

**REPARATORY JUSTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA: A RACE AGAINST
ERASURE: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA; 17 JUNE 2025.
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Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for inviting me to be part of the discussion of this important matter, on interrogating how we clean up our festering wounds, in order to allow for the healing to begin.

I have titled this lecture A Race against Erasure because I constantly ask myself, who am I really? Where do I come from? Is it true that I originate from West Central Africa and came southwards about 4000 to 5000 years ago? But what about the mysteries that were hidden deep within the caves in the Cradle of Humankind, which bear evidence that points us to the truth; that we are standing where man originates? The oldest evidence found there dates back three million years or more, evidence that now openly speaks of a community that lived, loved, bore children, regulated itself? What language did they speak? What songs did they sing? What food did they eat? How did they bury their dead? What Gods did they worship? What did they teach their children?

The Odulvai Gorge in Ngorongoro, Tanzania tells us of men shaping stones into useful tools over two million years ago.

There are glimpses of who we are that come to light here and there; in the lost and found cities in the northern parts of South Africa and in Zimbabwe. The Great Zimbabwe ruins tell us of a city that was a great

trading post. Information currently available tells us the city was inhabited from 1000AD.

Archaeological findings such as those of the Kingdom of Mapungubwe, the ancient towns of Thulamela, Dzata, where Africans were dancing the famous domba dance to the beat of the holy drum, tell us a different story from what the plunderers of Africa want us to believe.

Further afield, the Timbuktu manuscripts, dating back to the 13th century, stand as a testament to an outstanding African intellectual heritage. They cover a wide range of subjects, including medicine, astronomy, law, literature, philosophy and other sciences.

There are many questions outstanding. What did we call our places of abode before the colonialists arrived. When the Batswana call their mother Mma, was it always what they called them? Is the word Mma borrowed from the Spanish, Italian, Germans word for mother, or is it the other way round, that they borrowed from our ancient languages?

My soul wanders, seeking answers. History, as we know, is at best partly documented, mostly written with bias or not recorded at all. The African proverb; 'Until the lion tells his side of the story, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter' embodies this truth.

I have been asked to talk about Reparatory Justice in South Africa. I will try to go a bit beyond South Africa, mindful of the time constraints.

I will inquire into this matter in three parts. First to address the question that is usually put forward when dealing with reparations: What is the harm that was visited upon us people of colour; the harm that seeks redress through reparatory justice? I will thereafter interrogate the responses that are under consideration by the African Union and the United Nations, including its Committee for the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination, as well as refer to examples of reparations paid

under certain circumstances and, lastly, explore other possible remedies that may assist us to redress the harm in a holistic manner.

WHAT IS THE HARM THAT WAS CAUSED?

It is not possible to discuss in one sitting the harm that was caused to nations by the many acts of dispossession, in particular through the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism and apartheid.

In South Africa, the first recorded European settlers were the Portuguese, who tell us that they did not take our land, but only put their markers on our land, white stones and crosses, to demarcate their territory. That, they tell us, does not amount to taking our land. The Portuguese were followed by the French, Dutch and British. The Dutch tell us that a hundred of their men landed in Cape Town in three ships on 6 April 1652.

Both the English and the Dutch proceeded to unleash a genocidal reign of terror on Africans as they moved from what they named the Cape into the interior of present-day South Africa. As they plundered and killed, they killed our names as well. Cape Town, Grahamstown, Port Elizabeth, Queenstown, Durban, Bloemfontein, Pretoria, Pietersburg, Nelspruit, Kimberley they named our places, including bastardising the ones they attempted to keep, such as changing Mahikeng to Mafeking. We lost our personal names. Nelson, Oliver, Johannes, Elizabeth, Lillian, Charlotte, Victoria, Sarah, Jan, Pieter became our new names. On their part, to date, although they claim some African ancestry, they have not adopted our names still.

They erased our belief systems, calling us pagans. Our education systems vanished. Our way of life, our very identity, were lost to us.

The one hundred Dutch men arrived without women partners. They unleashed a grotesque attack on the sexual and reproductive integrity of indigenous populations.

What is it that we want to repair? How do you repair the erasure of our identity.

We lost:

Our land

Our names

Our customs

Our religion

Our dress

Our education systems, including oral history practices and storytelling

Our legal systems

Our entire identity.

That is the harm that we need to repair.

The colonial atrocities were spread throughout Africa and other parts of the world.

The slave castles of Goree, in Senegal, and the Gold Coast in Ghana bear the marks of the inhumanity of the slave trade. Human faeces from those years form the smooth patina that we now walk on. The narrow doors of no return remind us that there really was no return. Patrice Lumumba's only remaining body part, his tooth has just recently been brought home. Thousands had their limbs chopped off in Congo.

The National Museum of Ethnology In Lisbon, Portugal, has an ongoing exhibition titled "Decostructing Colonialism, Decolonizing the Imaginary" showing the colonial atrocities of the Portuguese in Mozambique.

Among other documents on exhibition, there are records of how they classified blacks as primitive, incapable of rational thought, with no idea of statecraft; no advanced skills; believed in no religion but were partial to “spells”; had no history and biologically resembled the great apes.

The genocidal massacres of over a million Algerians, a third of the total population then, by the French colonialists, remain etched in our memory. This the harm that we have to redress.

REST OF THE WORLD

The horrors of the transatlantic slave trade have been written about quite extensively. How do we even begin to try and understand the harm caused by the brutality of the capture, the horrors of the transportation, chattel slavery, where the totality of your humanity is wiped out and you become property. The brutality on the cotton fields. The rapes, both physical and spiritual.

The mental, spiritual and physical healing that is required is immense.

REPARATORY JUSTICE MEASURES

South Africa has a very limited direct reparatory justice history. The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act provided for reparations for victims of Apartheid. The reparations were limited to people who made statements or were referred to in the proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and were formally recognised as victims, which in itself was a huge limitation, since every aspect of black lives was negatively impacted upon by Apartheid.

The Reparations and Rehabilitation Committee was mandated to make recommendations for reparations, which reparations were not limited to monetary compensation. Fortunately, the reparations process remains

open, giving us an opportunity to learn from other experiences. South Africa does have some complexities though, because the reparations programme is linked to acts under Apartheid, and those Apartheid actors or their heirs are part of the current economic and political classes. In many instances, they are part of the government.

