



# THE STATE OF TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE IN AFRICA

## Transitional justice and education in Africa: Opportunities and challenges for peace, resilience and sustainable development



Report of the Eighth African Transitional Justice Forum



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Opportunities and challenges for peace,  
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Report of the Eighth African Transitional Justice Forum

11–12 September 2024

Port Louis, Mauritius



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## 1 Introduction

The **Eighth African Transitional Justice Forum** was convened in Port Louis, Mauritius, from 11th to 12th of September 2024, continuing the forum's critical role in advancing transitional justice (TJ) across the continent. Organised by the African Union Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (AU-DPAPS) and the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV), the forum brought together key stakeholders, including AU member states, national human rights institutions (NHRIs), regional economic communities (RECs), practitioners, academics, victim support networks and civil society actors, to engage in meaningful discussions on the state of TJ in Africa.

Framed by the AU's 2024 theme, *Educate an African Fit for the 21st Century: Building Resilient Education Systems for Inclusive, Lifelong, Quality Learning*, the forum aimed to underscore the synergy between TJ and education as transformative pillars for sustainable peace, social cohesion and reconciliation. Participants explored how education can catalyse positive change, thereby fostering reconciliation, transformative justice and a more resilient social fabric. This focus provided a profound opportunity to address historical injustices and reinforce societal foundations for lasting peace.



The forum was convened by AU-DPAPS and CSVR with the support of the Africa Transitional Justice Legacy Fund (ATJLF), Impunity Watch, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, the Berghof Foundation, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Union (EU) as part of the Initiative for Transitional Justice in Africa project, and implemented by a consortium comprised of the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), CSVR and ATJLF.<sup>1</sup> The project seeks to facilitate the domestication of the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP) by supporting the implementation of the AUTJP roadmap through technical assistance, knowledge production, and management of, and support for, civil society across Africa.<sup>2</sup>

**The forum sought to achieve the following objectives:**

- Provide a multi-stakeholder platform for identifying holistic solutions to the common challenges related to TJ, education and socio-economic justice, as well as other emerging issues, and proffering solutions that are rooted in collective and national experiences and reality.
- Share best practices, including Africa's successful TJ experiences, in respect of specific themes and generate new knowledge to advance a pan-African TJ discourse.
- Facilitate ongoing interaction and collaboration among national, regional and continental policymakers, including civil society, national government stakeholders, academia, and TJ

experts and practitioners, on specific themes of reflection to aid the effective implementation of the AUTJP.

**The forum outcomes include:**

- **Education as a Catalyst for Peace and Justice:** The forum recognised education as a transformative tool to instil a culture of peace, human rights and resilience. Integrating peace and justice education across all elementary to tertiary levels in Africa was recommended.
- **Advancing Gender Equality through Education:** Emphasis was placed on education's role in promoting gender equality, empowering women to participate actively in TJ processes, and attaining sustainable peace across the continent.
- **Leveraging Diversity for Development:** The forum embraced Africa's rich diversity as a strength, advocating for its use as a unifying force to drive regional and national development.
- **Prioritising Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS):** The importance of MHPSS for conflict-affected victims, survivors and communities was highlighted, and a call was made to integrate MHPSS into educational programmes for African children and youth.
- **Collective Responsibility in TJ:** TJ was affirmed as a shared societal responsibility, requiring widespread education and awareness to ensure its effective implementation.
- **Reparations as a Cornerstone of Justice:** Reparations were acknowledged as a fundamental component of TJ, essential for addressing victims' and survivors' needs and promoting reconciliation.
- **Addressing Land and Memory Issues:** The forum underscored the need to address Africa's historical and contemporary land injustices and carefully manage memory preservation as an integral part of TJ processes.



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## 2 Opening ceremony

The opening session of the forum was moderated by **Dr John Ikubaje**, Principal Transitional Justice Officer at the AU, who welcomed participants to the forum with a call to view the gathering as more than a ritual meeting and rather as a platform for promoting peace, governance and reconciliation across Africa. Reflecting on the 2024 theme centred on education, Dr Ikubaje highlighted the importance of curriculum development to embed peace education at all levels of learning, which he noted is a vital step towards building peaceful, inclusive and resilient societies.

**Mr Tefo Raditapole**, Chairperson of the CSV Board, expressed gratitude to the government of Mauritius for hosting the forum. He reflected on the significance of the series of TJ forums since 2017 and noted that these forums had revealed critical gaps in TJ processes while igniting innovative implementation approaches. He highlighted that, often, when people discuss TJ, it seems that justice and accountability are within reach, which is not always the experience of those directly affected by atrocities. Thus, as Africa celebrates 30 years of TJ on the continent, it is important to continue learning and engaging on what obstructs the full attainment of justice and accountability for all. Mr Raditapole highlighted the importance of integrating TJ into educational curricula, suggesting this as a meaningful way to engage youth and those often on the periphery of TJ.

**Ms Patience Chiradza**, Director of Governance and Conflict Prevention at AU-DPAPS, conveyed remarks on behalf of **H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye**, Commissioner of AU-DPAPS. She extended appreciation to Mauritius for its support in hosting the forum. She acknowledged the presence of diverse stakeholders, including civil society organisations, the AU reference group, academia, youth, women leaders and other distinguished participants. Ms Chiradza noted that the theme of the 2024 forum aligns with the objectives of AU Agenda 2063,<sup>3</sup> underscoring education's role in securing human rights, fostering social transformation and ensuring non-repetition of past atrocities. She observed that attacks on schools in West and Central Africa have hampered children's education and left children vulnerable to militia recruitment and early marriage. Noting that this was the 5th anniversary of the adoption of the AUTJP, Ms Chiradza stressed the urgency of the forum's mission to address these issues. She also reaffirmed the AU's commitment to promoting education as a vehicle for peace and accountability.

The **Hon. Maneesh Gobin**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and Attorney General of Mauritius, officially welcomed the participants. In his address, Minister Gobin acknowledged the statements made by the previous speakers and observed that achieving the forum's goals requires action-oriented dialogue, with education as a key factor in the conversation. Reflecting on Mauritius' multicultural heritage, he noted the importance of unity for nation-building and stressed that education must play a dual role: advancing

accountability and fostering sustainable peace. Recalling that the charter establishing the Organisation of African Unity (now the AU) called for eradicating all forms of colonialism in Africa, he noted that Mauritius' process of decolonisation was incomplete, given its efforts to recover the Chagos Archipelago from the British. He noted that the AUTJP, which also takes cognisance of Africa's colonial past, was a milestone in the quest for African solutions to African problems to help societies transition from conflict to peace, development and nation-building.

*There is a need for reconciliation, accountability and truth to help a nation move forward to nation-building. Incorporating education helps to inculcate principles of good governance, peace and prosperity.*

– Hon. Maneesh Gobin



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### 3 SESSION ONE:

## The state of transitional justice in Africa – unpacking challenges and successes of TJ mechanisms in diverse African contexts

**H.E. Ambassador Salah Hammad**, Head of the African Governance Architecture Secretariat at the AU Commission, moderated the first panel of the forum. The session opened with a solemn tribute to the late Dr Webster Zambara, a pivotal figure in advancing national cohesion, reconciliation and community peacebuilding efforts across Africa. Amb. Hammad provided the historical context of the AUTJP, acknowledging the significant role of CSVR in partnering with AU-DPAPS to frame and propagate the AUTJP as an African-centred model for addressing peace and justice. Reflecting on TJ's unique practical challenges and successes in Africa, he invited panellists to share insights from their country experiences.

