



CONNECT

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Note from the IJR Executive Director

This edition of IJR Connect comes at a moment of deep reflection, as we mourn the passing of Glenda Wildschut, a founding board member of the Institute. Glenda's steadfast dedication to justice, reconciliation, and human dignity helped shape IJR's identity and mission. As we mark 25 years of IJR in 2025, we honour her legacy and recommit to building fair, inclusive, democratic and peaceful societies across Africa.

This issue highlights the breadth of our work over the past month: commemorating International Women's Day, honouring Martti Ahtisaari's legacy, amplifying faith leaders' voices in the Women, Peace and Security agenda, training leaders in our Southern Africa Women Peace and Security Peace lab, speaking to critical issues like child rape in South Africa, democratic governance, national dialogue, human rights, and climate justice, and contributing to debates about a just peace for Mozambique and Ukraine, as well as our ongoing work on Africa's Perspectives on transforming the Multi-lateral order.

We have expanded our partnerships, signing MOU's with the Southern African Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (SAf-CNGO), the Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF), Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) and Center for Democratic Development (CDD), as we seek to strengthen our collaboration in the region.

As we move forward, in very trying times, let us be guided by Glenda's example—working boldly for dignity, justice, peace and prosperity.

– Prof Cheryl Hendricks

In Loving Memory of Glenda Wildschut



It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of our esteemed Board member, Glenda Wildschut. Glenda has been an integral part of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation since its founding. Her unwavering commitment to justice, reconciliation, and human dignity shaped not only the trajectory of our organisation but also touched the lives of all who had the privilege to work alongside her.

A former commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Glenda embodied the very values that define IJR's mission. She was a moral compass and a voice of wisdom on our Board, always engaging with integrity, humility, and compassion. Her leadership was both steady and visionary, deeply rooted in a lifelong pursuit of healing and human rights.

Glenda was not only a valued leader, but also a cherished colleague, mentor, and friend. Her warmth, grace, and quiet strength enriched every conversation and inspired a shared sense of purpose. She brought people together—across generations, communities, and ideologies—with a rare and powerful presence.

During this difficult time, we remember Glenda for the passion she carried into every space, the integrity with which she served, and the kindness she shared so generously. Her legacy is profound and enduring. It lives on in the countless lives she touched and in the mission we continue to carry forward.

We hold Glenda's family, friends, and loved ones in our thoughts and prayers. May they find comfort in the knowledge that her life made an indelible difference.

Rest in peace, Glenda.

IJR's International Women's Day Celebration

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation marked International Women's Day with a call to accelerate progress on gender equality and peacebuilding, as part of its 25th anniversary celebrations. The event, held in Cape Town, spotlighted the pivotal role of women in shaping inclusive and democratic societies across Africa.

Speaking at the event, IJR Executive Director Prof Cheryl Hendricks emphasised the importance of maintaining women's voices at the heart of peacebuilding, especially as the world prepares to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 25th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2025. "This commemoration comes at a time when democratic values and peace are facing serious challenges," she said.

IJR's Board member Hon. Nozizwe Routledge reflected on IJR's two-and-a-half-decade journey, calling it "a testament to the institute's unwavering commitment to justice, peace, and reconciliation across the continent."

Founded in 2000, IJR has played a central role in transitional justice, social cohesion, and democratisation efforts in Africa. Its Women, Peace, and Security project, and interventions through the Sustained Dialogues programme have built critical bridges between policy and practice, strengthening networks among governments, civil society, and women's groups at every level.

As IJR celebrates this milestone, our message is clear: the work is far from over. With women leading the way, the path towards a more just, peaceful, and inclusive future remains both urgent and possible.

We must acknowledge that peace and democracy are under threat globally and on our continent. Now, more than ever, we must stand together as women, creating spaces for one another, supporting each other, and ensuring that our voices remain at the forefront of efforts to build lasting peace.



Honouring Martti Ahtisaari's Legacy



The event "Echoing a Legacy of Peace: President Martti Ahtisaari, Finnish Anti-Apartheid Efforts in Southern Africa and the Future of Mediation," held at Freedom Park on March 6, 2025, was dedicated to honouring the legacy of the late President Martti Ahtisaari and Finland's pivotal role in peace and anti-apartheid efforts in Southern Africa.

