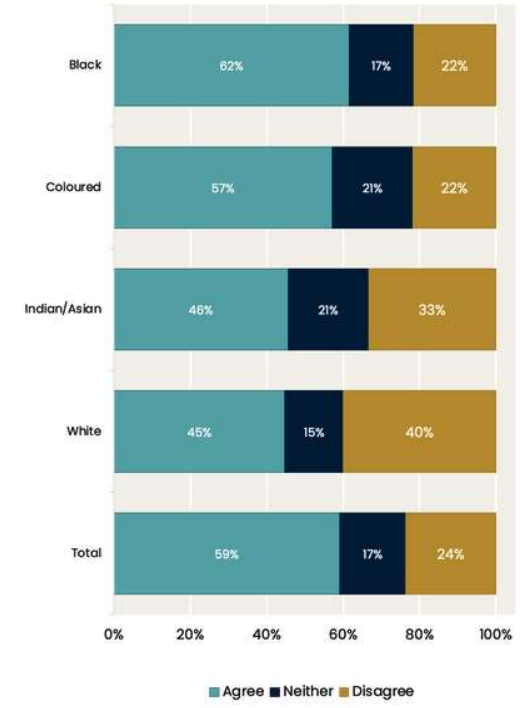


Figure 27

Wealth tax by race, 2023*



Source: SA Reconciliation Barometer
**Results show cumulative strongly agree + agree and strongly disagree + disagree responses*

Taken altogether, while there is moderate majority support for all of the reparations measures included in the Reconciliation Barometer in 2023, support/agreement is highest for the idea of an apartheid compensation fund, while disagreement/opposition is greatest for removing symbols of colonialism and apartheid (Figure 28).

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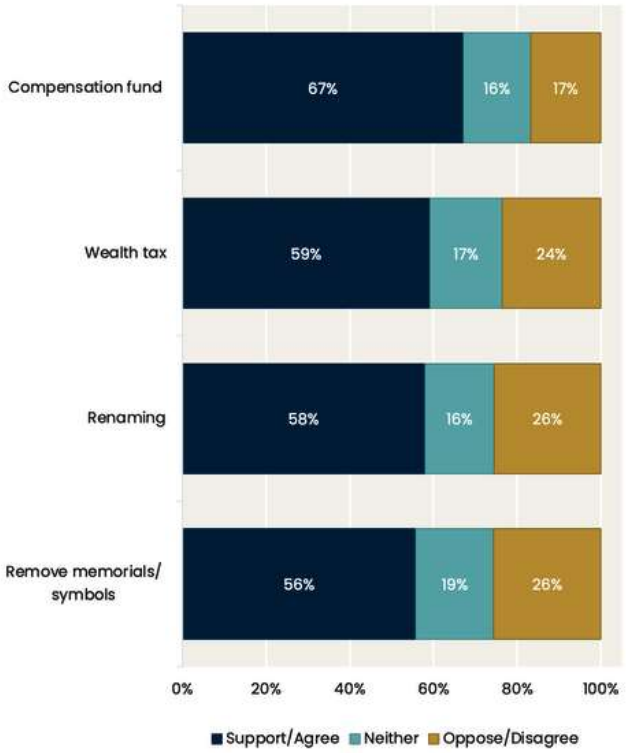
Figure 28

Comparative overall support for reparations measures, 2023*



Source: SA Reconciliation Barometer
**Results show cumulative strongly agree/support + agree/support and strongly disagree/oppose + disagree/oppose responses*

Key Findings

Generational differences:
With demographic changes and the passing of time since the democratic transition, younger South Africans are less knowledgeable about the history of the country than their older counterparts.

Overall national consensus about the past:
Survey results show moderate to high consensus about the truth of South Africa's apartheid past. Within this overall majority, however, white South Africans are less likely than people of other races to agree about the crimes and injustices perpetrated during apartheid.