Mauritius presented a unique perspective, with **Solicitor General Rajeshsharma Ramloll** highlighting the nation's relatively peaceful history but emphasising ongoing efforts to reconcile with colonial legacies of slavery and indentured labour. The Solicitor General discussed the 2008 establishment of the National Truth and Justice Commission,<sup>4</sup> which has implemented several recommendations focusing on land disputes, reconciliation, memorialisation, and social and economic justice reforms. Outstanding issues, such as the resettlement of the Chagossian people, remain a challenge.

Representing the Central African Republic (CAR), **Ms Brigitte Izamo**, Legal Advisor for the Ministry of Legal Affairs, Good Governance and Human Rights, spoke on AU-DPAPS' efforts to promote peace policies and the CAR's creation of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission to deal with violations that had occurred in the country, noting the complexities of reconciliation in the CAR's volatile landscape. She highlighted ongoing TJ processes, including peace accords between the government and militia factions and establishing national judicial accountability mechanisms with International Criminal Court (ICC) support. Ms Izamo underscored the need for inclusive dialogue involving victims and survivors, rebels and the state to foster sustainable peace.<sup>5</sup>

From Ethiopia, **Mr Awel Sultan Mohammoud** of the Ministry of Justice's National Human Rights Action Plan Office and the Transitional Justice Institutional Coordination Mechanism Secretariat outlined Ethiopia's newly adopted TJ policy,<sup>6</sup> developed after more than 80 consultations involving over 4 000 stakeholders, including politicians, academics, expert groups, vulnerable

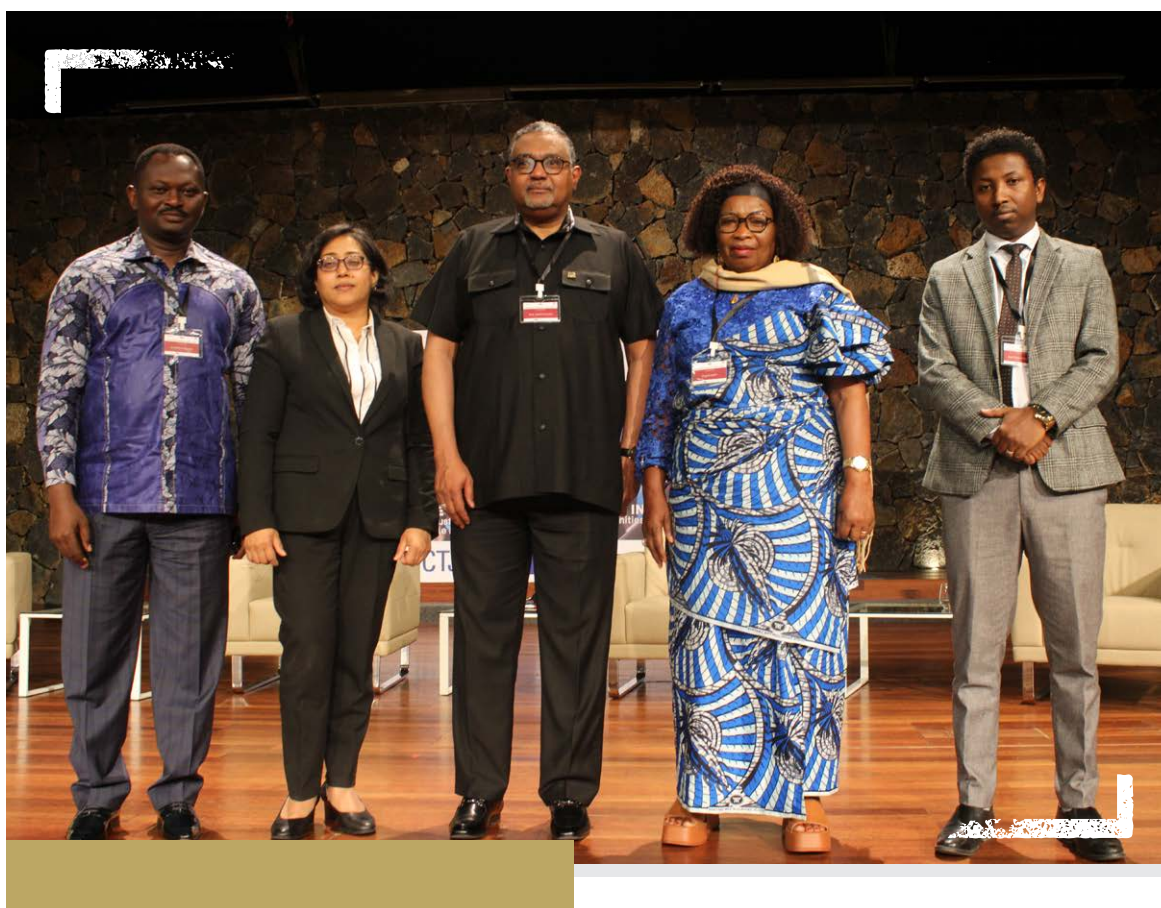
groups and youth. The policy centres on pillars such as conditional amnesty, reparations, institutional reform, criminal accountability and truth-seeking. He informed the forum that there is now a coordination mechanism to oversee the policy's implementation, including establishing the legislative frameworks for the various pillars.

Amb. Hammad asked panellists to reflect on how their respective countries have ensured, or plan to ensure, participatory and inclusive processes in light of their societies' diversity.

*In Sudan, after the war, we realised that our social cohesion was not strong, our social fabric not one. We began to see our differences.*

– H.E. Ambassador Salah Hammad

Mauritius emphasised the importance of keeping critical TJ-related information accessible and relevant even after completing its National Truth and Justice Commission's mandate in 2011. Solicitor General Ramloll noted that, even though the implementation of recommendations has not been satisfactory to everyone, it is still ongoing, with efforts to achieve satisfactory conclusions for all involved. Mauritius, known for its rich diversity in religion and ethnicity, has actively promoted inclusivity by designating national holidays for different groups and encouraging citizens to celebrate collectively. Regular meetings among religious leaders further strengthen national unity, fostering mutual respect and understanding. Solicitor General Ramloll observed



that educational systems are key to reducing social divides across generations by not assigning identifiers to students based on race or religion. He highlighted that such diversity should be seen positively, forming an integral part of the Mauritian identity.

For the CAR, Ms Izamo acknowledged that reconciliation efforts remain complex, as they must accommodate the interests of diverse stakeholders, including victim communities, government authorities and militia groups. She emphasised that inclusive reconciliation efforts were possible only through the active participation of all affected parties. Reflecting on the CAR's colonial history, Ms Izamo pointed out how colonial policies forced certain populations to adopt different names, religions and ways of life, highlighting the resulting marginalisation of Muslim communities in particular. The government now seeks to identify and address these historically alienated groups' grievances, understanding that these experiences have fuelled conflict and even instances of genocide. Since the signing of the Bangui Accord, the CAR has recognised the need for inclusivity in national celebrations, incorporating Muslim holidays into the official calendar. Ms Izamo also emphasised the essential role of education in preventing the recurrence of conflict, noting that a lack of educational opportunities has often led to weapons being seen as the only path to empowerment.

Mr Mohammoud highlighted Ethiopia's diversity as a source of national pride and a factor requiring careful management in the TJ process. As a federal state that has faced ethnic conflicts, Ethiopia sees its diversity as an asset but also recognises the challenges it presents. Mr. Mohammoud stated that addressing ethnic issues through truth-telling processes is crucial to Ethiopia's democratic development and stability. His office has prioritised transparent communication with the public about each stage of the TJ process to foster public trust and participation. Additionally, Ethiopia has launched a national dialogue process to involve all communities in a conversation on reconciliation, accountability and the future of governance.