The event commenced with a poignant plaque unveiling ceremony at Freedom Park, honouring seven Finnish individuals—President Martti Ahtisaari, Mikko Juva, Kari Karanko, Helena and Risto Kekkonen, Kalevi Sorsa, and Niilo Wälläri—for their pivotal contributions to the anti-apartheid struggle.

The tribute was led by distinguished dignitaries, including former Foreign Minister and Chair of the AU Commission Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Finnish Ambassador to South Africa Pekka Metso, Freedom Park CEO Jane Mufamadi, and Chair of the CMI Board Marko Ahtisaari. Their remarks underscored the profound and lasting impact of these individuals' efforts. Marko Ahtisaari, in particular, highlighted that his father's commitment to the anti-apartheid movement was driven by a fundamental belief in equality—the conviction that every person, regardless of their background, is entitled to dignity and respect.

Prof Cheryl Hendricks, Executive Director of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, participated as a panellist. She contributed to a thought-provoking discussion on the future of mediation, exploring the evolving challenges facing mediators, lessons drawn from Southern Africa's experiences, and the need for innovative approaches and strategic alliances in peacebuilding. Prof. Hendricks specifically addressed how recent peace agreements have, or have not, incorporated Transitional Justice.

The event brought together distinguished leaders, peace practitioners, and diplomats to reflect on past achievements and explore future pathways for conflict resolution and inclusive mediation.

The Role of Faith Leaders in Advancing the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda

The IJR, the South African Council of Churches (SACC), and the South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID) hosted a dialogue on the role of religious leaders in promoting the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda. With the support of the Embassy of Ireland, the gathering in Johannesburg, on 7th March 2025, brought together stakeholders to explore how faith communities can contribute to peacebuilding efforts and gender equality.

In his opening remarks, Rev. Mzwandile Molo, General Secretary of SACC, spoke on the vital role of women in shaping society, emphasising their transformative power in peace processes.

Prof. Cheryl Hendricks, Executive Director of IJR, outlined the objectives of the gathering, which included:

- Raising awareness to advance the WPS agenda
- Incorporating input from faith-based women's organisations into the revision of the South Africa National Action Plan
- Strengthening collaboration among women in the WPS space
- Enhancing partnerships between faith leaders and peacebuilders

Speaking on behalf of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), Ms Nthabiseng Malefane, WPS Focal Point Person, highlighted that WPS is a collective responsibility, not limited to specific sectors. She acknowledged the persistent gaps in gender equality across economic and social spheres and emphasised the potential for religious institutions to drive meaningful change. The dialogue underscored the essential role of faith leaders in advancing the WPS agenda and fostering a culture of peace.

Ms Vatiswa Moea, Executive Director of SAWID, echoed these sentiments, noting that women constitute the majority in churches and various social spaces. She stressed that the WPS agenda is not just about policies but about the well-being of families, communities, and the nation at large.

In conclusion, Ms Catherine Chegero, Program Specialist for Women, Peace, and Security at UN Women's South Africa Multi-Country Office, reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to supporting WPS initiatives, particularly the revision of South Africa's National Action Plan. "We stand ready to strengthen efforts that ensure women's voices are central to peace and security discussions," she said. As the conversation continues, collaboration between religious institutions, peacebuilders, and policymakers will be crucial in translating commitments into tangible outcomes for women and communities across the country.

IJR Statement on Child Rape in South Africa



The day that Cwecwe was raped there were another 46 children who were reported raped in South Africa. The shocking story of the violation of a 7-year-old child highlights the vulnerability of the children of South Africa. We see daily our young children being raped by their own fathers and family members.

Violence is robbing children of their childhoods and of their futures. We are shocked by the location of the crime, a school classroom, and by the age of the victim, but as a society, we are inured to the daily pandemic of sexual violence our children, both girls and boys, face. Estimates are that 10% of victims of rape are boys.

In 2024, 2,716 teenage pregnancies were reported for girls between the ages of 10 – 14. Given that children under the age of 12 cannot consent, many of these girls are pregnant as a result of rape.

What is happening is a national shame, a crisis, and a blight on our democracy.

While we understand the root causes of violence against children, there can be no justification for it and we as a society are not doing enough to stem it.

We must make the elimination of violence against children a national priority.

It is not enough to shore up the justice system. This needs a societal intervention in which all social structures and government work together to combat this violence and create safe spaces for children. This is urgent! There can be no more impunity for perpetrators.

We need to take positive steps to combat the environment of impunity in which perpetrators operate and find ways to combat the circumstances which enable such crimes to take place.