Moderate support for reparations measures:
There is moderate majority support for reparations measures that have been variously proposed and practised in South Africa. Support tends to be lowest for the removal of apartheid and colonial symbols and highest for the idea of an apartheid compensation fund. Again, support and approval for reparations are lower among white South Africans than other groups of people.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VI. Pathways to 2034

Previous sections of this report have examined the lack of economic change in post-apartheid South Africa, alongside increasing calls for reparations within the Global South and internationally. Evidence from other countries and regions suggests that reparations - while challenging and complex – can advance both reconciliatory and developmental agendas.

This section of the report presents four high-level narratives outlining hypothetical future pathways for the country over the next 10 years, developed as a starting point for further dialogue on reimagining what could happen if South Africa were to prioritise reparations for economic reconciliation – and what might happen if we do not.

> What could happen if we prioritised economic reconciliation - and what might happen if we do not?

1 Growth First, Justice Later

Following a period of initial optimism, the transformative shifts that many South Africans envisaged after the establishment of the second GNU in 2024 failed to translate into substantive changes, leaving the country in a prolonged struggle with familiar challenges. The prevailing story was one of incremental progress overshadowed by stagnation and systemic hurdles.

The GNU, while ambitious in its goals of multi-party collaboration for good governance, was frequently mired in disagreement and political factionalism, compromising its effectiveness. It became increasingly clear that political interests vested in remaining in the GNU – rather than a common cause around eradicating the country's significant developmental backlogs – was the glue that kept the coalition together. Frustrated by the lack of progress and change, public disillusionment with the status quo deepened, leading to record lows in voter turnout in subsequent national elections.

During this time, the government's primary solution for historical restitution was to focus on achieving increased economic growth. It prioritised policies promoting macroeconomic stability, infrastructure development and public-private partnerships. It aimed to increase efficiency and pursued foreign direct investment (FDI) to reverse years of low growth and successive downgrading by international lending institutions. However, as a relatively small economy in a volatile global market, these measures produced limited gains and proved too low to catalyse major changes in the national economic trajectory.

The government's primary solution for historical restitution was to focus on achieving increased economic growth

Pathway 1: Growth First, Justice Later (Continued)

After a decade of modest GDP growth and job creation, in 2034, most South Africans continue to live with the same hardships they faced a decade ago. Staggering poverty rates, which by most estimates surpassed 55% in 2024, declined slightly – but progress pales in comparison to the scale of need.

While the majority of people still live on very low incomes with insufficient access to education, housing, healthcare and employment, the wealthy minority has retained their economic security. They are highly mobile and able to seek education, work and investment opportunities internationally. Avoiding unreliable public services, elites have increasingly isolated themselves in security estates, activating and growing parallel private markets for essential amenities and services, including electricity, water, security, healthcare, education and recreation.

Although a policy priority, infrastructure remains a critical weak point in the daily lives of citizens and the functioning of the economy. Where development occurs, it is done for the purpose of stimulating the formal economy in the hopes that growth will trickle down and reach marginalised South Africans. This rarely happens. Cities and towns lack the digital connectivity required for economic transformation, and rural communities lag even further behind. Many regions are still without reliable, consistent services such as electricity, water, sanitation, transport, and refuse collection, perpetuating economic underperformance and social inequalities. Ageing and poorly-maintained infrastructure is no match for dramatic weather events, which have increased in frequency and impact.

The promise of renewable energy and associated growth opportunities has also largely gone unrealised. Coal continues to dominate the energy mix outside of a select few sustainability initiatives. Political resistance, inadequate investment and an unstable economic environment stifled the transition to greener alternatives.

Failure to significantly advance a vision of a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous society increased public discontent, leading to rising numbers of protests and social unrest.

2 A Nation Invested

The 2024 elections marked a turning point for South Africa. The incoming GNU recognised the extent of social and economic exclusion, public discontent and appetite for change throughout the country and embraced a bold new policy direction that prioritised a more fair and equitable future. The GNU viewed restitution as a prerequisite for inclusive growth rather than a by-product.