**Dr Robert Eno**, Registrar of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, was invited by Amb. Hammad to discuss the court's role in advancing TJ across AU member states and the degree of respect given to the court's rulings. Dr Eno emphasised the importance of considering a country's cultural background in any TJ implementation, underscoring that effective justice must resonate with the people it serves. He noted that, while 34 of 54 AU member states have ratified the protocol establishing the African Court, only eight countries have deposited an Article 36(4) declaration,<sup>7</sup> which allows their citizens direct access, thus limiting broader public recourse to the court. Dr Eno encouraged recognition of the African Court as an essential TJ platform, particularly for cases that meet its admissibility criteria. Although the AUTJP is categorised as "soft law," he



encouraged the legal community to leverage it for litigation purposes within the African Court's jurisdiction. He elaborated on the court's dual jurisdiction, explaining that it has both contentious and advisory functions, and urged stakeholders to request advisory opinions on TJ matters, as these can guide future national and regional TJ efforts and earn recognition from the AU.

## Plenary

The following points emerged in the plenary discussion:

- Political leadership at the highest levels of governance could be better positioned to ensure that TJ effectively reaches and benefits its intended communities, to prevent TJ from becoming disconnected from the people it serves or is meant to serve.
- In Ethiopia, the TJ process has received mixed reactions. To improve understanding, the National Human Rights Commission organised a moot court competition focused on TJ to engage students and raise awareness about its principles and potential impact.
- In South Sudan, progress in the TJ process has gained momentum following the passage of laws establishing truth-telling, compensation and reparation mechanisms, made possible with support from the AU.
- In Mauritius, the government has prioritised equal access to education for all, providing free transportation for children to schools and housing support. To prevent divisions and reduce marginalisation, the government has also implemented a minimum-wage policy to address socio-economic inequalities.
- African diversity is a strength, but politicians often manipulate it to create divisions. Many African legal frameworks acknowledge and incorporate provisions to respect and manage this diversity.
- TJ remains a deeply political process that requires strong political commitment. While the AU cannot enforce TJ mechanisms within member states, it can leverage various forums and opportunities to encourage their implementation.

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## 4 SESSION TWO:

# Aligning and exploring education strategies for peaceful societal transformation and democratic consolidation in TJ contexts with AU Agenda 2063

Moderated by **Mr Mohamed Suma**, AU Team Lead for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Regional Office for East Africa, this session explored the intersection between education and TJ as essential drivers of long-term peace, social cohesion and the consolidation of democracy. Panellists discussed how integrating TJ principles into educational systems can address the roots of societal divisions and prepare future generations for responsible, inclusive governance.

**Ms Reem El Gantri**, Head of the ICTJ Libya Office, opened the session by discussing how conflict disrupts educational access and perpetuates cycles of violence, especially in post-conflict societies like Libya. She noted that the right to education – both availability and access – was one of the most violated in conflict situations, according to victims and those who are affected. She noted that the targeting of schools by terrorists, as happened in Syria and Afghanistan, is not done at random but deliberately to disrupt access to education.<sup>8</sup> Ms El Gantri further highlighted the risks associated with distorted or revisionist narratives in educational materials and contested narratives that emanate from contested histories, which can exacerbate tensions and hinder reconciliation. She emphasised that reforming educational curricula should be integral in institutional reform processes to help dismantle divisive ideologies, making education a powerful tool for TJ. Finally, she also advocated for educational narratives that propel peace and cohesion, noting that teachers should be considered authority figures in TJ discussions, factoring in their influence and potential biases.

Representing CSV, Advocacy Specialist **Mr Bobuin Valery** shared insights on using innovation through education to tackle historical injustices and contemporary issues like violent extremism and climate change. Drawing on CSV's work and experience, he proposed that TJ frameworks integrate discussions on social justice and the environment, broadening the understanding of TJ from post-conflict or post-authoritarian situations to address governmental and developmental challenges. CSV has been using TJ to deal with violent extremism in the Sahel,<sup>9</sup> for early-warning systems in fragile situations, and including TJ in ongoing climate change conversations to influence the payment of reparations and institutional reforms around climate issues. Mr Valery stressed that the AUTJP could provide a foundation for curriculum development across Africa, promoting a shared vision of peace and civic trust.



**Prof. Khabele Matlosa**, Director of the Strategic Institute for Research and Dialogue in Lesotho, presented a dual approach to integrating TJ principles in education: formal education through schools and universities and non-formal civic education initiatives targeting community groups and grassroots organisations. He outlined how educational institutions at all levels can foster awareness of democratic values, human rights and peace. Prof. Matlosa called for the AU's support in establishing TJ-focused curriculum frameworks that reflect African contexts and realities. The key actors that can help strengthen this nexus between education and TJ include policymakers, educational managers and teachers.

**Ms Sophia Ashipala**, Head of the AU Commission's Education Division, reiterated the AU's recognition of access to education as a human right. She spoke on the Continental Educational Strategy for Africa (CESA) 2016–2025<sup>10</sup> and its efforts to integrate peace education and conflict-resolution TJ principles into African educational systems. She outlined how CESA's strategy brings civil society, RECs and national educational ministries together to develop curriculum frameworks that include peace and conflict-resolution education. Ms Ashipala highlighted CESA's emphasis on teacher training programmes, which are designed to equip educators with the knowledge to be peace advocates, as well as identify issues in schools that could trigger conflict in the future, such as bullying and corporal punishment. This approach ensures that schools become spaces where young people are encouraged to embrace peace and democratic participation.

**Dr Amina Bouayach**, Chairperson of the National Human Rights Council of Morocco, highlighted that education fundamentally focuses on youth and children, making their inclusion in broader TJ conversations essential. She explained that recognising this, the council has begun actively incorporating youth and children into their initiatives. Reflecting on the recommendations of Morocco's Equity and Reconciliation Commission, Dr Bouayach noted the emphasis on education as a vital means for preserving historical memory. This led to the council establishing exhibitions designed to create interactive spaces where children and young people can engage meaningfully with the country's history.

**Dr Baba Jallow**, former Executive Secretary of The Gambia's Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission, who could not attend the forum, shared his insights in writing. He stressed the educational potential of TJ, proposing that TJ not only address past wrongs, but also educate societies on preventing future conflicts. Dr Jallow suggested incorporating public education committees within TJ bodies to engage communities and encourage witnesses to speak of their experiences as not merely witnesses testifying before a commission but as knowledgeable public educators sharing useful knowledge with the general public. Based on lessons from The Gambian

commission, he recommended creating youth and children's units for school outreach. Lastly, he advocated establishing country studies institutes to foster ongoing national history and conflict-resolution learning.

*Encouraging witnesses to see themselves as 'national teachers' will raise their sense of personal dignity, self-esteem and healing. The sense of being 'national teachers' will encourage witnesses to expand their thinking to include lessons in traditional justice, morality, norms, values and other aspects of their culture that may otherwise not have been articulated.*

– Dr Baba Jallow

## Plenary

The following points emerged from the plenary discussion:

- Participants emphasised the importance of integrating TJ into university education across Africa. The forum highlighted examples such as the University of Maiduguri in Nigeria, which has introduced a master's programme in TJ and provided scholarships to support student enrolment. Additionally, the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria, in partnership with CSV, is developing both a short course and a master's programme in TJ.
- Music and the arts, including painting and publications, were recognised as effective tools for raising TJ awareness among children and youth. These creative outlets provide accessible and engaging ways to communicate TJ principles to younger audiences.
- When shaping educational dialogues in post-conflict or post-dictatorship societies, it is essential to consider several factors – ensuring equitable access to education, reforming educational content to convey accurate and inclusive narratives, accommodating contested histories, and utilising civic education to build societal trust.
- There was a strong call to decolonise African education systems, stressing the need to reclaim indigenous knowledge and perspectives as part of TJ.