It is apt to quote Mahatma Ghandi: "The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members." South Africa we are found sorely wanting!

Consolidating South Africa's Democratic Governance

The Post-Election Conference hosted by the Wits School of Governance (WSG) took place in Johannesburg from 26 to 28 March 2025 under the theme "Consolidating South Africa's Democratic Governance." The conference served as a timely platform for reflection and analysis following South Africa's historic 2024 General Elections. Experts, academics, civil society leaders, and policymakers gathered to examine the implications of the election outcomes and the future of democratic governance in the country.

Over 40 scholars and practitioners offered an array of views on subjects related to democracy, the government of national unity in South Africa, and the 2024 national elections. The WSG Post-Election Conference sought to fill a critical gap in understanding South Africa's evolving political terrain—doing so with the benefit of a closer interrogation of the patterns displayed by the distribution of the votes, the key messages that the results are conveying about the future of party politics, the inclusion and representation of women, the role of the youth, the place of resurgent identity politics, and the overall culture of politics in an era of fragmentation.

Among the notable contributors was Professor Cheryl Hendricks, Executive Director of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, who featured as a panellist in the session titled "Interpreting the 2024 Voting Patterns and Election Results." Drawing from her extensive experience in governance, peacebuilding, and justice, Professor Hendricks provided valuable insights into voter behaviour, the shifting political landscape, and the growing demand for accountability and inclusion.

The three-day conference included keynote addresses, expert panel discussions, and interactive engagements on critical issues such as political party realignments, coalition governance, youth and gender representation, and the need for electoral reforms. It was widely regarded as a crucial step in understanding the evolving nature of South African politics and in fostering a more responsive and participatory democratic system.



Justice or Just Peace: The South African Perspective on Ukraine



In an insightful dialogue co-hosted by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Daily Maverick, Institute for Security Studies, Desmond and Leah Tutu Foundation and The Ukrainian Association of South Africa, on 10th April, African voices joined the global conversation on what a just peace in Ukraine could look like.

In 2023, the African Peace Mission to Kyiv and St. Petersburg highlighted the key elements that are necessary to ensure the pursuit of peace and justice in the war-affected region. Valuable insights can be learned from the experiences of South Africa and other countries that faced oppression and invasion in addressing the challenges of pursuing a just and sustainable peace during a negotiated settlement.

This dialogue therefore sought to provide a platform in which we can learn more about Ukraine's concerns and thinking about a pathway to peace as well as share some of the strategies, best practices and pitfalls of others who sought to achieve a just peace.

Moderated by Janet Jobson, CEO of the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, the conversation marked a sobering milestone: three years since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and 11 years since the annexation of Crimea. Jobson reminded attendees of the urgency of the moment, as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky prepares to visit South Africa later this month.

The panel featured Dvzinka Kachur of the Ukrainian Association of South Africa, Priyal Singh from the Institute for Security Studies, and Professor Tim Murithi, Head of Peacebuilding Interventions at the IJR. Together, they tackled a pressing question: *What does a truly just peace look like in Ukraine—and is it possible?*

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Human Rights in South Africa

By Anthea Flink

South Africa celebrated Human Rights Day on the 21st of March. We would do well to remember the events that led to this day being declared a public holiday. This day is highly significant because, 65 years ago, nearly 100 people lost their lives and 238 were wounded during protest actions against pass laws that took place across the country. This campaign intensified the struggle against the unjust laws under which the apartheid government oppressed its Black citizens.

During apartheid, Coloured, Black, Indian, and Chinese citizens had restricted movement and were required by law to carry registration documents in the form of a domestic pass or 'dompas.' This document 'allowed' Black people to enter and remain in areas not designated to them, and they were required to carry the document at all times. In apartheid South Africa, Black citizens who failed to produce the dompas were arrested immediately.

The exclusivity of the apartheid laws, which benefited the white minority, stood in stark contrast to the harsh reality faced by the country's indigenous black citizens every day.

In March of 1960, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), a breakaway group from the African National Congress (ANC) led by Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, launched a campaign protesting the dompas laws. With the women remaining at home, the men left their dwellings without their dompasses and walked directly to police stations.



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The International Year of Glaciers' Preservation: A Call for Climate Justice



By Kesia Abrahams

This year, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation celebrates 25 years of advancing human rights in Africa. This anniversary serves as an opportunity to reflect on the critical issues facing our continent and the planet. Glacier melt, an alarming consequence of climate change, is highlighted as part of the United Nations' designation of 2025 as the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation.