In the first of two major policy changes, the GNU implemented a basic income grant (BIG), after years of research and civil society advocacy – and taking into account the impact of the social relief of distress grant, which was extended during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The BIG was not intended to compensate South Africans or singularly reverse the crimes, exclusions or continued structural inequalities of colonialism and apartheid. It was, however, designed to provide cash directly to people most in need, ensuring that households and families had a reliable baseline income. Set at the food poverty line and adjusted annually to keep up with inflation, by 2034, the BIG has almost eradicated extreme poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition. As time has passed, families have experienced improved health and educational outcomes. Although unemployment remains high, many South Africans have used the BIG to cover transportation, childcare and other costs associated with seeking work.

> Recognising the extent of exclusion and discontent, government embraced a bold new policy direction prioritising a fair and equitable future

Pathway 2: A Nation Invested (Continued)

Also cognisant of the urgent need to invest in millions of youth, many of whom were NEET in 2024, the second important policy change occurred within the education system – a longstanding impediment to employment and the economic agency of workers. Almost a decade after the #FeesMustFall movement, the GNU abolished tertiary education fees at public universities. Although these institutions face significant capacity and resource constraints resulting from increased demand and enrolment, a dynamic new generation of young graduates has already begun making its mark on the country. The economy has benefitted from an influx of skilled workers filling gaps in emerging industries, from technology to renewable energy. In 2034, South Africa is better positioned to compete in the global economy, and its workforce attracts international investors and employers. On physical and virtual campuses, the inclusive student body has reshaped institutional cultures and narratives.

With their basic needs better met and education more accessible, young South Africans increasingly view a tertiary qualification as a default path, encouraging innovation and career aspirations. While the surge in tertiary graduates has outpaced job creation in some industries, many youth have started new businesses, leveraging the BIG as a safety net.

Taking the path of prioritising restitution as an investment in the future was challenging and required a major paradigm shift from the orthodoxy of South African economic policy since the mid-1990s. Many in the country remain unconvinced, and this creates regular and highly polarised political debates about affordability and sustainability. Elites and economic conservatives remain highly critical of significant increases in public expenditure, particularly during periods of economic downturn.

At the same time, as economic inclusion has increased, so too has the size of the national tax base. Inequality has begun to decline – and this trend is set to continue. South Africa has become a more inclusive society and public discontent, crime and social unrest have declined, leaving a more cohesive country in their wake.

3 Champion for Global Justice

In preparing to assume the Presidency of the Group of 20 (G20) and in alignment with calls from the AU, Commonwealth and Global South, in 2024, the South African government embarked on a bold diplomatic agenda of championing the global reparations campaign. Framed both as a moral imperative and practical necessity, South Africa led the charge in reshaping international norms on justice and accountability and securing an equal position for the Global South in world political and economic agendas.

Assuming a position as the leading voice in the reparations campaign, South Africa played a central mobilising role in collaboration between countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Commonwealth. Counted among its greatest successes was the UN's eventual adoption and implementation of a proposal to establish an International Reparations Tribunal, with the resources and capacity to assess and enforce reparative claims.

South Africa also led by example in the reparations campaign by confronting its own colonial past. Through the Tribunal, supported with a depth of archival evidence, South Africa initiated reparations negotiations citing colonial crimes including massacres and enslavement of Indigenous people; land seizures and forced relocations; sexual violence; and cultural suppression, among many others. These negotiations engaged the Netherlands and the UK, both colonisers of parts of present-day South Africa, as well as companies and other entities that defied sanctions and traded with the apartheid state.

> Aligning with calls from the Global South, government embarked on a bold diplomatic agenda of championing international reparations

Pathway 3: Champion for Global Justice (Continued)

South Africa's claims brought significant strain to international diplomatic and economic relations with Northern countries, resulting in a challenging period of punitive actions affecting trade, investment and development assistance. Several entities rejected the Tribunal's authority and argued against liability for historical injustices, particularly those in the far distant past. This, however, only served to strengthen solidarity and resolve within the Global South. With growing economic power in a changing world order, reparations proponents used this leverage to make accession to the Tribunal a precondition for the expansion of trade ties with implicated former colonising countries.