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## 5 SESSION THREE: Successes, lessons and recommendations for global development – opportunities for future research on unlocking the full potential of TJ

Moderated by **Prof. Eugene Bakama**, Transitional Justice Specialist at AU-DPAPS, this session invited panellists to explore innovative approaches to TJ that integrate traditional and emerging perspectives. Prof. Bakama encouraged the panellists to consider evolving TJ frameworks that address complex and dynamic challenges within diverse African contexts.

The first panellist, **Ms Choice Mharidzo**, Chairperson of the African Women for Transitional Justice (AW4TJ) platform,<sup>11</sup> introduced her approach to categorising TJ contexts to predict implementation outcomes. Ms Mharidzo identified the following three models:

- The Overthrow Model is typical of societies transitioning from colonialism or apartheid to democracy, where TJ is widely accepted due to a lack of resistance and a collective aspiration for democratic governance.
- The Compromise Model emerges in states with national unity governments, such as Kenya and Zimbabwe. In the case of this model, Ms Mharidzo emphasised the importance of “power mapping” to gauge stakeholder interests and potential challenges within the TJ process.



- The Status Quo Model emerges in situations where individuals associated with past abuses retain positions of power. She noted that TJ practitioners must navigate this cautiously, as those in authority often try to undermine TJ mechanisms to protect their interests.

The second panellist, **Mr Andrew Songa**, Regional Advisor for the European Partnership for Democracy, discussed the influence of technology as an emerging dimension in TJ. He highlighted that technology has reshaped social, economic and governance interactions and that, by embracing diversity, the AUTJP creates opportunities to leverage digital advancements. Mr Songa highlighted the digital civic space as a vital forum for citizen engagement and human rights documentation. However, he raised concerns about challenges such as the digital divide, especially based on gender, the shrinking of civic spaces due to government restrictions, cyberbullying, cyberterrorism and data misuse. He urged the development of legal frameworks to safeguard digital spaces and questioned whether the AUTJP's current pillars adequately address technological issues. He cited other regions and countries, such as the Balkans, Chile and Ireland, where technology has enriched TJ processes.

**Dr Tadesse Metekia**, Senior Researcher at the Institute for Security Studies in Ethiopia, elaborated on the role of traditional justice within TJ, asserting that its inclusion in the AUTJP signifies a genuinely African approach. Dr Metekia explained that traditional justice's integration in Ethiopia is not merely a result of AUTJP guidelines, but also a reflection of popular support from those consulted during the country's TJ policy development process. He acknowledged past criticisms of traditional justice, particularly regarding its treatment of women and youth and its perception as a method for avoiding accountability. However, Dr Metekia argued that, when harnessed effectively, traditional justice can support accountability, peace and reconciliation. He advocated for further research into traditional justice as an invaluable component of TJ frameworks.

**Dr Hugo van der Merwe**, Head of National Advocacy and Technical Support at the Global Survivor Fund (GSF), shared the GSF's approach to advocating for reparations. Describing reparations as essential to rebuilding survivors' lives, he outlined two core elements in implementing reparative measures:

- With the Technical Element, truth commissions are crucial in documenting survivor experiences and the long-term impacts of violations. GSF has adopted small-scale, reparation project documentation methods to enable governments to view reparations as achievable initiatives, including practical approaches for securing funding.
- With the Political Element, GSF seeks to mobilise states to acknowledge their responsibility to provide reparations while underscoring a survivor-centred approach that respects the needs and experiences of affected individuals.

*There is a continental policy backing and there is an on-the-ground reality supporting the need to incorporate traditional mechanisms into transitional justice.*

– Dr Tadesse Metekia

## Plenary

The following points emerged during the plenary discussion:

- For many years, TJ approaches have maintained a narrow focus, which has not always been effective. There is a need to broaden this scope to address emerging issues, such as militarised masculinities, and to explore technological tools like artificial intelligence (AI), which could assist families searching for disappeared relatives. Impunity Watch has plans to conduct a study and organise a conference on these topics.
- An academic conference dedicated to TJ would provide a valuable platform for researching and discussing emerging issues and fostering scholarly exploration and innovation.
- While traditional justice mechanisms should not be idealised, they should not be dismissed. These mechanisms have shown resilience and value, but clear guidelines must ensure they operate within human rights standards.
- Reparations provided through traditional justice mechanisms should not absolve the state of its responsibility to offer reparations to victims.
- Reparations must carefully consider and address victims', survivors' and communities' specific needs and preferences in order to provide meaningful and effective redress.



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## 6 SESSION FOUR: Addressing historical injustices and promoting inclusivity through education and transformative approaches to gender equality, peace and security

Moderated by **Ms Mary Izobo**, Advocacy Programme Manager at CSVR, this session explored the role of TJ in addressing historical injustices and promoting inclusive education as a pathway to gender equality and sustained peace. Ms Izobo opened the discussion by highlighting that the erasure of marginalised voices, particularly those of women, has been a profound gap and invited panellists to address how TJ processes can rectify these omissions.

**Prof. Mutoy Mubiala** from the University of Kinshasa presented a compelling example from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where Belgium's response to the injustices of colonial rule neglected the specific atrocities against women.<sup>12</sup> He explained that colonial practices included the systematic rape of women and the forced separation of mixed-race children from their mothers. Prof. Mubiala emphasised that TJ processes must acknowledge such gendered experiences to ensure inclusive healing and reconciliation.



**Ms Nomancotsho Pakade**, CSV's Research Programme Manager, stressed the importance of revisiting how women were specifically affected by violations, when engaging with historical accounts. She argued that women's experiences of oppression and violence are frequently left out of mainstream narratives, and this oversight extends into educational curricula, where the historical experiences of women are rarely addressed.<sup>13</sup>

**Dr Paul Kamau** from the University of Nairobi addressed the need for an inclusive approach to education in Africa. He noted that educational content in many African countries is heavily influenced by external agendas and called for a move toward developing curricula that reflect African perspectives and values. Dr Kamau highlighted ongoing challenges in access to education, particularly in post-conflict countries. Citing an Afrobarometer survey, he said that between 25 and 30% of students in Africa cannot access a school within walking distance, with poverty further exacerbating barriers to educational access. He concluded by reiterating the significance of African-grown education systems.

**Ms Eva Heza**, Legal Officer at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), could not join the panel but shared her submissions in text. She noted that the ACHPR's role in addressing historical injustices includes the Maputo Protocol, which strengthens gender equality and holds states accountable for addressing and rectifying harms against women. She advocated for integrating marginalised perspectives into education, using collaborative approaches to build inclusive curricula that reflect diverse voices in Africa's historical narratives. Ms Heza stressed that this would enhance trust and promote peace and security among African communities.<sup>14</sup>

*When you begin to think about gender, in the sense of what the education system reproduced, it is based on three sets of inequalities: race, gender and class. So what we see years later is this cultural production of gender inequalities that is also class and ethnic. Then what does transitional justice afford us? It affords us the opportunity to unlearn and relearn when it comes to education.*

– Ms Nomancotsho Pakade



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## 7 SESSION FIVE: The role of legal institutions in ensuring accountability for atrocities, with a focus on institutional reforms and educational initiatives promoting inclusivity and reconciliation

This session was moderated by **Dr Robert Eno**, Registrar of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. Dr Eno engaged panellists **H.E. Ambassador Adama Dieng**, AU Special Envoy for Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities in Africa; **Mr Howard Varney**, Senior Programme Adviser at the ICTJ; and **Ms Henrietta Ekefre**, Legal Advisor at the Africa Jurists and Judges Forum (AJJF). Dr Eno opened by inviting the panellists to discuss the following, respectively:

- Is it possible to gain accountability for mass atrocities and human rights violations in the absence of competent and working institutions?
- Does TJ lend itself to political compromises, and how can expectations be managed?
- What is AJJF doing in fighting for reparations for slavery, colonialism and historical injustices?