While glacier loss is often framed as an environmental issue, it is deeply intertwined with human rights. At IJR, we believe addressing glacier melt goes beyond environmental conservation; it is about safeguarding the rights of those who have been historically marginalised and continue to face the harshest consequences of climate change.

The year 2025 is a significant milestone for the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation as we celebrate 25 years of advancing human rights across the African continent. While we take pride in this accomplishment, we remain deeply committed to addressing the pressing challenges facing our planet.

As glaciers are melting at a rapid rate, the United Nations General Assembly has named 2025 the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation, spotlighting the widespread effects glacier melt has on water security, ecosystems, and vulnerable communities around the world (Blondel, 2025). Why do we care about this at IJR?

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#NoStudentLeftBehind: The Fight for Accessible Education

By Asemahle Tshoni

Every new academic year, the same pattern unfolds in South Africa: students take to the streets, demanding their right to education. As the academic year begins, we brace ourselves for disruptions, warnings about potential protests, and the possibility of moving online. This cycle repeats itself year after year.

This year, the University of Cape Town (UCT) sent out an email stating: "As you know, this year marks the 10th anniversary of the #FeesMustFall student movements, and we should expect protests at UCT (and possibly nationally) around fee debt."

The UCT Student Representative Council (SRC) has submitted a memorandum calling for a sustainable solution to ensure that academically eligible, yet financially vulnerable students are not blocked from continuing their education due to outstanding fees. Additionally, they have called for an extension of on-campus accommodation.

However, this issue is not limited to UCT alone. As the UCT SRC and social media has rightly pointed out, this crisis reflects broader systemic failures—issues with government policies, economic priorities, and funding mechanisms.

Education: A Constitutional Right, Not a Privilege

Students' calls for change are not sudden; they are based on long-standing expectations for accessible education in South Africa. The 1955 Freedom Charter called for "free and compulsory education" (ANC, 1955). Our Constitution, under Section 29, affirms that "everyone has the right to further education, which the State, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible" (SA Constitution, 1996:29).



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IJR Hosts Southern Africa Women, Peace, and Security Lab

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation hosted the Southern Africa Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Lab in Pretoria from 8 to 10 March 2025, bringing together participants from Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. The event aimed to strengthen the WPS agenda by fostering a deeper understanding, promoting leadership, and developing innovative solutions to contemporary peace and security challenges.

IJR Executive Director, Prof. Cheryl Hendricks, emphasised the importance of the Peace Lab in driving meaningful progress in women's leadership within peace and security.

"The Peace Lab aims at strengthening the Women, Peace, and Security agenda by creating a deeper understanding of WPS, promoting leadership, and developing innovative solutions to current peace and security challenges," said Prof. Hendricks.

The discussions at the Peace Lab revolved around leadership, norm-setting, and strategies for overcoming challenges in the WPS domain.

The key themes included:

- Leadership for peace leaders
- Leadership styles and creating spaces for others
- Sustaining momentum amidst global and continental backlash against peace efforts
- Integrating a gender perspective in peace and security decision-making
- Forming structures to promote women's participation in mediation

The event also reflected on significant milestones, particularly the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 25th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325.

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IJR's Contributions through International Education Engagements



At the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, we recognise education as a vital tool for advancing social justice, reconciliation, and inclusive democracy. That is why it lies at the heart of what we do, including our Sustained Dialogues programme.

This programme uses dialogue as a mechanism to acknowledge, confront, and engage with the enduring legacies that continue to marginalise, wound, and cause injustice. These interactions go beyond simple discussions—they serve as transformative experiences that shape the perspectives and actions of future generations both in Africa and abroad.

IJR has long been at the forefront of fostering meaningful dialogue and advocating for redress through education. In 2006, we hosted a national conference themed "A National Priority? TRC Recommendations and the Need for Redress." As a result of its significant impact, we received the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education in 2008, further cementing our stance on the importance of education in combating human rights violations, promoting healing, and driving sustainable change.

In line with the commitment above, from 19 to 21 March 2025, the Sustained Dialogues team hosted three groups of international students from the United States, eager to learn more about the work of IJR and engage in meaningful dialogue. On 19 March, students from one of the University of Chicago's public policy programmes visited our offices as part of their experiential learning curriculum.