For South Africa, as in the rest of the world, the Tribunal's work has proven highly complex with many claims still awaiting resolution. Yet major success stories have also begun to emerge. Reparations agreements, including concessions on all sides, have already had a positive and transformative effect on the economy. The return of a number of high-profile artifacts also reinforced this important victory for restorative justice.

In addition to bolstering national pride, South Africa's leadership role reaffirmed its reputation as a principled and strategic leader within the Global South – inspiring other nations to pursue justice and asserting greater influence in international forums. By 2034, newly reconfigured, more reciprocal relations have begun developing with Northern countries. At the same time, South Africa's deepened ties have fostered new commitments for economic and political collaboration elsewhere, reflecting the broader global trend toward multipolarity.

4 A New Political Order

The period immediately following the 2024 elections saw the GNU emerge as a beacon of hope for South Africa, following on more than a decade of political polarisation, state capture and crumbling economic infrastructure. Many hoped that the multi-party coalition government would usher in a new era of greater transparency and accountability; a unified vision for the future; and a change in the systemic trajectory continually reinforcing poverty, inequality and unemployment.

Early signs suggested that this change could be afoot. GNU members agreed on key reforms, particularly related to the rebuilding of state capacity – as captured in Operation Vulindlela. International and domestic markets responded positively, the volatile rand strengthened against other currencies, and demand for South African government bonds increased. Further buoyed by declining inflation and interest rates, positive sentiment also filtered through to the real economy, boosting consumer optimism. This convergence of circumstances provided a foundation for reconstructing a battered economy and divided society.

This optimism, however, was short-lived. Comprised of ideologically disparate parties, the GNU was plagued by persistent disagreement and big egos. After a few short years in office, the coalition began collapsing under the weight of infighting over critical issues such as economic reform, social spending and foreign policy.

> The GNU began collapsing under the weight of infighting, creating a vacuum swiftly filled by surging support for far-left parties

Pathway 4: A New Political Order (Continued)

Members were also unable to reach a consensus over questions of apartheid reparations and restitution, producing no advances or executable policies to remedy historical injustices or deliver a more equitable economy.

The 2026 local government elections marked a turning point for the GNU, with member parties shedding further support - the result of a state paralysed by poor to non-existent service delivery. Defections and resignations rendered the coalition almost unworkable, and its primary goal became staying in power rather than responding to the electoral mandate.

The disintegration of the GNU created a political and leadership vacuum that was swiftly filled by a surge in support for far-left parties. Most prominent among these was Umkonto weSizwe (MK), led by ousted former president Jacob Zuma, who presided over the worst excesses of state capture.

Riding a wave of public frustration with systemic inequality, unemployment, and the perceived failures of centrist policies, MK secured a parliamentary majority in the 2029 national elections. Their radical manifesto promised sweeping changes, including scrapping the constitution and the return of parliamentary supremacy; expropriating land without compensation; nationalising the Reserve Bank; universal free education; national health insurance; and minimum wage jobs for all capable and willing workers. The MK also promises to introduce a BIG and pursue colonial and apartheid reparations - albeit without disclosing prospective funding sources for these far-reaching changes.

MK's policy agenda was welcomed by an activated support base of members who experienced profound relief and hope for the future, after decades of injustice, frustration and exclusion. Many benefitted in the short term from greater access to land, property and healthcare, crediting the party for restoring dignity within disadvantaged communities.

However, corruption abounded with government institutions and systems in flux, and in the absence of constitutional checks and balances. Preferential treatment spiked in the awarding of government contracts and expropriated land to a politically connected elite.

Pathway 4: A New Political Order (Continued)

This did not go unnoticed in international markets, and ratings agencies further downgraded South Africa's credit. Foreign investment plummeted, capital flight accelerated, and key industries and services faced monumental operational disruptions as state-operated entities fell further into decline. Institutional restructuring within all spheres of government slowed the pace of service delivery, as leaders struggled to source the technical capacity, resources and political support for these large-scale changes.