Amb. Dieng addressed the question of institutional accountability, asserting that states are primarily responsible for ensuring their citizens' protection, rights and peace. He observed that states cannot claim authority over citizens without fulfilling these obligations. Citing Sudan as an example, he stressed the importance of addressing the conflict's root causes and building a new Sudan premised on equality and justice. While building legal institutions is a slow process in fragile states, he argued that accountability need not rely solely on domestic systems.

Amb. Dieng advocated for support from regional and international justice institutions in such cases, referencing past interventions like the UN Security Council's creation of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and the ICC referral of the Darfur situation. He called for the Security Council to consider a similar approach for Sudan while emphasising that African institutions like the African Court must demonstrate they can handle African issues. However, he noted that many of Africa's human rights institutions lack funding and political support, which limits their capacity to enforce accountability. Amb. Dieng concluded by stressing that regional and international institutions' effective accountability depends on AU member states' support and cooperation.

Mr Varney responded to the question of political compromise in TJ, acknowledging that compromise is often necessary in achieving peace and stability in post-conflict societies. Drawing from Sierra Leone and South Africa, he noted that, while compromise can facilitate stability, it may also undermine victims' and survivors' rights if not managed with integrity. In Sierra Leone, for instance, the Lomé Accord included an amnesty provision later overridden by the establishment of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, reflecting the international community's dismissal of the initial compromise. South Africa's conditional amnesty, meanwhile, did not ensure accountability for those who withheld the truth.<sup>15</sup> Mr Varney also highlighted the international community's failure in certain TJ contexts, citing cases in Timor-Leste, Rwanda and Sierra Leone where justice institutions were established without adequately transferring skills to local communities. This left countries unable to address accountability independently once international support waned, diminishing the long-term impact of external assistance.

*The role of the international community in times of atrocities should be to stand between the oppressor and the oppressed. It is one thing to bring foreigners to do the work of pursuing accountability, but if there is no transfer of capacity and skills to local institutions, then that is in vain.*

– Mr Howard Varney

In her deliberations, Ms Ekefre shared the AJJF's work on reparations for harms inflicted during slavery and colonialism. She said the AJJF's recent position paper calls for AU engagement on this issue, following a Ghana-based meeting in which the AU committed to establishing a committee and appointing a special envoy on reparations.<sup>16</sup> Among the AJJF's strategies are targeting, for reparations, corporations that profited from colonial exploitation, reclaiming looted artefacts, and training judges on the significance of reparations. Ms Ekefre also emphasised the need for gender-sensitive approaches to TJ, advocating for women to be central in implementation plans due to the specific harms and discrimination they experience in accessing justice. She referenced legal frameworks, such as the Maputo Protocol, as essential guides for incorporating gender inclusivity in TJ processes.

## Plenary

The following points emerged during the plenary discussion:

- In Namibia, a major challenge in implementing reparations from Germany for the Herero–Nama genocide has been the lack of direct consultation with affected communities. With reparations being channelled through the government, many victims feel marginalised and excluded from the process.
- Reparations for colonialism can be quantified by examining the ongoing link between poverty and the exploitation perpetrated by colonial powers, as well as the lasting harm this legacy continues to inflict.
- Strong institutions play a vital role in safeguarding societies from violations, as evidenced by Senegal. In Europe, the European Commission has leveraged EU membership criteria to enforce accountability for human rights violations, a strategy that could similarly benefit African nations.
- African leaders should not use sovereignty as a shield against accountability. The ongoing crisis in Sudan highlights the “lessons unlearnt” from Rwanda’s tragic history, underscoring the need for stronger regional responsibility.



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## 8 SESSION SIX: Equipping youth with skills for building resilient societies, and success stories of young leaders from post-conflict societies

**Ms Joyce Lulihoshi**, founder of the Joy Foundation Network and Co-Chair of African Youth for Transitional Justice (AY4TJ), moderated this session. The session elicited diverse insights from young leaders across the continent. Ms Lulihoshi invited panellists to reflect on their experiences and discuss the transformative impact of education and skills development in TJ contexts.

**Ms Christella Niyonzima**, Head of Programmes at Impunity Watch in Burundi, asserted that TJ, as a blend of formal and informal mechanisms for addressing past violence, requires an education approach at both levels. She noted that TJ aims to repair the broken social fabric and renew the social contract, both shattered by violence. Consequently, societies need to re-educate themselves on how they can rebuild themselves. She further argued that young people educated about the past should



return to their communities empowered to drive transformation. Moreover, Ms. Niyonzima emphasised that informal education is essential in reaching both young and older generations, enabling the entire society to participate in restoring the social fabric.

Ms Niyonzima pointed out that societies affected by conflict often inherit educational narratives that perpetuate division, militarisation and violence. She stressed that, in these contexts, re-education is critical for uprooting hatred, normalising peace and reversing dehumanisation. She shared Impunity Watch's community-based approaches in Burundi. These include photography and storytelling, which enable young people to document stories of older community members who have not participated in truth-seeking efforts; theatre, which entails creating plays based on local narratives to uncover unspoken truths and stereotypes; and participatory research, which includes training young people to conduct community discussions that document collective truths.<sup>17</sup> These initiatives have transformed young people into active TJ agents, allowing them to explore the past and redefine their community roles. According to Ms Niyonzima, such creative, youth-centred platforms help make TJ accessible and relevant to lived realities, moving it beyond abstract policy.

**Mr Steven Harageib**, a youth development specialist from Namibia, discussed how the young people are proactively learning and understanding the impact of injustices, reclaiming their country's true narratives and rethinking its layout. He noted that the youth in Namibia are also using innovative tools such as the digital space to connect with other African youth and question the narratives passed on to them as universal truths. This, he observed, was often viewed as rebellious and confrontational, but Mr. Harageib argued that it is necessary, as young people feel their voices have been disregarded. By understanding their history, especially regarding apartheid, genocide and colonialism, youth have begun to take interest and engage in mainstream politics to actively deal with issues that continue to affect them, such as structural inequalities, poverty and exclusion policies.

**Mr Enya Echeng**, founding trustee of the Youth Organisation for Research and Justice Advocacy, recounted the establishment of the organisation after a TJ conference in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, where young attendees resolved to create a platform to empower youth in TJ. The organisation now operates in 31 countries, providing a safe space for youth to engage in meaningful dialogue, educate one another and build their capacity to interact with stakeholders effectively.

**Mr Douglas Wanja**, from the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Nairobi, examined the links between poverty and education in post-conflict settings. He observed that young people affected by conflict often endure compounded rights violations, facing both poverty and a lack of educational opportunities. Mr Wanja emphasised the importance of prioritising education in post-conflict situations.<sup>18</sup> He further noted that, in doing so, it is important to train teachers in new ways of teaching that respond to the holistic needs of children, including teaching them conflict-resolution strategies.

*We have to be able to address structural issues that are facing our nations, at the nexus of transitional justice, focusing on truth-telling, allowing young people to be able to deal with the emotional, psychological impacts of violence that is perpetuated against them, both as a legacy of our historical injustices and that then is seen in our generational parenting ... this pervasive sense of violence that almost dehumanises young people and children from being active participants who have autonomy and agency.*

– Mr Steven Harageib

## Plenary

During the plenary, participants raised two key challenges facing youth in the context of TJ:

- The forum acknowledged the persistent mistreatment of young people by governments when they mobilise around justice issues. Youth face suppression and repression for protesting not only in the physical space, but also in digital spaces.
- The mental-health challenges faced by youth engaged in activism were highlighted as a crucial concern. As they confront human rights abuses and work to rectify historical injustices, the psychological impact on young activists can be significant.



