



RACISM AS A RISK FACTOR FOR ATROCITY CRIMES:

A Case Study on Namibia¹

Author: Steven Bernardus Harageib

The following case study has been written by an independent consultant on behalf of the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation (GIJTR). This case study is informed by a combination of desktop research, document analysis and interviews. It therefore reflects these perspectives and findings, as compiled and written by the consulting author(s). Interviewees have been anonymized to ensure their safety and privacy but GIJTR extends its gratitude for the time and participation of all interviewees.

“Racism is not just about color, it is about a way of being seen in domination, enforcing patriarchy, normalizing this idea of supremacy amongst people... So, racism and these things are rooted not just in domination, dehumanization, and humiliation. When you see violence, dehumanization, humiliation, those are all tenants of racism.”

1 Entwined Atrocities of Genocide and Apartheid: Namibia and the Historical Context of Racism

German Occupation and Genocide

To understand the current challenges of racism in Namibia, it is important to understand the history of genocide and apartheid that laid the foundation for today’s environment. Namibia’s colonial history began in 1884 with German occupation. Conflicts led to war in 1903 with the resistance by the Ovaherero (commonly referred to as Herero) people, escalating to an “extermination order” by the German general Lothar von Trotha in 1904. It is estimated that, between 1904 and 1908, 65,000 people (80 percent) of the Herero population and 10,000 (50 percent) of the Nama population were

killed, starved to death, or died in concentration camps.³ This mass execution marked the first genocide of the 20th century, and set a precedent that laid the foundation for the Holocaust. The similarities in the use of concentration camps, mass killings, and racial ideologies connect these two horrific events, shedding light on how colonial atrocities were a precursor to later global tragedies. Germany's radicalization of counterinsurgency, extermination decrees (including von Trotha's brutal extermination order), and the subsequent empowerment and reward of von Trotha reflected a deliberate era of European colonialism. The Germans met the criteria of genocide which includes act and intent, against the Herero and Nama.⁴ This horrific event also impacted many Damara and San communities. These groups were subjected to a wide range of brutalities, including being shot, hanged, burned, and starved. They were also subject to experimentation, enslavement, and forced labor that led to death, abuse, and rape. These communities were dispossessed not only of their tangible assets such as land, property, and livestock, but also of their intrinsic rights, dignity, and way of life.⁵ These acts can be classified as atrocity crimes, as the indigenous people were forcibly driven to German concentration camps, and their skulls were shipped to Germany for research. Further, they were governed by a separate set of racially biased laws, resembling an apartheid system, that granted them limited rights as subjects and not citizens.⁶

South African Rule and the Impact of Apartheid

In 1915, Namibia fell under the control of colonial South Africa and was administered as a League of Nations mandated territory from 1921 onward.⁷ Throughout this period, Namibia functioned as a fifth province of South Africa, which wielded considerable influence over its governance and affairs. In 1948, the ruling the Afrikaner National Party formally introduced apartheid as a governance system that institutionalized and sustained racial and ethnic divisions. During this period, there were countless cases of human rights abuse and institutional violence, as well as conflict and power imbalances, social stratification, and economic inequality.⁸ This continued the legacy of discrimination and dehumanization and further entrenched the impact of the German colonial period and was an ongoing racist reality of Namibia for the next seventy years, until independence was gained from South Africa and its apartheid.

Independent Namibia and Initial Progress Toward Healing

At the time of independence in 1990, Namibia made significant strides to confront its complex historical background by adopting numerous laws aimed at addressing past injustices. These measures included land reform policies and efforts to promote racial and ethnic equality, as well as initiatives to redress economic disparities among different communities. Despite these efforts, the

THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR JUSTICE, TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

In 2014, the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) launched the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation (GIJTR), a consortium of nine international organizations focused on offering holistic, integrative and multidisciplinary approaches to issues of truth, justice and reconciliation. GIJTR works primarily with local populations, civil society organizations, survivors and governments to develop transitional justice approaches that are victim-centered, collaborative, and support dignity, respect, inclusion, and transparency in societies emerging from conflict or periods of authoritarian rule. Since its founding, GIJTR has engaged with people from 76 countries, worked with 681 CSOs, and has conducted 463 community-driven projects and supported 7,460 initiatives dealing with human rights violations.

For more information, please visit gijtr.org.



GIJTR

Global Initiative for Justice
Truth & Reconciliation

legacy of the pre-independence period continues to manifest in various ways. These issues support a central theme in the broader context of the case and will be explored and explained in further detail throughout this case study.