Declines in livelihoods were accompanied by rising social tensions. Initially, the government deflected criticism by blaming economic elites and the urban middle class for their resistance to change. However, as the costs of radical reforms mounted, public support for MK's policy agenda began to wane, jeopardising its long-term sustainability.

South Africa's significant break from its prior developmental path and a new direction considered antithetical to neoliberal global economic norms also prompted deep ruptures in relations with many Northern countries. Confronted with limited access to international capital and resources, South Africa deepened its allegiances with like-minded states in the Global South.

In 2034, while the government's actions partially responded to the need for justice and economic inclusion, many political promises could not be matched with resources – and ultimately went unmet. A widening gap between plans and fiscal realities has created restlessness and uncertainty about the country's future, which remains unpredictable as parties continue to jostle for majority leadership. Whether South Africa emerges as a model for transformative justice or succumbs to economic and political instability will depend on the government's ability to navigate the complexities of radical reform while maintaining public support and credibility.

VII. Conclusion

South Africa's first democratically elected government assumed the leadership of a country that was deeply fractured and unequal, on a bedrock of historical systems and structures designed to privilege a small minority by oppressing the large majority. There can be no doubt that this process, in Sampie Terreblanche's terms, was a "political miracle" that required immense resources, negotiations, strategy and planning. Complex interests and priorities needed to be balanced, and this was indeed a profoundly challenging task.

Upon receiving the TRC's recommendations, the government of the day chose a path of limited individual cash grants and parallel community reparations programmes, emphasising the importance of implementing the RDP and rolling out much-needed public amenities and services.

However, in spite of some advances and progress achieved, the RDP and policy programmes that followed have not "restored to good condition" the livelihoods of most South Africans or deconstructed the discrimination and harms of colonialism and apartheid. South Africa's "historical and present injustices", therefore, remain the same injustice.

Policy has not "restored to good condition" the livelihoods of most South Africans or deconstructed past discrimination and harms

This injustice is one in which thousands of dollar millionaires live alongside working families who have to sacrifice the food security of their children in order to make sure they can pay for electricity and transportation in order to keep their jobs. This injustice is also one that is growing. New generations of born-free children and young adults continue to experience poverty and, when completing their education, are statistically most likely to find that the vision

of finding a job, pursuing their passions, providing for their families, investing in the future, and even building generational wealth, will prove to be a myth for them.

This injustice also works against reconciliation, social cohesion, stability and peace. While the country was once pressed to consider how the country could afford to pay reparations, this report has sought to ask whether, today, we can afford not to pay reparations.

This is an opportune moment to reimagine the apartheid reparations question. There is growing recognition, acceptance and solidarity in Africa and internationally that past harms and damages continue to shape present realities and call for reckoning. While challenging and complex, recent examples demonstrate that reparations are not as impractical and implausible as many have argued in the past, and can have both reconciliatory and transformative economic effects.

In Colombia, progress has been made by putting cash in the hands of survivors and supporting them to invest in a better future. In the US, change has come at the local and state levels, with a focus on reversing specific areas of discrimination, such as housing segregation and educational exclusion. In the cases of former colonisers, reparations have also been secured through advocacy, negotiations and litigation.

The Reconciliation Barometer confirms that South Africans consistently view inequality as the leading source of social division in the country and the area of least improvement since 1994. While support for the reparative interventions that have been proposed and implemented thus far is moderate, there is a strong foundation for a new dialogue on the changes in the country that we want to see – including what we are willing to give up in order to make this happen, and what we are willing to embrace.

Annex A: SARB Hypotheses

The following tables contain the Reconciliation Barometer hypotheses used during the first and second decades of the survey. Work is currently underway to review, revise and validate these hypotheses for the next phase of the project.