I have earlier spoken about the harm that was caused to South Africans long before the advent of Apartheid. That part awaits redress.

The year 2025, this year, marks the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has taken up the responsibility of drafting a general recommendation that all member states should use in determining what reparatory justice measures are appropriate. I should mention that at the last sitting of the Committee in April this year, South Africa, which had the honour to host the first United Nations World Conference Against Racism, had not made its submission. The General Recommendations will address reparations for the historical injustices from the chattel enslavement of Africans, particularly concerning the harms of forced capture of Africans, the transatlantic transport of those captives, their enslavement as chattel, and the massive and continuing harm suffered by their descendants.

Brazil's submission to the Committee included the following:

“12. The Permanent Forum affirms that reparations are the foundation of the form that justice must take in the 21st century and that an effective sustainable development agenda is not possible without them. As recognized in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the full dignity and human rights of people of African descent require comprehensive reparatory justice. The Permanent Forum affirms that enslavement, the transatlantic trafficking of enslaved Africans, apartheid and colonialism are crimes against humanity and constitute genocide. Trauma and structural impacts continue to manifest themselves in

inequalities in health, well-being and the full enjoyment of human rights. The Permanent Forum encourages Member States to take concrete actions to educate themselves and the public about the histories and legacies of colonialism and enslavement; to acknowledge how they have contributed to or suffered from these histories and legacies; and to eliminate all forms of structural and systemic racial discrimination at the local, national, regional and global levels. Member States should treat this as an issue of justice, not charity or aid, and in doing so should give centrality to the will, participation and needs of people of African descent.

The fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance is a priority for Brazilian foreign policy. Not only does the Federative Republic of Brazil govern its international relations (art. 4) by repudiating racism, but it also considers the practice of racism to be an unbailable and imprescriptible crime (art. 5).

Sustainable development, which includes the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, the fight against inequalities, the preservation of the planet, economic growth and the promotion of social inclusion, in this sense, must not fail to consider aspects related to racial issues in its formulations.”

Cristina Duarte, the UN Special Adviser on Africa writes on 2 May 2025, in the UN Bulletin, that:

“Reparations are often discussed exclusively in terms of the past: slavery, colonial exploitation, violent occupation, and cultural pillage. These were monumental crimes, and the demand for justice for these wrongs is not negotiable.

However, focusing solely on history without interrogating today’s systemic injustices misses a vital truth: the past wrongs were not buried; they were transformed into today’s economic and political systems.”

On its part, the AU theme of the year 2025, "Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations", underscores the need for a structured, coordinated, and legally binding approach to reparatory justice.

The objectives of the AU declaration are set out as follows:

1. Strengthening AU Institutional Frameworks:
 - Establish and operationalize key mechanisms, including a Committee of Experts on Reparations and an Africa Reparations Fund.
 - Develop partnerships with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the African Diaspora to enhance collaboration.
2. Operationalizing Reparations as a Flagship Project:
 - Convene strategic dialogues and develop a framework for implementing reparations and racial healing initiatives as a flagship project.
 - Promote policy and legislative measures to ensure the project's success.
3. Developing an African Common Position:
 - Create a unified stance on reparations, incorporating input from experts, member states, and relevant stakeholders.
4. Mainstreaming Reparations into Development Policies:
 - Equip member states and regional economic communities (RECs) to integrate reparations and racial healing into their strategies and programs.
5. Promoting AU-Wide and Global Engagement:
 - Organize global summits and dialogues to advocate for reparations.
 - Enhance public awareness and research on reparations and racial healing.
6. Establishing Knowledge and Research Centers:
 - Set up a Center of Excellence for training and scholarships focused on reparations and racial healing.
 - Launch educational programs like summer schools and grants.
7. Building Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships:
 - Strengthen collaboration between civil society, governments, religious organizations, and the diaspora to advance reparatory justice.
8. Resource Mobilization:
 - Secure sustainable funding through initiatives like the AU Global Fund on Reparations.
 - Host high-level events to encourage investment in reparations and racial healing.

As is clear from the breadth of the objectives, the African Union has set itself a very detailed agenda.

The decision to declare 2025 as the year of reparatory justice was preceded by a few African initiatives, including a decision by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, meeting at its 73rd Ordinary Session held in Banjul, The Gambia, from 21 October 2022 – 9 November 2022, which stated, among others, as follows:

“The African Commission on Human and People's Rights, meeting at its 73rd Ordinary Session held in Banjul, The Gambia, from 21 October 2022 – 9 November 2022.

Affirming that accountability and redress for legacies of the past including enslavement, the trade and trafficking of enslaved Africans, colonialism and racial segregation is integral to combatting systemic racism and to the advancement of the human rights of Africans and people of African descent;

Taking note of the ongoing discussions the calls from the African continent and Africa's diaspora for reparations for legacies of the past including the trade and trafficking of enslaved Africans, colonialism and racial segregation;

Called on Member States to establish a committee to consult, seek the truth, and conceptualise reparations from Africa's perspective, describe the harm occasioned by the tragedies of the past, establish a case for reparations (or Africa's claim), and pursue justice for the trade and trafficking in enslaved Africans, colonialism and colonial crimes, and racial segregation and contribute to non-recurrence and reconciliation of the past;”

An international conference to address the same matter was held in Accra, Ghana, in November 2023. This conference recommended that the African Union should declare 2025 as the year for reparatory justice.