Since independence, land distribution mostly has favored individuals from the country's northern regions who are members of the ruling South West Africa People's Party. Importantly, these groups were not dispossessed of their land under the colonial regime, and local Nama and Ovaherero populations express frustration and anger toward this transfer of territory to these northern groups.⁹ Meanwhile, marginalized communities, such as the San, are largely overlooked in these discussions. Adding to these complexities is the unresolved issue of ancestral land restitution, referring to land that was usurped during German colonial rule and further expropriated following the defeat in what is referred to as the Namibian-German War. Regrettably, the national discourse on land currently lacks any mention of retributive justice.¹⁰

National Reconciliation

Since gaining independence, Namibia's government has acknowledged the deep-rooted inequalities stemming from a century of exploitative and discriminatory German and South African colonialism and apartheid. Independence necessitated acknowledging and accepting the existing socioeconomic systems including the recognition of ownership and property rights, reducing social change to only constitutional measures under the theme of "national reconciliation."¹¹ The need to maintain stability and foster economic growth led the government to work within certain aspects of the inherited socioeconomic system rather than completely overhaul it. The approach was both pragmatic and contentious, reflecting the complex challenges faced by Namibia to overcome the legacy of colonialism and apartheid.

Key Policy Frameworks

Namibia passed The Prohibition of Racial Discrimination Act of 1991 which prohibits racial discrimination. However in examining the Namibia report, the Committee on The Elimination of Racial Discrimination highlighted the challenges that remain to empower previously disadvantaged people, especially regarding unemployment and persistent poverty.¹² Although initiatives to alleviate these discrepancies through affirmative action and land redistribution have been attempted, considerable hurdles and restrictions remain.¹³ Namibia continues to struggle with wealth disparities: both the historical power concentrated within the pre-independence White economic elite and more recently the growing politically-connected Black elite.¹⁴ Figures from 2018 revealed that just over 6% of Namibia's 2.4 million person population were White, yet they owned the great majority of enterprises and lucrative farming land. In addition, they had a significant share of the finance and tourism economies.¹⁵

A few attempts have been made to rectify this imbalance and empower Black Namibians, such as the National Equitable Economic Empowerment Framework bill, which originally included a provision requiring White enterprises to sell a 25% ownership stake to historically disadvantaged Black Namibians. The clause was later removed from the bill as it was expected to lead to a Fitch downgrade, which stated that the proposal would frighten away investors.¹⁶

Additionally, there were attempts to amend the country's laws so that the government could seize land from White landowners and give it to the majority Black population as the concept of "willing buyer,

willing seller” (voluntary selling of land), had failed.¹⁷ The government also established a development bank and a small and medium enterprises bank to assist people from historically disadvantaged groups moving into White-controlled economic fields. This later failed due to money laundering.¹⁸ Currently, many Namibians remain unable to participate in the economy in any meaningful way due to the historical disadvantages they have faced and more recent solutions not delivering significant change.

2 Current Status of Race Relations

The population of Namibia is diverse, and race is only one part of the story. About 88% of Namibia’s population is Black; 6% is White; and 7% is mixed. However, breaking down beyond these broad racial categories reveals the complexity of identity in Namibia. Approximately 50% of the total population belongs to the Ovambo tribe, the largest group. The second-largest group are the Kavango people, who constitute 9% of the population. Other groups include Damara (7%), Herero (7%), Nama (5%), Caprivian (4%), San (3%), Basters and Coloreds (community of mixed origin) (2%), and Tswana (0.5%).¹⁹

The Namibian government is criticized for failing to address the marginalization of minority groups, particularly the San population, that was instigated by former apartheid policies. When Namibia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1982, the focus was primarily Black–White apartheid racism. However, the strategy for including ethnic minorities in implementing the convention was insufficient, leading to continued discrimination, particularly against groups like the San.²⁰ By 1971, the majority of the San were living in White commercial farming areas or under native authorities, with only 2% retaining some control over their traditional lands. The dispossession of lands further increased their economic vulnerability. On White farms, this dependency allowed farmers to pay the San less and treat them more poorly compared to other laborers. In communal areas, the San became an underclass of cheap labor, and their economic marginalization was compounded by social stigmatization. Many in the communal areas characterized the San’s impoverished status as innate inferiority rather than recognizing the treatment they received, which further entrenched their marginalization. For example, some San had difficulty obtaining a government ID because they lacked birth certificates or other evidence of identity. Without a government-issued identification card, the San could not obtain government assistance or register to vote.²¹