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## 9 SESSION SEVEN:

# The role of education in restoring communities after mass human rights violations

Moderated by **Ms Tsholofelo Nakedi**, Community Specialist at CSV, this session explored the critical role of education in TJ, focusing on restoring communities affected by mass human rights violations.

**Ms Pelumi Obisesan** from the ATJLF opened the discussion by emphasising that education in TJ extends beyond access alone; it should encompass historical accuracy and balanced narratives. She cited the example of Côte d'Ivoire, where resistance to teaching about military takeovers has limited young generations' understanding of their history. Ms Obisesan stressed that balanced and truthful historical education helps young people critically engage with their country's past and future, fostering a deeper commitment to peace. She also highlighted the importance of educating political leaders to actively participate in peacebuilding, as conflict severely fractures society, and education can rebuild it.

**Ms Gugu Shabalala**, Manager of the MHPSS Programme at CSV, discussed the necessity of integrating MHPSS within TJ initiatives,<sup>19</sup> given that societies recovering from conflict are often deeply wounded. She noted that, during active conflict, survival takes precedence, often leaving mental-health impacts unaddressed. However, the psychological toll surfaces once conflict subsides, necessitating urgent support. Ms Shabalala observed that MHPSS is often absent from TJ frameworks, leading to unresolved trauma that later manifests as societal violence. Ms Shabalala said adults often ignore the effects of psychological trauma on them, which makes them pass it on to children, thus continuing the cycle of trauma. She recommended the inclusion of mental-health support in education systems, warning that teachers with untreated trauma may inadvertently pass this on to their students, thus continuing cycles of suffering. Schools, she added, often serve as emergency shelters during conflicts, which places additional psychological burdens on children and underscores the need for government and community action.

**Dr Rebecca Quionie**, a magistrate with the Ministry of Justice in Congo-Brazzaville, shared her research on an innovative response mechanism for addressing sexual violence in the DRC. She noted that sexual-violence crimes cause immense physical and psychological harm, with victims often facing stigmatisation and various forms of prejudice in their pursuit of justice, especially in formal courts. Dr Quionie underscored the need to bridge justice gaps, particularly for victims and survivors of sexual violence, and advocated for a gender-sensitive approach in TJ. Her recommendations included reinforcing national institutions to establish special chambers dedicated to victim justice and reparations, creating a national fund for victims of sexual violence and other crimes, and establishing truth commissions to promote collective healing.



**Prof. Chidi Odinkalu**, Chairperson of the Truth, Justice and Peace Commission for Southeast Nigeria, addressed the impact of post-colonial trauma and exclusionary politics on African societies. He argued that education is vital in restoring social cohesion and overcoming historical trauma, but access to accurate information remains a barrier. As an example, he highlighted the Nigerian government’s destruction of records related to the Biafran War,<sup>20</sup> which has made it challenging for younger generations to learn about this period. Prof. Odinkalu stressed the need to document history to ensure future generations understand and learn from the past. He said that stakeholders cannot convene a discussion on TJ without discussing the issue of land, which he noted, remains the most contentious and salient issue on the continent.

Additionally, Prof. Odinkalu emphasised the importance of strengthening African legal frameworks, such as the Malabo Protocol,<sup>21</sup> which enables African nations to address crimes domestically. Despite challenges in ratifying the protocol, he urged continued advocacy, underscoring the need for African-led solutions to justice. He suggested that former Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir should be tried in Africa rather than at the ICC, arguing that even a flawed trial within Africa could yield valuable lessons for the continent’s justice systems.

*What we have, looking at our colonial and post-colonial trajectories, is a continuation of a tradition and habit of violence. You need education to break them. That education is education for social cohesion, for coexistence, and for building a country or countries that are owned mutually by all who live in them.*

– Prof. Chidi Odinkalu

## Plenary

The following points emerged from the plenary discussion:

- Land issues remain highly emotive in Africa, frequently serving as a source of violence, conflict and instability. Addressing these issues directly and proactively is essential for long-term peace and stability.
- Undervaluing the role of education in post-conflict rebuilding and of fostering social cohesion is akin to setting a time bomb. Education is crucial in promoting understanding and rebuilding fractured societies.
- Education fosters empathy, a core principle in MHPSS. Engaging in challenging but necessary conversations about the past can help societies collectively process, and heal from, shared traumas.

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## 10 SESSION EIGHT:

# Collaborative efforts between government, non-governmental organisations, regional economic communities and international organisations in building partnerships for sustainable peace and development – best practices and lessons learnt

This session, moderated by **Ms Sarah Kasande**, Head of ICTJ Uganda and the Initiative for Transitional Justice in Africa project, focused on the role of collaboration in TJ for fostering inclusivity, legitimacy and forward momentum. Ms Kasande set the stage by emphasising how strategic partnerships are instrumental in amplifying TJ initiatives across varied areas of implementation. She invited the panellists to discuss their experiences, sharing insights on successful partnerships and the lessons they have drawn. She also requested that the panellists provide recommendations for effective coordination among the AU, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international organisations to advance the goals of TJ in specific contexts.

**Mr Ayalew Getachew**, Senior Child Protection Officer at the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), focused on integrating child rights into TJ frameworks. He highlighted the importance of collaborative approaches, noting that ACERWC's child-centric focus in TJ has been effective due to partnerships with various stakeholders. He stressed that, while children are particularly vulnerable in conflict, they have agency and rights that must be respected. Citing examples from Liberia and Sierra Leone, he explained how child testimonies in truth processes spurred youth-led initiatives aimed at sustainable peace. Mr Getachew advocated adopting child-friendly measures to engage children meaningfully in TJ, stating that AU policies provide foundational guidance for child engagement in transitional contexts.

**Ms Annah Moyo**, Executive Director of CSV, highlighted the AUTJP's Section 4, which outlines actors essential to implementing the policy. She noted that effective collaboration needs to evolve from concept to implementation. Ms Moyo said that this approach enabled her organisation, CSV, to work closely with the AU in developing and operationalising the AUTJP. This partnership, which has both formal and informal dimensions, facilitated inclusivity, enabling dialogue among states, civil society and victims, thus enriching TJ interventions and enhancing legitimacy.



**Ms Levinia Addae-Mensha**, Deputy Executive Director of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), addressed the strategic value of alliances between NGOs, RECs and the AU. Through WANEP’s collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), she elaborated on how her organisation has contributed to building capacity and facilitating critical engagements around TJ challenges in the Sahel. WANEP has served as a bridge in regions with restricted institutional access, enabling the AU and ECOWAS to establish early-warning systems and navigate complex political landscapes. She emphasised that the AUTJP can support sustainable TJ efforts, bolstering credibility in societies where implementation remains a work in progress.

**Ms Victoria de Mello**, Policy Specialist on the Rule of Law at the UNDP’s Regional Office in Addis Ababa, discussed the UN’s role as a vital conduit among states, victims and civil society in TJ contexts. She noted that the UNDP has adopted a developmental approach to TJ, contributing to institutional capacity-building and inclusive participation. Her remarks highlighted a recent UNDP report on a development approach to TJ, stating that, at a more substantive level, the UNDP helps in institutional building, including capacity development and ensuring that people, including victims and those marginalised, can participate in TJ issues actively.