The conference proclamation states, in part, as follows:

“RECOGNIZING that the Accra Reparations Conference convened with a shared commitment to addressing historical injustices and injurious crimes committed against Africans and people of African descent, through transatlantic enslavement, colonialism and apartheid, and to addressing the inequities present in the international economic and political orders, is a demonstration of the African Union's commitment to advancing the cause of reparatory justice and healing for Africans and for all people of African descent;

REITERATING our respective and collective understanding and abhorrence of the profound and lasting impacts of slavery, colonialism, racial discrimination and neo-colonialism on Africans and people of African descent, and how these continue to cause immense suffering, cultural disruption, economic exploitation, emotional trauma and unending discrimination endured by Africans and people of African descent throughout history;

AFFIRMING that the fulfilment of reparations is a moral as well as a legal imperative rooted in principles of justice, human rights and human dignity, and that the claim for reparations represents a concrete step towards remedying historical wrongs and fostering healing among the people of Africa and people of African descent;

HEREBY COMMIT to undertaking the following social, cultural, political and economic areas of action;

1. **Establishment by the African Union Commission and inauguration of a Committee of Experts on Reparations, in consultation with Member States, ECOSOCC and other AU Organs as well as the RECs, for the purpose of developing a Common African Policy on Reparations and incorporating therein, an African Reparatory Programme of Action,** in accordance with due process and taking into consideration the following proposals:
 - a. To serve as a principal point of reference for the African Union on matters relating to reparations and healing;
 - b. To solicit, nurture and promote reparatory justice knowledge at the African Union, by developing and implementing knowledge about reparations between and among different AU organs, Member States and the global African community;

- c. Liaise with and support the mandate of an AU Special Envoy on Reparations for Africa; and
 - d. Undertake any other tasks which may be assigned and determined by the African Union.
- 2. **Establishment of a Global Reparations Fund**, based in Africa and supported by multilateral institutions and agencies aligned with the reparatory justice agenda. Such a Fund will complement the efforts of similar initiatives in and outside the Continent, while operating as an autonomous entity geared towards ensuring the judicious utilization of a pool of resources to advance the campaign for reparations, in close cooperation with the African Union Commission and for consideration by Member States, according to due process;
- 3. **Establishment of the Office of AU Special Envoy on Reparations for Africans**, to be recommended for consideration according to the AUC due process, and with a view to help champion the international advocacy and campaign for reparations at the global level. The full mandate of this Special Envoy will be determined, in consultation with the Executive Council of the African Union. The postholder of this office will reinforce the work of the Committee of Experts on Reparations and Healing.
- 4. **Recognition of African civil society efforts on reparations:** The African Union Commission, through the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), have made tremendous progress in engaging and collaborating with African peoples through civil society actors, and expanding engagement with the African Diaspora community through State and non-state institutions. To build on this and continue the advancement of equitable representation and participation that will inform the day-to-day discourses on reparations and reparative justice, we commit to supporting relevant African networks, coalitions and initiatives that foster synergy and cooperation between and among the relevant actors of the reparatory justice movement.
- 5. **Creation of a transcontinental partnership framework between the AU, CARICOM Latin American States, and the African diaspora in Europe and all other regions in the world, including, where appropriate, relevant CSOs:** This will seek to enhance Global South cooperation, in close coordination with the African Union Commission, through stronger collaboration between the African Union (AU) and other inter-governmental entities in the Global South with significant African and people of African descent. The framework will support efforts by the AU to accelerate

processes that will catalyse the development of transcontinental messaging around reparations, including the need to emphasize that reparations are an integral pillar for the achievement of sustainable development. It will also be deployed to foster intercontinental knowledge building and exchange on reparations and healing.

6. **Exploration of legal and judicial options for reparations:** This will involve engagement, in close coordination with the African Union Commission, on the question of how international law interacts with or supports the quest for reparations, including the potential for exploring litigation options in regional and international court systems. This effort will require the African Union, including the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, CARICOM and Latin American states, Europe and all other regions of the world, among others, in collaboration with civil society, to engage the United Nations and other multilateral bodies on the legal merits of the call for reparations, including on the question of whether acts of enslavement, colonialism and apartheid against Africans, constitute grave violations of human rights at the time they were committed. In addition, we support actions being taken in and outside the Continent by individual Member States and descendants of victims of these historical crimes and call on the African Union to lend its weight behind future litigatory actions for reparations.
7. **Increased role for the United Nations:** Conference Members call on the United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, to convene, in close coordination with the African Union Commission, an International Conference, involving former colonial powers, on the issue of reparations as well as to extend the Decade for People of African Descent, for acknowledgement and healing with regard to the Trans-Atlantic enslavement, colonialism, and apartheid.
8. **Establishment of a Legal Reference Group,** in close coordination with the African Union Commission, to be set up to support the AU Committee of Experts and the AU Special Envoy, through the provision of legal advice on the question of reparations, including best practice on the law, practice and litigation of the reparation's agenda. The Legal/Expert Reference Group will further provide thought leadership and advice, drawing from global case studies, for influencing policy and advocating for the application of global norms in support of reparatory justice.
9. **Amplification of marginalized voices in the reparatory justice movement.** The Conference acknowledges that contemporary

forms of discrimination, especially against women and young people, stem from long-standing discriminatory and non-representative policies rooted in colonialism, apartheid and neo-colonialism, which have further strained the overall development of former colonized countries in the Global South. As such, the Conference calls for political discussions on reparations accompanied by actions that demonstrate genuine socio-political equality through fair representation of marginalized voices.

10. **A united front for the reform of global financial systems and structures:** The delegates commit to supporting the advocacy campaign headlined by President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and the Republic of Ghana for the reform of the global financial infrastructure with a view to achieving a new global financial pact that is reparatory in nature and economically equitable in scope and practice. Member States of the AU, CARICOM and other developing and Least Developed Countries that have been adversely impacted by trans-Atlantic enslavement, colonialism, apartheid and other forms of extractivism, are urged to support the Government of Ghana and similar efforts, including the Bridgetown Initiative championed by Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley of the Republic of Barbados, to pursue joint reparatory efforts within the global multilateral system.
11. **Increased and active role for AU organs Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the reparations campaign:** Conference delegates further call on AU organs, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) of the African Union, to take concrete measures, in close coordination with the African Union Commission, that would promote and sustain linkages between the various AU organs, the RECs and Civil Society, including through the use of information and communication technology as well as the arts and culture industries to advance reparatory justice and healing.
12. **Climate justice and reparatory justice:** The delegates of the Conference note that descendants of the victims of Trans-Atlantic enslavement and colonialism have also been exposed to the dangers of climate change, including the impact of environmental damage caused by the exploitative forces of colonialism and through the forced relocation of enslaved African labour to other regions. Delegates, therefore, commit to supporting efforts campaigning for the compensation of the people of African descent suffering from those effects.