Due to limited access (or lacking access entirely) to essential education, employment, health care, and housing, many San people were employed for cheap labor, extorted and forced into isolation. San women in Namibia bear the consequences of marginalization in particular due to gender, for example, the inability to report and seek protection from gender-based violence.²²

The Namibian government maintains that advocacy and promotion of human rights issues affecting marginalized communities are carried out in accordance with international conventions, instruments, and protocols such as the United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.²³

3 How Does Racism Contribute to Atrocity Risks?

Racism's contribution to atrocity risks in Namibia is deeply rooted in the country's complex history and the lasting effects of apartheid and genocide, which influence the current societal dynamics, including inequality and discrimination in education, upward mobility and other fundamental elements of daily life.

Education and Social Mobility: the Limitations of Racism

Apartheid further enforced race-based segregation by enacting various discriminatory policies against Black Namibians, such as differential education systems. For example, the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which entailed four years of primary schooling for Black individuals in 1958, saw only 20% progress to higher levels.²⁴ This had a significant impact on educational and employment outcomes. Namibia has one of the highest rates of unemployment at 20.8%. Even though it is classified as a middle-income country, there are significant disparities in wealth. Some marginalized populations are faced with the worst of these disparities.²⁵ The historical policies of apartheid, particularly in education, have left a legacy that continues to affect contemporary Namibian society. The link between limited education and high unemployment illustrates a complex interplay that exacerbates social fragmentation as it relates to race relations and deepens economic mobility.

One-city, Two-system: Enduring Spatial Segregation

Despite laws forbidding racial segregation, places like Windhoek remain a stark example of racial division. The city's planning and structure reflect a continued "one-city two-system" (OCTS) approach where Black Namibians often live in poor conditions, mirroring the country's colonial and apartheid history. Under the Odendaal Plan (1964), ethnic groups were forcibly resettled into designated "homelands" or reserves, each with varying levels of limited self-administration. This process aimed to solidify the territorial entities for each ethnic group, aligning with the broader Bantustan Policy. Windhoek is recognised as one of sub-Saharan Africa's most unequal cities, with an unbalanced distribution of resources and services that trace back to Namibia's colonial apartheid heritage, which imposed geographical, economic, and social isolation. Windhoek's delivery of services, access to high-quality facilities, planning, law enforcement, government, and administration are all still separate.²⁶

A policy leader recalls in an interview the harsh displacement of her family due to racist practices. "The day they [White soldiers] came to bulldoze our house is something that stayed with me throughout." Her father lost his job, and her mother was forced into domestic work. She further provides an intimate glimpse into the duality of her interaction with the White populace. "Mrs. Visser would let us eat with her but when the husband came we had to go to our place. I was confused because White people are bad... I was staying as a domestic in an outside room... yet, she was seeking friendship."²⁷

Within the Namibian context, spatial segregation highlights a troubling image of racism. According to one academic expert stated in his interview that there is a clear divide between White people who predominantly live in urban areas, specifically towns, and Black people who primarily reside in villages. This division is deeply ingrained in Namibian society, resulting in distinct demarcations in town planning along racial lines. This separation also influences personal interactions. This interviewee reported that when his father would meet any White person he would call them "bass" (boss), even when they were not working for them.²⁸

Despite efforts to address racial disparities, remnants of racial inequality are still evident in Namibia's urban planning. Townships, which are predominantly occupied by non-White inhabitants, serve as a stark reminder of this racial divide. By avoiding a direct confrontation of the racial disparities in urban planning, Namibia forgoes an opportunity to tackle the root causes of inequality and create inclusive communities.²⁹ This discomfort surrounding the topic of racial inequality contributes to the perpetuation of structural violence, as pointed out by a public policy expert. Such violence not only undermines human dignity but also diminishes the overall quality of people's lives.³⁰

One prominent aspect visible through the lens of a domestic workers is the daily routine they endure. Often these workers must wake up early and take buses to reach the homes where they work, often for White families. This highlights the spatial divide in Namibian society, with White people predominantly living in urban areas and Black people primarily based in villages. The housing crisis further exacerbates this issue, as many domestic workers live in shacks (a roughly built structure usually of metal and wood) or informal settlements. The prevalence of shacks not only reflects a lack of adequate housing but also exposes the racial segregation within urban planning.³¹ The divide between predominantly non-White townships and predominantly White urban areas is deeply ingrained and perpetuates racial disparities.