*In 2017, member states who were members of the task force that was constituted by the Specialised Technical Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs of the African Union [were] invited to the [first] forum and they shared their ideas. Now we are hosting the eighth edition of the forum. Ideation is really important because big things can come out of it, things that catalyse and facilitate us working towards and achieving sustainable peace and development on the continent.*

– Ms Annah Moyo

## Plenary

The following points emerged from the plenary discussion:

- Participants emphasised the importance of collaborating with traditional leaders in TJ processes, advising the forum to integrate these leaders more actively to enhance community buy-in and the cultural relevance of TJ initiatives.
- The importance of including victims' and survivors' perspectives at every stage of TJ processes was noted, and recommendations were made to mainstream these voices to ensure that TJ mechanisms are responsive and authentic to those directly affected.
- It was suggested that the AU Commission sustain and resource the Peace Fund. This fund should facilitate ongoing engagement between AU bodies and member states, providing sustained support for TJ initiatives across the continent.
- Localisation of skills and resources was highlighted as a priority for strengthening the capacities of state actors and victim support structures at the national level.

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## 11 Closing ceremony

**Ms Kasande** delivered the closing remarks, expressing deep gratitude to the government of Mauritius for hosting the forum and to the organisers AU-DPAPS and CSVr and key partners like the EU, ICTJ and ATJLF as partners in the Initiative for Transitional Justice in Africa project. She noted that the project focuses on providing technical support to AU member states and RECs, building capacity, generating knowledge, popularising the AUTJP, and enhancing citizen engagement in TJ through support for civil society organisations.

Ms. Kasande highlighted the following takeaways from the Eighth African TJ Forum:

1. TJ has evolved from a concept viewed as an external intervention, particularly by the ICC, to an African-centred approach under the AUTJP.
2. Peace and justice are now embraced as complementary rather than opposing ideals, with African nations defining their unique TJ values and priorities.
3. There is a need to take TJ's approaches to education to foster societal transformation.
4. Accountability should be understood broadly, encompassing formal judicial institutions and traditional African mechanisms.
5. Redistributive justice, including reforms in education, land distribution and institutions, is essential to address historical injustices and systemic marginalisation.
6. Civil society organisations are invaluable in advancing TJ processes across the continent.
7. Youth engagement is pivotal for shaping the present and future of TJ, necessitating platforms for effective civic involvement.
8. Emerging technologies present valuable opportunities to enhance inclusivity and access to information for all citizens.
9. African women have historically contributed significantly to fostering peace, democracy and development in Africa and continue to do so.
10. Increased investment in MHPSS is needed to support personal, communal and national healing.



Ms. Kasande concluded with a call to:

- Recognise that TJ is a dynamic, evolving field requiring ongoing development.
- Invest in research, particularly in areas like AI and technology.
- Challenge ingrained biases such as misogyny, tribalism and prejudice and embrace the principles of ubuntu and inherent human dignity.
- Reclaim, and reflect upon, African history, narratives and institutional integrity.

**Ms Moyo**, on behalf of CSV, also thanked the government of Mauritius for hosting the forum. She reflected on CSV's work with the AU, which has spanned more than 10 years, recalling how TJ was once misperceived as an ICC initiative. This understanding has since evolved into a more African conceptualisation. She also appreciated the EU's support and that of other funders and partners like Impunity Watch, the Berghof Foundation and GIZ. She noted that the forum had successfully achieved its goal of bringing together stakeholders to discuss TJ meaningfully.

**Mr Marios Vitos**, First Secretary and Deputy Head of the Delegation of the EU to Mauritius, emphasised the EU's commitment to supporting AUTJP implementation. He acknowledged that the AU and the EU are the only regional bodies with TJ policies. He reflected on an AU–EU seminar held earlier in 2024, which fostered synergy between the two organisations in their TJ efforts. Recognising TJ as a mechanism for accountability, peace and reconciliation, Mr. Vitos said he hoped the AUTJP roadmap would lead to widespread political support and implementation, enhancing human rights, the rule of law, gender equality and sustainable peace. He noted that the AUTJP adds value to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and fostering regional stability.

**Ms Patience Chiradza** gave a closing statement on behalf of **H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye**. She thanked the government of Mauritius, the EU and partners like the ICTJ, CSV, UNDP and ATJLF for their continued support. She acknowledged the participants for their active engagement in discussions on education, youth and women's roles in TJ, underscoring the AU's recognition of these issues. She thanked member states and civil society organisations for their commitment to promoting the AUTJP.

The **Hon. Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Science and Technology Leela Devi Dookun** thanked everyone for considering Mauritius as the host of the Eighth African TJ Forum, noting the forum's importance for the country. She expressed her satisfaction that the theme of this year's forum was education, acknowledging that it was good that the AU had decided to make education a priority. She took note of the different sessions of the forum that had allowed participants to explore the role of education in TJ, particularly in promoting social cohesion and resilience within societies.

The **Hon. Vice Prime Minister** highlighted the transformative power of education in ensuring non-recurrence, explaining that education equips Africa to look forward by leveraging its abundant resources for development. She acknowledged the youthful demographic of Africa, emphasising the importance of considering this in discussions about the continent's future. She also noted that a rights-based approach to curriculum development promotes valued education, expressing concern that children in many African countries struggle to acquire necessary skills. She praised the AU's work to combat learning poverty and to ensure young children across Africa can read and write.

Lastly, the Hon. Vice Prime Minister urged participants to remember the significance of history and the need for Africa to reclaim its historical narrative, remarking that history has largely depended on who records it.

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## 12 Recommendations

From the rich deliberations of the numerous panels at the Eighth African TJ Forum, the following recommendations are drawn to advance the African TJ agenda further. These recommendations aim to strengthen justice, peace and stability across the continent and are directed to the AU, RECs, national governments, educational institutions, civil society organisations and international partners. They highlight relevant nexus points between TJ and education, reforms, mental health, youth engagement, technology, gender and redistributive justice. Prioritising these recommendations can provide a foundation for inclusive and transformative TJ processes throughout Africa.

The forum recommendations are as follows:

- Make efforts to mainstream peace, justice and human rights education into African curricula, from primary to tertiary levels.
- Foster inclusivity by embedding gender equality and cultural diversity within educational programmes.
- Include TJ narratives in educational materials, supporting students' understanding of historical injustices and peacebuilding.
- Strengthen legal institutions to enhance accountability for atrocities and promote justice.
- Ensure reparations are victim-centred, informed by the needs and experiences of affected victims, survivors and communities.
- Develop guidelines for innovative documentation of victim and survivor experiences, establishing reparations funds and creating mechanisms for effective reparations implementation.
- Integrate MHPSS into educational systems and TJ frameworks to address the trauma experienced by communities.
- Train educators in MHPSS principles, especially in post-conflict regions, to prevent the transmission of untreated trauma.
- Establish youth-centred programmes that foster resilience, critical thinking and leadership skills, particularly in post-conflict societies.
- Encourage youth participation in local governance and peacebuilding, recognising their role in shaping future TJ processes.
- Use technology and digital platforms for civic engagement, documentation, and access to TJ information.
- Acknowledge the role of traditional justice practices and align them with human rights standards.

- Incorporate women’s historical and gender-specific experiences in TJ efforts.
- Ensure gender-sensitive TJ initiatives address women’s challenges.
- Partner with governments, NGOs, RECs or international partners to strengthen TJ initiatives.
- Work towards enabling the AU Peace Fund to support TJ initiatives across member states.
- Prioritise land redistribution and address historical grievances related to land to prevent conflict.
- Land reform should be a central element in TJ, addressing historical and current inequities.
- Emphasise cultural preservation and the ethical treatment of historical narratives within TJ frameworks.
- Embrace and encourage using the arts, music and creative expression to memorialise and engage in TJ.