13. **Repatriation, restitution and safeguarding of African cultural artifacts:** Developing a strong Common African Position on the Restitution of Cultural Property and Heritage and producing a Framework for Action on the Negotiations for the Return/Restitution of illicitly trafficked cultural property from the Continent in accordance with the Continental Consultations on the Restitution of Cultural Property and Heritage held from 30 November to 2 December 2021. African experts should endeavour to establish networks of African cultural experts, policymakers, certified dealers and auctioneers, and museum curators, among others, working in combatting illicit trafficking in cultural property and heritage. As the African Union Agenda 2063 underscored, Africa's stolen culture, heritage and artifacts should be fully repatriated and safeguarded.
14. **Neo-colonialism:** Highlight that African States are still facing the repercussions of trans-Atlantic enslavement, colonialism, and apartheid through the persistence of neo-colonialism and dependency on former colonial powers. Hence, they call for immediate, just and comprehensive reforms of the prevailing architecture of multilateral institutions by fully realizing related African Common Positions. Particularly in regard to the composition and working methods of the United Nations Security Council, and the Bretton Woods Institutions, as well as ensuring an equitable and just international system through concrete measures including, but not limited to, special and differential treatment, common but differentiated responsibility and mechanisms for loss and damage, debt relief, curbing illicit financial flows and return of African cultural artifacts.
15. **Propose** the holding of the International Conference on Reparations regularly and **encourage** other AU Member States to offer to host the Conference in collaboration with the AU Commission, alongside other relevant mechanisms for dialogue relating to specific aspects of reparations to sustain the momentum.”

Reparatory Justice is not a new concept. It is a practice that has been an integral part of efforts at reparations for at least the last three centuries.

One of the first recorded case of payment of reparations were the French-imposed racist reparations on the victorious freed slaves in Haiti, as far back as 1885.

Greg Rosalsky, a reporter at NPR's Planet Money, reminds us that:

"Haiti is one of the [poorest nations](#) in the world, and rich countries have their fingerprints all over the nation's stunted development. The United States worked to isolate a newly independent Haiti during the early 19th century and [violently occupied](#) the island nation for 19 years in the early 20th century. While the U.S. officially left Haiti in 1934, it continued to control Haiti's public finances [until 1947](#), siphoning away [around 40%](#) of Haiti's national income to service debt repayments to the U.S. and France.

Much of this debt to France was the legacy of what the University of Virginia scholar Marlene Daut calls "the greatest heist in history": surrounded by French gunboats, a newly independent Haiti was forced to pay its slaveholders reparations. You read that correctly. It was the former *slaves* of Haiti, not the French *slaveholders*, who were forced to pay reparations. Haitians compensated their oppressors and their oppressors' descendants for the privilege of being free. It took Haiti more than a century to pay the reparation debts off.

The Tragic Hope of Revolutionary Haiti

Haiti won its independence from France in 1804, and it was almost immediately made a pariah state by world powers. It was an independent, black-led nation — created by slaves who had cast aside their chains and fought their oppressors for their freedom — during a time when white-led nations were enforcing brutal, racist systems of exploitation around the world.

Haiti, then known as Saint-Domingue, had been the crown jewel of the French empire. It was [the most lucrative colony](#) in the whole world. French planters forced African slaves to produce sugar, coffee, and other cash crops for the global market. The system seemed to work well. That is, until the French and American revolutions helped to inspire, in 1791, what became the world's largest and most successful slave revolt. Against all odds, the slaves won. Former slaves sent slaveholders scurrying to France and America — and Haitians successfully fought back subsequent efforts to re-enslave them. Haiti was [the first nation](#) to permanently ban slavery."

Greg Rosalsky: 'The Greatest Heist in History'. How Haiti Was Forced To Pay Reparations For Freedom; NPR Newsletters, October 5, 2021

It is Marlene Daut in her article 'All the Devils Are Here – How the visual history of the Haitian Revolution misrepresents Black suffering and death', published on 27 October 2020, who warns us to look out for narratives that portray blacks as violent and whites as victims of that violence, when in fact blacks were responding to the violence perpetrated against them over time. It is a lesson not lost on us as we observe the situation between Palestine and Israel.

Reparations were paid by many countries after both the first and second world wars.

One of the most comprehensive reparations programme was that undertaken by Germany in respect of the Holocaust victims.

A United States Department of State report to Congress, the Justice for Uncompensated Survivors Today (JUST) Act Report: Germany, released on July 29, 2020, sets out the comprehensive nature of reparations paid by Germany for Holocaust victims.

I refer to the entire report to illustrate the detailed manner in which reparations are made when there is political will. The report states as follows:

"Overview

Germany has taken commendable steps to confront its role as the perpetrator of the Holocaust and to ensure that Holocaust victims and their heirs receive restitution and/or compensation. Germany also honors and remembers the victims of the Holocaust and has worked to cultivate a culture of remembrance. Its restitution measures range from compensating former owners and heirs for assets wrongfully seized during the Holocaust to making substantial financial contributions to victims' funds and survivors' pensions. From 1945 to 2018, the German government paid approximately \$86.8 billion in restitution and compensation to Holocaust victims and their heirs. Germany has also identified Nazi-looted objects – including art works, books, and objects within larger collections –

and has returned 16,000 objects to survivors and their heirs over the last 20 years. Thousands more pieces of looted art are still missing worldwide. Rising anti-Semitism throughout Europe including in Germany, and especially in former East Germany, coupled with polls showing the need to increase Holocaust education among Germany's youth, highlight the importance of Germany's continued dedication to fostering a culture of remembrance.

Immovable Private, Communal/Religious, and Heirless Property

In the aftermath of World War II, the United States, France, and the United Kingdom occupied the areas of Germany that in 1949 became the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). In November 1947, the U.S. military government promulgated Military Law No 59, which became the foundation of the first program of restitution of Holocaust assets. Similar laws enacted in the French and British zones between 1947 and 1949 enabled the return of property that had been seized by the Nazi regime or sold under duress. In September 1951, Chancellor Adenauer delivered an historic speech in the Bundestag during which he asked forgiveness for the crimes of Nazi Germany and stated that he was ready to commence negotiations with world Jewry on the issue of Holocaust reparations.