Additionally, the legacy of the Odendaal plan continues to be felt in Namibia, contributing to the persistent racial divisions and inequalities that still characterize the country's social and urban landscape. The OCTS approach in Windhoek stands as a stark example of how ethnic segregation has left a lasting imprint on the nation.³²

Land Ownership and Historical Disenfranchisement

In the 1920s, South Africa implemented a policy to settle poor White South Africans in Namibia, then called South West Africa. To accommodate these White settlements, a law was introduced called the Native Administration Proclamation 11 of 1922. The law prohibited natives from squatting on the land without permission from a magistrate and allowed the Administrator to establish "native reserves" for the use of natives or specific racial or tribal groups. The South African government gave considerable economic support to White settlers at the time, notable because it was a time of drought and difficult market conditions. However, little support was offered to native Black farmers residing in the native reserves. In 1922, the Native Reserves Commission recommended that 9% of the land within the Police Zone (a holdover term from German colonial policy) be set aside for native reserves. The entire Police Zone was 5 million hectares, but by 1925, only 2,813,741 hectares south of the Police Zone were designated for a Black population of 11,740 people, while 7,481,371 hectares were available for 1,106 White settlers.³³

Agricultural land ownership has been crucial in Namibia's social and political evolution, from pre-colonial times through the colonial era to post-independence. Land issues remain central to post-colonial state-building efforts, particularly in achieving national reconciliation and nation-state objectives. Liberation movements focused not only on ending foreign domination but also promised a society where Namibia's disadvantaged citizens could participate in fair national development processes.³⁴ Land ownership is not only a financial issue; it is strongly linked to identity. The injustices inflicted upon the Nama, Herero, San, and Damara people have had long-lasting economic and social consequences. Disparities in wealth, resources, and opportunities often disproportionately affect marginalized racial or ethnic groups, perpetuating cycles of poverty and reinforcing racist attitudes. "Even today, most Namibian land belongs to White farmers. The colonial transfer of wealth, the genocides and century-long racist oppression have created a legacy of transgenerational social,

economic, and cultural exclusion.”³⁵ Historical policies like the Native Administration Proclamation still shape Namibia’s land ownership issues. However, land ownership transcends mere economy and is also linked to cultural identity.

Missed Opportunities: The German-Namibian Joint Reconciliation Agreement

In 2015, Germany recognized its genocide in colonial South West Africa and reached a reconciliation deal with Namibia in May 2021. However, the agreement has been criticized for being insufficient and a form of tokenism. Community leaders criticized the negotiation process itself, arguing that they were not adequately consulted or involved.³⁶ Meanwhile, the German government resisted the characterization of the agreement, stating that the aid package should not be seen as reparations. Critics argue that it represents an evasion of responsibility, as it does not acknowledge a specific moral obligation to redress historical wrongs, unlike reparations. Further, the broad application of development funding may fail to address the unique needs of affected communities. It also may reflect unequal power dynamics between Germany and Namibia, allowing Germany to retain control over how the funds are used. This approach is seen by some as perpetuating historical inequalities and paternalistic attitudes. The government-to-government level talks also have not produced real reconciliation with the individual descendants of the genocide’s most impacted local populations. The reconciliation accord may indicate the start of a shared process of reconsideration in foreign policy on culture and education. However, the preliminary findings of German-Namibian bilateral discussions show that real reconciliation remains a distant objective. The nature of the apology (as an admission of genocide) has legal ramifications for compensation, and the phrase “reparations” has been purposefully avoided by the German side, as it would set a dangerous precedent over the reconciliation process.³⁷

There are strong feelings of exclusion among the affected communities who believe they were not adequately represented in the negotiation process. While the government argues that affected community members were part of the Namibian team, the communities counter that these were individuals employed by the government, not true representatives of their interests. As a result, they feel the negotiation was more government-to-government, lacking true community input and buy-in.³⁸ The affected communities say that the fact that negotiators were employed by government means they came into an already established framework with parameters resulting in the negotiations being between the two envoys. Additionally, the amount of money (1 billion euro over 30 years) proposed by Germany as an apology toward development is seen as insufficient, as they believe it fails to address the emotional scars and pain caused by the genocide. As one interviewee flatly stated: “The money that Germany proposed is a joke.”³⁹ Therefore, there is a call for the process regarding the reparations be restarted to better incorporate their perspectives.⁴⁰