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Exploring Shared Interests: IJR Engages with Belgian Consul General



On 24 March 2025, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation met with Mr Nicolas Fierens Gevaert, the Consul General of Belgium in Cape Town, for an introductory exchange to explore shared interests and potential areas of collaboration.

Mr Gevaert, who has a longstanding personal and professional commitment to transitional justice, expressed enthusiasm for IJR's work and a keen interest in exploring opportunities for partnership — particularly around events, dialogues, and international engagement on transitional justice themes.

The meeting also highlighted a mutual interest in convening spaces that promote shared learning between countries with established transitional justice processes and those currently navigating post-conflict transitions.

IJR looks forward to building on this initial exchange to strengthen collaboration with the Belgian Consulate and to deepen international dialogue around justice, reconciliation, and inclusive peacebuilding.

IJR and SAYoF Sign MoU to Boost Youth Engagement in Governance and Peacebuilding

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation and the Southern African Youth Forum (SAYoF) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 25th February, 2025, to strengthen youth engagement in governance, peace, and security across the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

The MoU establishes a collaborative framework focused on supporting the Governance, Peace, and Security Standing Committee of the SADC Youth Parliament and SAYoF's thematic cluster on the same.

Through the partnership, the two organisations aim to enhance the capacity of young people to meaningfully participate in policymaking, peacebuilding, and regional governance dialogues.

Founded as a youth-led platform that unites national youth structures and networks from all SADC Member States, SAYoF plays a key role in amplifying young voices in regional development. It serves as the official convener of the SADC Youth Parliament and advocates for youth inclusion in continental and global decision-making spaces.



IJR Hosts Sri Lanka Barometer Team for Learning Journey



From 7–11 April, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation had the privilege of hosting colleagues from the Sri Lanka Barometer (SLB) for a week-long immersive Learning Journey in Cape Town.

For over five years, the IJR has been working with the SLB – piloted under the Strengthening Reconciliation Processes in Sri Lanka (SRP) programme between 2018 and 2022 and now part of the Strengthening Social Cohesion and Peace in Sri Lanka (SCOPE) programme, implemented by GIZ.

The Sri Lanka Barometer was originally modelled on the IJR's South African Reconciliation Barometer, although it has been tailored to the post-conflict context of Sri Lanka, a country that emerged from a protracted civil war in 2009. The IJR team has worked with the SLB team on various fronts, including conceptual development and planning of surveys, data analysis and validation workshops, training and other capacity-building. With data recently collected for the 2025 Sri Lanka Barometer, the Learning Journey provided an opportunity to strengthen the project through the sharing of experiences, network-building, and in-person data analysis.

The Learning Journey aimed to:

- Encourage shared experiences and mutual learning between the SLB and the IJR teams, and its programmes
- Establish and grow networks that support the sustainable implementation of the Sri Lanka Barometer and peer research initiatives
- Co-develop skills and capacity, including in survey implementation, quantitative data analysis, and communications

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Indigenous Arts take Centre Stage at MAC Workshop in Umzimkhulu

During the first week of April, a workshop hosted by the Sustained Dialogues team of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation brought the vibrant power of indigenous music, dance, and storytelling to the forefront of efforts to foster reconciliation and social cohesion in South Africa. Held in the culturally rich town of Umzimkhulu, the Music, Arts, and Culture (MAC) Workshop forms part of IJR's broader initiative to support divided communities in showing agency, addressing their challenges, and transforming social relations.

At the heart of the workshop was a commitment to restoring human dignity and cultural pride through the revitalisation of indigenous art forms—centuries-old practices that have long served as vehicles for community identity, resilience, and wisdom. Against the backdrop of South Africa's complex history marked by colonisation, apartheid, and displacement, the workshop aimed to create healing spaces where art becomes a bridge between past wounds and a reconciled future.

The MAC workshop, whose participants were youths (aged 15 – 18 years old), was anchored in five key objectives: preserving indigenous art forms, fostering cultural understanding, empowering indigenous communities, promoting reconciliation, and enhancing learners' sense of dignity. By positioning indigenous artists as teachers, the workshop not only passed on knowledge but also elevated their status as respected cultural custodians.

Activities at the workshop ranged from targeted sessions on respect and understanding of diverse cultural identities, to storytelling circles, dance and musical performances. These interactive formats were tailored to help participants process their experiences in safe, culturally rooted ways.