In October 1951, more than 20 Jewish organizations met in New York and formed the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (JCC or Claims Conference). In March 1952, the FRG held negotiations with the Government of Israel and the Claims Conference, which in September 1952 led to two agreements known as the "Luxembourg Agreements." The agreement with Israel provided for the payment of DM 3 billion (approximately \$714 million based on 1952 exchange rates) in goods and services to the State of Israel. The agreement with the Claims Conference provided for payment of DM 450 million (approximately \$107

million, based on 1952 exchange rates) and obligated the FRG to enact legislation to compensate individuals.

Following those agreements, the FRG passed two landmark pieces of legislation. In 1956, it passed the Federal Compensation Act (BEG), which covered many aspects of compensation for Nazi injustices not covered by the Allied restitution laws for certain groups of persecuted persons. The BEG provided payments to those persons as compensation for physical injury and damage to health, restrictions on personal freedom, harm to economic and professional growth, and damage to personal property. Individual insurance policies have been compensated since 1956 under the BEG in Germany, and many claims had been settled before ICHEIC began its work in 1998. As of mid-2019, approximately 25,000 Holocaust survivors worldwide still received a monthly pension for “damage to health” provided under the BEG. In 1957, the FRG passed the Federal Restitution Law (BRüG), which replaced and filled in certain gaps in the Allied restitution laws. The BRüG attempted to provide appropriate compensation for immovable and movable property that could no longer be returned. As of 2011, approximately \$2.255 billion had been paid out under the BRüG.

While the FRG contributed billions of dollars in compensation to Holocaust victims, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) refused to accept responsibility for the crimes of the Nazis. It provided no restitution to Jews for property confiscated by the Nazis or nationalized during the Communist regime. Following German reunification in October 1990, the FRG passed the Open Property Questions Act, which was essentially a re-privatization law for citizens of the former GDR whose property had been nationalized under the Communist regime. This law also included provisions for Jewish property owners and their heirs to file claims for assets located in the former GDR that were lost or confiscated during the Nazi era. The filing deadline for claims was December 31, 1992, for real property and June 30, 1993, for movable property. The Claims Conference Successor Organization was designated under the law as the legal successor to

unclaimed Jewish property lost as a result of Nazi persecution. The Claims Conference used the proceeds it received from the sale of heirless or unclaimed property in the former GDR for social welfare services for needy Holocaust survivors and to support Holocaust education and projects devoted to preserving the memory and lessons of the Holocaust.

Since 1990, German authorities have granted restitution and/or compensation totaling approximately €2.5 billion (approximately \$2.8 billion) for property lost as a result of Nazi persecution, primarily to former owners and their heirs. As of mid-2019, the Federal Office for Central Services and Unresolved Property Issues had 5,000 pending claims.

In addition to its private property restitution efforts, the German government also provides more than 50 percent of the maintenance costs for Jewish cemeteries, including \$1.1 million annually for the protection of Jewish cemeteries in Central Europe. In 2006, the Claims Conference partnered with the Conference of European Rabbis to establish the *Lo Tishkach* (“Do not forget”) European Jewish Cemeteries Initiative. The initiative maintains a comprehensive database of more than 11,000 Jewish cemeteries, mass graves, and burial sites throughout Europe and facilitates their upkeep and improvement.

Movable Property: Nazi-Confiscated and Looted Art

Compensation for and restitution of looted art remains a work in progress. Nazis looted an estimated 600,000 paintings from Jews in Europe during World War II, 100,000 of which remain missing. In 1998, the German government signed the Washington Conference Principles on Nazi-Confiscated Art. In the years since, it has returned more than 16,000 individual objects (including books and objects in collections) to Holocaust survivors or their heirs. On November 26, 2018, Germany hosted an international conference on the 20th anniversary of the Washington Principles to draw attention to the progress made and to generate

momentum where implementation of the Principles had fallen short, including in Germany. Germany and the United States also signed a joint declaration during the conference reaffirming their commitment to the Washington Principles and acknowledging the need to improve implementation. Germany pledged that it would improve the procedures of the Limbach Commission on Holocaust-era art claims to require German museums to participate in the proceedings. Germany also committed its federally funded art museums to expediting the provenance research on their collections to determine if they possess any art potentially confiscated by the Nazis.

In 2015, the German government established the German Lost Art Foundation (DZK) in Magdeburg to promote provenance research. The DZK has become Germany's national and international contact partner for all matters pertaining to the illegal seizure of cultural assets in Germany since 1933, with a focus on seizure by Nazis from Jewish owners. The government funds the DZK, which had a budget of \$6.86 million in 2018 and \$8.95 million in 2019. From 2008 to 2018, the DZK and its predecessor, the Center for Provenance Research in Berlin, supported 273 projects with funding totaling \$27.3 million. These projects have examined more than 113,000 objects held in museums to determine their provenance.

The German Lost Art Foundation also maintains an online "Lost Art" database that documents objects proven or suspected of having been confiscated by the Nazis. Heirs can use it to list objects seized from their families. The database currently contains approximately 169,000 detailed descriptions and several million summaries of objects. In 2013, Christie's auction house used this database to determine that two vases consigned for sale had been looted by the Nazis in 1939. Following further investigation, the FBI art crime team organized the return of the vases to the owner's heirs in an August 1, 2019 ceremony at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin. Additionally, the DZK provides financial support for searches that

trace relatives and heirs of Holocaust victims in order to return looted art to the rightful owners. The DZK is working to complete a comprehensive database of Germany's federal museums by 2020. Public universities in Bonn, Hamburg, and Munich have established professorships for provenance research.

In 2003, the government established an advisory commission to mediate and provide recommendations on disputed looted art cases upon the request of both parties involved. Thus far, the commission has provided just 16 recommendations, which has led some observers, including the Claims Conference's lead negotiator and the president of the World Jewish Congress, to criticize its effectiveness and lack of transparency. In response to criticism about the lack of Jewish members on the advisory commission, the Commissioner added two Jewish members in 2016. In 2019, the federal government began requiring the federally funded institutions to agree to mediation by the commission at a claimant's request. Previously, both parties had to agree to enter mediation. This change, which benefited claimants, was part of the [November 2018 U.S.-Germany Joint Declaration \[4 MB\]](#). It should be noted that the statutes of limitation also continue to hinder claims for restitution.