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## 13 Appendix

### THE MAURITIUS DECLARATION

#### EIGHTH AFRICAN TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE FORUM

#### THE STATE OF TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE IN AFRICA

#### TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND EDUCATION IN AFRICA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR PEACE, RESILIENCE, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

#### PORT LOUIS, MAURITIUS

1. The African Union Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security and the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation organised the Eighth African Transitional Justice Forum from 11th to 12th September 2024, in Port Louis, Mauritius, in collaboration with their partners, notably Impunity Watch, the International Center for Transitional Justice, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH, the Africa Transitional Justice Legacy Fund and the Berghof Foundation.
2. All the organisers of, and participants at, the Eighth African Transitional Justice Forum convey their immense gratitude to the government and the people of Mauritius for hosting this forum, for their warmth and for welcoming them to Port Louis.
3. The participants acknowledge that education is a viable catalyst for promoting a culture of peace, respect for human rights, justice and resilience, and peace and justice education. Therefore, they recommend that these should be mainstreamed into Africa's education curricula from the primary/elementary to the tertiary levels.
4. The participants underscore the transformative power of education to advance gender equality, encourage women's participation in transitional justice and, thus, pursue sustainable peace in Africa.

5. Further, African society is diverse in terms of ethnicity, language, religion and culture. This diversity should thus be embraced as a unifying regional and national strategy for positive development in Africa.
6. Noting that mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to victims and populations affected by violent conflicts and human rights violations is critical to transformative justice, MHPSS should, therefore, be entrenched in children and youth education in Africa.
7. The participants emphasise that transitional justice is a collective responsibility and that all segments of society should be educated to promote and implement it effectively.
8. Finally, the forum highlights that reparation is an important pillar in transitional justice, noting that while a common African position is critical, the process of developing it should be inclusive. The participants are emphatic that how Africa treats memories and historical as well as contemporary land issues has been a major challenge and should henceforth be prioritised.
9. In conclusion, the forum urges the African Union and its member states to note the above observations and recommendations and implement the necessary mechanisms for their implementation.

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## 14 Endnotes

- 1 The AU and EU launch joint initiative to foster implementation of Africa's continental Transitional Justice Policy, [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/african-union-au/au-and-eu-launch-joint-initiative-foster-implementation-africa%E2%80%99s-continental-transitional-justice\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/african-union-au/au-and-eu-launch-joint-initiative-foster-implementation-africa%E2%80%99s-continental-transitional-justice_en).
- 2 African Union, Transitional Justice Policy (2019), [https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/36541-doc-au\\_tj\\_policy\\_eng\\_web.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/36541-doc-au_tj_policy_eng_web.pdf); African Union, Roadmap for the implementation of the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (2020), [https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/41242-doc-Roadmap\\_for\\_the\\_Implementation\\_of\\_AU\\_ENGLISH\\_Sep\\_091.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/41242-doc-Roadmap_for_the_Implementation_of_AU_ENGLISH_Sep_091.pdf).
- 3 Agenda 2063 is the African Union's strategic framework aimed at transforming Africa into a global powerhouse. Launched in 2013, it outlines goals for inclusive and sustainable development, economic growth, peace, and unity across the continent, rooted in pan-African ideals and regional integration. See Agenda 2063: The Africa we want, <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>.
- 4 The Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission (2009–2011) was established to investigate the legacy of slavery and indentured labour and their enduring social and economic impacts on Mauritian society. (ATJ Hub, Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission (2009–2011), <https://atjhub.csvr.org.za/mauritius-truth-and-justice-commission-2009-2011/>).
- 5 In the Central African Republic, transitional justice remains challenging, with the Special Criminal Court and Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Reconciliation Commission working to address severe human rights abuses amid ongoing instability (International Center for Transitional Justice, 'A drop of water on a hot stone': Justice for victims in the Central African Republic, <https://www.ictj.org/publication/'-drop-water-hot-stone'-justice-victims-central-african-republic>).
- 6 Ethiopia's Draft Transitional Justice Policy includes key measures to address past abuses and promote reconciliation and peace (Institute for Security Studies, Ethiopia's Draft Transitional Justice Policy: 10 key observations, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/ethiopias-draft-transitional-justice-policy-10-key-observations>).
- 7 An Article 36(4) declaration with regard to the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights allows individuals and non-governmental organisations to bring cases directly before the court. Without this declaration, only the African Commission, African states, and intergovernmental organisations can submit cases.
- 8 See UNESCO Institute for Statistics. The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education. Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011. Paris: UNESCO, 2011, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000190771>.
- 9 See Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation. Violent extremism and transitional justice: A case study of Niger, Johannesburg: CSVr, 2024, <https://www.csvr.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Violent-Extremism-and-TJ-case-study-Niger-EN.pdf>.

- 10 African Union. Continental education strategy for Africa (2016–2025): Educating for the African Renaissance in the 21st century, Addis Ababa: African Union, 2016, <https://ecosocc.au.int/sites/default/files/files/2021-09/continental-strategy-education-africa-english.pdf>.
- 11 The African Women for Transitional Justice network serves as a platform to empower African women in transitional justice processes, fostering their involvement in peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts across the continent, <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/african-women-for-transitional-justice-aw4tj-continental-platform-launches>.
- 12 Dunn, K. (2018). When archives speak back: Sexual violence in the #Congo Free State. Africa at LSE, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2018/07/18/when-archives-speak-back-sexual-violence-in-the-congo-free-state/>.
- 13 Burton, A. (2007). Archive stories: Gender in the making of imperial and colonial histories', in P. Levine (ed.), *Gender and empire*, Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series (Oxford, 2007; online ed., Oxford Academic, 3 October 2011).
- 14 African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. (2016). High-level thematic panel discussion organised by the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa, <https://achpr.au.int/en/news/statements/2016-07-20/high-level-thematic-panel-discussion-organised-special-rapporteur>.
- 15 Abrahamsen, T. & Van der Merwe, H. (2005). Reconciliation through Amnesty? Amnesty Applicants' Views of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Research report written for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, <http://www.csvr.org.za/docs/trc/reconciliationthroughamnesty.pdf>.
- 16 African Union. Accra Proclamation on Reparations. 2022. This proclamation emphasises the African Union's commitment to addressing the historical injustices of slavery and colonialism through reparative measures; <https://au.int/en/decisions/accra-proclamation-reparations>.
- 17 Impunity Watch. (2023). Harnessing art and cultural traditions to confront Burundi's past, <https://www.impunitywatch.org/news-burundi-artistic-initiatives-memory/#>.
- 18 Paulson, J. (2009). (Re)Creating education in postconflict contexts: Transitional justice, education, and human development, Research Unit, International Center for Transitional Justice, <https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Development-Education-FullPaper-2009-English.pdf>.
- 19 Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation. (2023). Literature review: Mental health and psychosocial support in transitional justice in Africa, <https://www.csvr.org.za/literature-review-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-in-transitional-justice-in-africa/>.
- 20 The Biafra Civil War (1967–1970) was a brutal conflict in Nigeria, triggered by the secession of the southeastern region of Biafra. The war led to significant casualties and a humanitarian crisis, with widespread famine affecting the Igbo population. The conflict ended with Biafra's reintegration into Nigeria, but the legacy of the war continues to impact the region's politics and identity; Kenyon, P. (2018). *Dictatorland: The men who stole Africa*. London: Head of Zeus.
- 21 The Malabo Protocol (Protocol on Amendments to the Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights) was adopted by the African Union in 2014 and aims to expand the jurisdiction of the African Court to include international and transnational crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity, and corruption. However, as of 2024, the protocol has not yet entered into force due to insufficient ratifications by member states.