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IGAD & Partners Launch Inception Meeting on Draft Regional Transitional Justice Protocol

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), in collaboration with the Initiative for Transitional Justice in Africa (ITJA), convened a high-level inception meeting with IGAD Member States on 2–3 April 2025 to deliberate on a proposed Draft Regional Transitional Justice Protocol and Mechanism. The meeting took place in Djibouti, bringing together political and technical experts from across the East and Horn of Africa.

The Initiative is being led by the IGAD Peace and Security Division in partnership with the African Union Commission's Department for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (AUC-PAPS), the International Centre for Transitional Justice, and ITJA, with support from the European Union. Representing the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation was Professor Tim Murithi, Head of Peacebuilding Interventions, who joined other regional thought leaders in offering insights on the potential of a legally binding framework to support transitional justice efforts in the region. Prof Murithi emphasised the importance of African-led processes that address legacies of structural violence, promote healing, and strengthen institutions.

The meeting marked the beginning of a broader consultative process, where Member State representatives will help shape the content of the Protocol. Discussions centered around establishing a Technical Expert Working Group to guide the development of the Draft Protocol and ensure national priorities are reflected. The IGAD Protocol aims to enhance the institutional capacities of national systems to effectively implement transitional justice mechanisms that address past human rights violations, prevent future conflict, and promote rule of law and sustainable peace. This comes amid persistent challenges in the region, including protracted conflicts, governance gaps, and cross-border insecurity.

Participants acknowledged the uneven impact and sustainability of past transitional justice efforts and welcomed IGAD's move to foster regional coherence. Outcomes from the inception meeting include the formal establishment of the Technical Expert Working Group and a shared commitment to ongoing engagement throughout the drafting and validation stages. The process is expected to lead to a landmark regional framework that will strengthen peacebuilding, human rights, democracy, and development across the IGAD region.

Policy Brief - Reparations in South Africa: What still needs to be done?

By Felicity Harrison

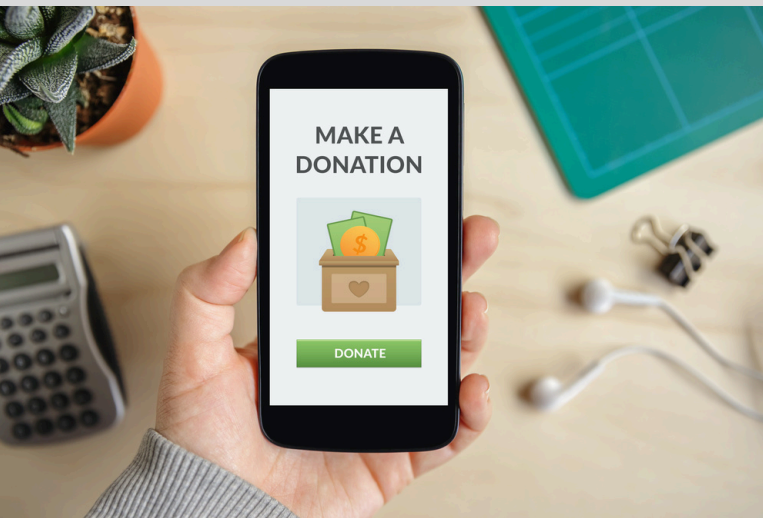


Reparations are necessary not just from a justice perspective, but also have an important psycho-social element, which cannot be ignored; or if ignored, may imperil the whole reconciliation project. Acknowledgement, accountability and redress are necessary, but not sufficient. If the trauma that resulted from the violations is not acknowledged, authentic reconciliation and lasting peace are imperiled.

South Africa chose to pursue the route to reconciliation through Transitional Justice. Transitional Justice emphasises the centrality of victims. "It focuses on their rights and dignity as citizens and human beings and it seeks accountability, acknowledgment, and redress for the harms they suffered". This is important because the focus and intent is on reconciliation, which is human-centred and not a "tick-box" exercise to meet legal or political requirements, although some may argue this is a trap that we have fallen into. Often in cases where there has been conflict and gross human rights violations, such actions are conducted in secrecy.

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Help make a difference!



At the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), we are committed to supporting the building of fair, inclusive, democratic and peaceful societies across Africa.

Our work bridges the gap between grassroots action, evidence-based research, and policy advocacy, ensuring that healing, justice, and accountability are not just ideals, but lived realities.

Join us in making transitional justice, peace and reconciliation a lived experience for all.

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