The German government maintains possession of the remaining unclaimed objects obtained from "Central Collecting Points" set up by the Allied Forces at the end of World War II. Unclaimed objects include 3,000 works of art, 4,000 coins, and about 6,600 books seized by the Nazi regime or by Nazi officials operating in a private capacity. The government is working to return these items to their rightful owners, but progress is slow.

Judaica and Jewish Cultural Property

Germany is committed to strengthening provenance research on Judaica and deepening scientific exchange in this field. In 2018, the German

Center for Cultural Property Losses and the Israel Museum cooperated on a project that added more than 1,100 potentially stolen Judaica items to the German Lost Art database. In 2019, the government sponsored a German translation of the Claims Conference-WJRO *Handbook on Judaica Provenance Research: Ceremonial Objects*. Germany also encourages its public universities to promote Judaica provenance research.

Access to Archival Documents

The German Federal Archives provides access to documents about cultural assets stolen during the Nazi era. In principle, every person has the right to use the federal archives upon request. The federal archives are digitizing a steadily growing portion of their archive holdings and, to the extent legally permissible, making them available online.

The Federal Finance Ministry (BMF) launched a project in August 2018 to create a central interconnected digital portal to find documents from state archives throughout Germany specifically related to Holocaust compensation and restitution. The BMF is also working to create a new database that combines all data concerning individual compensation proceedings and makes it accessible to scientific researchers, as well as to Holocaust survivors and heirs.

The International Archival Programs Division of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) has been active in Germany for more than 25 years. It has enjoyed excellent cooperation with the German Federal Archives and the political archive of the German Foreign Office, from which the USHMM recently acquired several million pages of Holocaust-relevant archival documentation on microfilm and as digital scans. The Arolsen Archives in Bad Arolsen (formerly called the International Tracing Service) is a separate archive that contains about 30 million documents from concentration and extermination camps, details of forced labor, and files on displaced persons. The Arolsen Archives,

which is governed by an international committee and has been fully funded by the German government since 2011, is digitizing its archives to improve accessibility.

At the state level, the USHMM has signed archival access agreements with North Rhine-Westphalia, Brandenburg, and Bavaria. Cooperation with the state of Hamburg has also been excellent, despite the lack of an official access agreement. Access to the State Archive in Berlin yielded the records of more than 150,000 individual trials against Jews and other victims prosecuted by Nazi courts in the Berlin area. The Berlin State Archive recently suspended its cooperation with the USHMM, however, citing data privacy concerns with regard to the reproduction of records. As of mid-2019, the archive was preparing the digitalization of its data, and discussions about access were ongoing. Other states are similarly concerned about data protection, and this has slowed progress. Cooperation with Saxony is underway, while discussions with Bremen and Saarland are pending. The U.S. Embassy in Berlin and U.S. consulates have advocated with local authorities throughout Germany in support of USHMM requests for access to state archives.

Some advocates for Holocaust survivors and descendants of Holocaust victims have pointed out that Property (Asset) Declaration forms completed by Jews in Nazi Germany in April 1938 remain scattered among archives in the different German states and have not been digitized. They add that other files relating to post-war claims for Holocaust-era compensation and restitution are located in more than a dozen archives in the country and are generally not publicly accessible. The German government and relevant NGOs and historians are working to develop a plan for the preservation and collection of these documents for use by historians and others. The sheer volume of these archives and the privacy issues involved complicate their task.

Education, Remembrance, Research, and Memorial Sites

The Federal Commissioner for Culture and the Media takes the lead in identifying and funding Holocaust memorial sites and places of remembrance. The Commissioner's work is guided by the tenet that Nazi crimes against humanity give the federal government and the entire German nation a special responsibility to ensure the constitutionally guaranteed inviolability of the dignity of every person, as well as to stand up against anti-Semitism, discrimination directed at the Roma people, racism, and exclusion. In 2018, there were nearly 5.5 million visitors at federally funded memorial sites.

Both the federal and state governments provide funding to preserve Holocaust memorials, including former concentration camps and Jewish sites of cultural or religious importance. In 2017, the federal government provided a total of \$20 million for the maintenance of major Holocaust-related memorials. Individual German states contributed additional funds to these sites. The Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe maintains memorials in the center of Berlin dedicated to those persecuted during the Holocaust, including Jews, homosexuals, Sinti, and Roma, as well as victims of Nazi-era "euthanasia" killings. The federal government fully funds the foundation, which received \$3.7 million in 2017. In addition, the German Foreign Office by mid-2019 had provided \$6.5 million for Holocaust commemoration sites abroad (including Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland and Yad Vashem in Israel), as well as Holocaust-related projects, exhibitions, or seminars, including Nazi persecution of Sinti and Roma.

Germany holds numerous annual commemoration events throughout the country at memorials and the sites of former concentration camps. Important remembrance days include International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27 and Kristallnacht on November 9, the day in 1938 when Nazis destroyed Jewish property and synagogues and arrested tens of thousands of Jews. The German Bundestag holds an

annual commemoration event on International Holocaust Remembrance Day, usually with a Holocaust survivor as a guest speaker.

Holocaust remembrance is an integral part of public school education throughout Germany. As part of the curriculum, which is established at the state level, students often visit one of the 12 former concentration camps in Germany that are now Holocaust commemoration sites. Beyond school programs, the government and NGOs host numerous remembrance and education initiatives. For example, Germany's Foundation for Remembrance, Responsibility, and Future (EVZ) supports projects and educational initiatives, such as the collection of firsthand accounts by Holocaust survivors in the form of interviews and memoirs, as well as educational seminars and the creation of online resources that teach about Nazi persecution. However, certain challenges in educating the next generation remain. A 2017 Körber Foundation poll found that fewer than half of German children aged 14 to 16 years had heard of Auschwitz-Birkenau, demonstrating the need for continued Holocaust education.

The U.S. Embassy in Germany cooperates closely with several NGOs promoting Holocaust remembrance and education initiatives, including the American Jewish Committee Berlin, the Kreuzberg Initiative against Anti-Semitism, and the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC). ERIAC, which receives \$223,000 in annual funding from the German government, promotes Roma contributions to European culture and documents the historical experiences of Roma people in Europe, including their persecution under the Nazi regime.