SA Reconciliation Barometer hypotheses and indicators, 2003 - 2013

Hypothesis	Indicator
Human security: If citizens do not feel threatened, they are more likely to be reconciled with each other and the larger system.	Physical security; economic security; cultural security.
Political culture: If citizens view the institutions, leadership and culture of the new system as legitimate and accountable, reconciliation is more likely to advance.	Justifiability of extra-legal action; legitimacy of leadership and Parliament; respect for the rule of law.
Cross-cutting political relations: If citizens are able to form working political relationships that cross divisions, reconciliation is more likely to advance.	Commitment to national unity; multi-racial political parties.
Historical confrontation: If citizens are able to confront and address issues from the past, they are more likely to be able to move forward and be reconciled.	Acknowledgement of the injustice of apartheid; forgiveness; reduced vengeance.
Race relations: If citizens of different races hold fewer negative perceptions of each other, they are more likely to form workable relationships that will advance reconciliation.	Interracial contact; preconceptions; tolerance.
Dialogue: If citizens are committed to deep dialogue, reconciliation is more likely to be advanced.	Commitment to more dialogue.
ONLY 2003 ROUND Commitment to socioeconomic development: If citizens are able to commit themselves to transformation and redress, the national reconciliation process is more likely to progress.	Willingness to compromise.

SA Reconciliation Barometer hypotheses and indicators, 2015 - 2021

Hypothesis	Indicator
Power relations: Unjust/unequal power relations between social groups (e.g. race/class) hinder progress towards reconciliation. More just and equitable power relations would create a more fertile environment for reconciliation. Limited to perceptual data, we have chosen to measure this by asking about access to economic, social, cultural and spatial resources within society. This concept is measured through these sub-indicators, each of which demonstrates different perceptions of access to realms of power in society.	Economic access; social access; cultural access; spatial access.
Democratic political culture: Reconciliation is more likely to thrive in a society where there is a growing democratic political culture. This is evident when citizens feel part of an inclusive nation, participate in the political process, feel the government is legitimately elected, respect the rule of law, and support democratic political institutions.	Political community; political efficacy; the rule of law; confidence in democratic institutions.
Apartheid legacy: In order for reconciliation to take root in South Africa, it is necessary, firstly, to acknowledge and deal with the legacy of direct, structural and symbolic violence and oppression suffered under apartheid, and, secondly, to support initiatives aimed at the redress of this legacy.	Acknowledging the injustice of apartheid; acknowledging the legacy of apartheid; support for redress and transformation.
Racial reconciliation: Progress towards reconciliation cannot take place without the opportunities and willingness to engage in meaningful connections between different race groups in South Africa.	Willingness to tolerate; willingness to confront racism; formal opportunities to engage; spontaneous opportunities to engage.
Improvement in reconciliation: For reconciliation to advance, South Africans should feel connected to the concept (i.e. they can understand and articulate the meaning of reconciliation) and have experienced it in their own lives. Reconciliation is a complex concept with different meanings. This indicator attempts to ascertain the subjective meaning of reconciliation held by respondents, and, according to their subjective meaning, to measure perceptions of improvement.	Meaning of reconciliation; perceived improvement in reconciliation.
Perceptions of change: For reconciliation to advance, it is important for citizens to perceive positive change within society with regard to the past and the future.	Material change; psychological change; hope for the future.

Annex B: SARB Sample

SA Reconciliation Barometer unweighted sample, 2023

Demographic	# (N=2,006)	%
Black	1,160	57.8%
Coloured	358	17.8%
Indian/Asian	129	6.4%
White	359	17.9%
Male	907	45.2%
Female	1,096	54.6%
18-24	226	11.3%
25-34	478	23.8%
35-44	503	25.1%
45-54	381	19.0%
55+	418	20.8%
Eastern Cape	276	13.8%
Free State	176	8.8%
Gauteng	453	22.6%
KwaZulu-Natal	360	17.9%
Limpopo	95	4.7%
Mpumalanga	103	5.1%
Northern Cape	66	3.3%
North West	107	5.3%
Western Cape	370	18.4%
Low Income (< R137 000 HH p/a)	951	47.4%
Middle Income (R137,001 - R620,000 HH p/a)	707	35.2%
Upper Income (> R620,001 HH p/a)	348	17.3%

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