Germany's six federally funded political foundations also play an important role in promoting Holocaust education and remembrance. The foundations, each of which is associated with a political party represented in the Bundestag, seek to build upon the principles of liberal democracy and work to foster solidarity and tolerance through their activities. They

frequently hold events to examine Germany's Nazi past, remember the Holocaust's victims, and work to strengthen Germany's democratic values.

The Welfare of Holocaust (Shoah) Survivors and Other Victims of Nazi Persecution

Although the ability to file compensation claims under the BEG legislation expired in 1969, the FRG provided funding to the Claims Conference in 1980 for the creation of an additional "Hardship Fund." The Fund provides one-time payments to Jewish victims of the Nazis who had been forced to emigrate from Soviet bloc countries. During the last decade, the Fund expanded dramatically to make payments to eligible victims residing in Central and Eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union. The Fund also recognized the persecution of Jews in Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. As of July 2019, more than 521,500 Jewish victims of Nazi persecution had received a one-time payment from the Hardship Fund.

The 1990 treaty uniting Germany obliged the German government to hold negotiations with the Claims Conference on the establishment of new funds for victims of the Nazis who were in need and who had received no or only minimal compensation. In October 1992, Germany agreed to provide funding via what later became known as the "Article 2 Fund." In 1998, the country established a sister program, the Central and Eastern European Fund (CEEFF), for victims living in those areas. Since 1990, these funds enabled pensions for more than 130,000 Holocaust survivors.

In July 2000, an interagency team led by Stuart Eizenstat, Special Representative of the President and Secretary of State on Holocaust-Era Issues, concluded on behalf of the U.S. government an agreement with German industry and the German government for 10 billion DM (approximately \$5 billion) to settle class action suits filed against German companies in U.S. courts. This agreement included funds for certain slave

laborers (most of whom were Jewish laborers who were worked to death); forced laborers (representing the most extensive payments by Germany to non-Jewish citizens in such countries as Poland, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia); unpaid insurance policies, which were passed through to the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC) chaired by former U.S. Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger; and a new foundation to be created with German industry support.

To implement the July 2000 agreement, the German Bundestag established the EVZ. After paying \$4.9 billion in lump-sum payments to 1.66 million former forced laborers over the course of seven years, the EVZ concluded its direct compensation activities in 2007.

In 2002, the EVZ paid 550 million DM (approximately \$248 million, using 2002 conversion rate) to the ICHEIC to provide compensation for the unpaid Holocaust-era insurance policies issued by German companies. ICHEIC also received funds from settlements with certain non-German insurance companies. Holocaust survivors and their heirs filed approximately 90,000 insurance claims with ICHEIC, and 48,000 claimants received payments. Many claimants did not know the name of the company that had issued their policy. However, ICHEIC used archival research and matching protocols to identify more than 16,000 of these unnamed claims; companies made payments on about 8,000 of them. In total, ICHEIC made \$306 million in payments to Holocaust survivors and their heirs. Humanitarian payments were also made to claimants in cases where no policies could be found.

The EVZ set aside \$399 million, yielding capital proceeds of about \$8.6 million per year, for the “Future Fund” to finance Holocaust remembrance and educational projects, which was thought to be the fund’s major task when it was created in the July 2000 agreement. In recent years, a

significant portion of the funds have been used for projects dealing with human rights issues not related to the Holocaust.

Today, with funding from the German government, the Claims Conference continues to administer approximately 50,000 Article 2 and CEEF pensions, which amount to several hundred million dollars per year to Holocaust survivors in 80 countries. From 2009 to 2019, the Claims Conference has negotiated more than \$9 billion in additional compensation with the German government. Regular negotiations between the Claims Conference and the German government have expanded existing programs and introduced additional ones, including a child survivor fund, a Kindertransport fund, and the provision of home care services for elderly survivors. The latter program has been repeatedly expanded: in 2018, the Claims Conference and the German government negotiated an \$83 million funding increase, from \$452 million to \$535 million. In their 2019 negotiations, the German government agreed to an increase, which raised the total funding level for 2020 to \$587 million and included for the first time payments to the widowed spouses of recipients of Holocaust survivor pensions.

U.S. Citizen Claims

The deadlines for many of the restitution funds for Holocaust victims expired many years ago. However, victims who have not yet filed claims can still do so for some funds. The Claims Conference serves as the primary partner for Holocaust victims during the filing process, offering assistance free of charge. Moreover, the Claims Conference and the German government work to identify and contact potential claimants.”

On the other hand, this is the same Germany that has just recently, after much pressure was brought to bear on it, acknowledged that what it did

in Namibia amounts to genocide. It is the same Germany that has not apologised to Namibians and has certainly not agreed to comprehensive reparations for its actions in that country. The monster of racism rears its head again!

I have titled this lecture; A Race Against Erasure, in part because despite the brave effort of many countries convening at the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa in 2001 to acknowledge the truth of our past, put the debate to rest and actively begin the necessary reparatory work, we remain in a race against the attempt to erase that past.

There are many who say that African countries should have by now pulled themselves out of poverty. They refer to successes such as those in Singapore. I do not subscribe to this position. First, why should we forgo what is rightfully ours? It is very easy for the beneficiaries of slavery, colonialism and apartheid to seek to put us on the defensive, in order to deflect from what needs to be done. We must not allow that.

Secondly, countries such as Singapore did not develop depending on their own capacities. The United States and its ally, Israel, backed the development of Singapore with resources and political cover. Singapore is not a miracle; it is what happens when a major superpower determines that it is in its national security interest to develop certain countries.

It is true that there are instances where we could have done better in service of our communities. This lecture is co-hosted by the South African Department for Public Service and Administration. Many in this country are asking whether there is a public service to talk about in this country. We watch with dismay as many public services disintegrate around us, not because we have no budgets, but because some of our leaders have decided that the public service is there to feed their stomachs. Some of our politicians and public servants are spitting on the graves of the young martyrs who died 49 years ago yesterday. Shame on all of you who continuously desecrate the memories of those gallant young heroes. It is of great concern that some of those on the corruption

feeding frenzy were in the trenches with those who died. Have you no shame!

Be that as it may, the demand for reparations is not a call for favours to be extended to the victims; it is about accountability.

“But for” test

As we have seen with the Holocaust reparations, there are many ways of determining what kind of reparations are appropriate in respect of the different forms of harm caused.

Cases such as that of Haiti present a relatively easy way. For a start we can calculate the monetary value of the racist reparations that the free slaves were made to pay. However, the manner of calculating the untold psychological harm and negative effects of the continuing racist destabilisation of Haiti presents a challenge.

More recently, the American city of Tulsa has been able to quantify the amount of reparations due to the descendants of the Tulsa massacre.

Dr Scott Ellsworth, a writer and historian, writes in the Oklahoma Historical Society publication:

“During the course of eighteen terrible hours on May 31 and June 1, 1921, more than one thousand homes and businesses were destroyed, while credible estimates of deaths range from fifty to three hundred. By the time the violence ended, the city had been placed under martial law, thousands of Tulsans were being held under armed guard, and the state's second-largest African American community had been burned to the ground.”

The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture

A June 2025 BBC report puts it as follows:

“The city of Tulsa, Oklahoma is preparing to award its black community a \$105m (£73.8m) reparations package to address the harms caused by the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, one of the largest and most violent racial attacks in US history.

The plan, by Monroe Nichols, Tulsa's first black mayor, focuses on community redevelopment and does not involve direct payments to descendants or the two remaining survivors of the attack.

The funds, raised by a private trust, includes \$24m for a housing fund and \$60m for a cultural preservation fund focused on "reducing blight".

"The Tulsa Race Massacre has been a stain on our city's history... hidden from history books," Nichols said.

That tragedy, he said, was compounded by economic harms that followed, namely the building of a highway "to choke off economic vitality", "perpetual underinvestment" and "intentional acts of redlining", where black people were denied home and property loans.

"Now it's time to take the next big steps to restore," Nichols said.

The plan is called Road to Repair and its funds will be managed by the Greenwood Trust. It seeks to have \$105m in assets either secured or committed by 1 June, some of which would also go into a legacy fund for the trust to acquire and develop land.

Nichols said the proposal would not require city council approval. The council would, however, authorise the transfer of any city property to the trust, which he said was very likely.

The Greenwood Trust borrows its name from Tulsa's Greenwood District, a once-prosperous black neighbourhood with an economy so thriving that it was dubbed Black Wall Street.

That all changed in May 1921, when a white mob burned it to the ground, destroying more than 1,000 homes and structures in less than 24 hours. An estimated 300 black residents were killed and many more injured.

The event "robbed Tulsa of an economic future that would have rivalled anywhere else in the world", Nichols said in a phone interview.”

Tulsa plans \$105m in reparations for America's 'hidden' massacre. 2

June 2025

Brandon Drenon
BBC News, Washington DC

The work that the AU and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is doing will hopefully add substantively to answering the questions on what kind of reparations will holistically heal the harm caused to Africans.

My proposal is that in addition to all the excellent schools of thought on how to determine what reparations are due, we add the “**but for**” test. This test is used in law to determine whether the harm would have occurred but for the actions of the offending party. If the harm would not have happened without their conduct, then that conduct is considered a cause of the harm. This test is a fundamental part of establishing liability in law.

Slavery, colonialism disrupted the natural evolution of African societies.

But for the transatlantic slave trade, what would have happened in those countries from which able-bodied men and women were snatched away? We already know from what I said earlier that African societies were already quite advanced by the time of the slave trade. No doubt that those countries would have continued on that trajectory, trading with China from Mapumbugwe, exploring the universe as evidenced by the Timbuktu manuscripts.

But for slaves would the American economy have thrived as it did, and does? I am certain we have accountants and actuaries that can calculate the growth of the economies of States in America resulting from the free strong labour they had. That can be quantified for purposes of reparations.

But for the disruption caused by colonialism, what would have happened to the great Zulu nation? We know from snippets that Queen Nandi was quite influential in the Zulu Kingdom. But for the disruption to our way of life, could we have inherited from her the understanding that men and women have equal standing in communities, a practice that would have avoided our exposure to European Calvinistic practices that put men as better and higher being than women? Perhaps, but for colonialism, we would have avoided the scourge of gender based violence, because of what we saw and learnt from Queen Nandi, from Queens Nzinga and Taitu?

But for colonialism, we would have avoided the individualistic approach immanent in western societies, which results in the elevation of the individual above the group. This approach is a negation of our African way of life, encapsulated in sayings such as: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together with others” or Our Ubuntu mantra; *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*. The group approach leans more to better accountability.

The question remains; what is to be done. I will leave the answer to that question to the scholars gathered in this hall. Allow me to suggest a few interventions to initiate the debate.

1. We have to reclaim our identity. Archaeological and other findings have shown us that we come from greatness. Let us teach our children that truth. I spoke to a young South African woman, Marang, 17 years old, in Grade 11, to check what we are teaching our children in the history classes. It is woefully inadequate, lacks context and does not go back enough. There are very general references to some Apartheid laws and policies, such as Bantu Education and the Group Areas Act. Jan van Riebeeck finds space alongside the Sharpeville massacre. A greater attempt at what we teach our young ones needs to be made. We should consider going back to making some history module compulsory for all students.

2. We have to tell the truth of what happened. Facts matter. The killings, the rapes, the torture; all of it. We must confront false narratives.
3. We must not hesitate to claim monetary compensation for what happened to us. It is our right. Slavery was not only a legal construct, it was also an economic one.
4. We must involve those who are guardians of our souls and minds, the artists, the psychologists, the faith practitioners, to guide us on how we heal the souls of nations.
5. We must demand the return of all that was stolen, including human remains.
6. We must fight the narrative that says the harm belongs to the past, because we live with its continuing effects.
7. We must call out the willingness of some countries to pay reparations to white victims and refusal to pay African victims for what it is; racism.

Some will continue trying to run from the truth, but the demand for reparations is not going to stop. It is a demand whose time has come.

The Martinique poet, writer and artist Édouard Glissant, in his opening speech for the 6th international literature festival in Berlin on September 5th 2006 said:

“No place in the world can condone the slightest forgetting of a crime, the slightest shadow cast. We ask that the ban on the unsaid of our histories should be lifted, in order that we may enter, all together and all freed, into the Whole-world.”

I thank you