Socio-economic Disparities

Despite being classified as a middle-income nation, Namibia has substantial wealth discrepancies, and socioeconomic disparities inherited from the apartheid regime. The country’s current wealth and future economic prospects continue to be concentrated in the hands of a pre-independence White economic elite.⁴¹ In Namibia, marginalized populations include, but are not limited to, those excluded due to their race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, language, and/or immigrant status. The San, Ovaherero, Ovambo, and Nama are all considered marginalized, illustrating how marginalization occurs when individuals or groups are neglected or pushed to the edges of society, unable to fully participate in social, economic, and/or political life.⁴²

Entrenching White Supremacy: The Role of Apartheid in Racism

The interview with a national politician provides insight into the long-term personal impacts of systemic racism on Namibian communities. She recalls her grandmother's praise: "When you are grown up, I want to make sure that you get a German husband." This aspiration to marry outside the Black race reflects an internalized inferiority complex born from a history of genocide and systemic racism.⁴³

The personal and the systemic can converge, as indicated in the multiple accounts by interviewees regarding racial segregation in education and the impact on their ability to learn and achieve. A theology professor recounted in an interview his personal experiences and reported eyewitness accounts of violence: "My uncle was killed in front of my eyes by the apartheid soldiers...I was 10 years old." He said on another occasion "a random White guy slapped me because I stood next to his car." And his education was also significantly impacted, as he explained: "During my senior secondary schooling, I went to a previous[ly] White school but because I had failed math, I struggled to access the school." The interviewee went on to explain the segregation in education: "Math was the standard for intelligence. We were put in the same class with a few Colored learners and no White learners." The education system not only treated Black and White students differently academically, but also financially excluded based on race. He indicated that he was threatened with suspension from school due to non-payment of school fees but his White counterparts were not suspended when faced with non-payments. Beyond actual grades, the interviewee articulated the emotional damage of low confidence as a non-White student. "The school was predominately White...[I was told] You will not cope [at the] higher grade therefore you must stay at the ordinary level." He explained the simple but painful reality of his youth: "We experienced racism in school...but nobody protected us."⁴⁴

Another interviewee recounted his own experiences growing up in Ngandu village, now known as Kavango West. He described the mistreatment he and other students faced in secondary school, where White teachers discouraged them from pursuing certain studies. He also shared an incident where he and his brother were wrongly assumed to be thieves and faced hostility in a White-dominated area.⁴⁵

A political analyst notes in his interview his experiences of racial hostility, beginning with overt aggression in the early 1990s. "[Someone] shouted at me from a car and disappeared." In later years, he points to subtler forms of discrimination, sometimes referred to as "micro-aggressions," particularly in the coastal city of Swakopmund. For example, he recounts the feeling of being ignored in a restaurant as an example of continued, albeit less overt, racism.⁴⁶

There remains a need to acknowledge the enduring impact of systemic racism, through the genocide and apartheid that entrenched White supremacy in Namibian society. The discussions highlighted how these historical events have fostered racial discrimination, inequality, and internalized feelings of inferiority among marginalized communities. These personal narratives detail the often-dismissed experiences of racism, educational disparities, and societal microaggressions, highlighting the far-reaching consequences of these historical injustices. The discussions also illuminated the impact of policies such as school segregation and access to work permits and how these measures aimed to control and devalue Black individuals, perpetuating a narrative of inferiority.

It is important to address the actions of non-state actors, and their role in historical events like genocide in Namibia. In an interview, a public policy expert questioned the lack of accountability for the atrocities committed during the genocide and highlights the importance of acknowledging the systemic violence inflicted by the military and non-state actors. "The common fallacy is to solely focus on the state and

disregard the role of non-state actors. We need to address the violence committed by state and non-state actors, coordinating a comprehensive response to systemic racism.”⁴⁷

National Days: The Exclusion in Celebration

“What am I celebrating? Millions are spent on this celebration... people scrambling for food. I wouldn’t want my parents to spend so much money celebrating my birthday while we have nothing to eat in the home.”⁴⁸

Interviewees raised concerns over the lack of full acceptance and open discussion regarding the genocide, particularly the absence of national recognition and commemoration. Therefore, a call for more inclusive remembrance practices, including a national genocide remembrance day and the erection of more memorial structures is proposed. The lack of participation by White citizens was also highlighted along with a proposal for more inclusive practices that cater to the post-independence generation. Related, some participants questioned the relevance of national holidays in a society marked by inequality and hardship, critiquing the expenditure on celebrations while many struggle for basic necessities.

National days and the construction of nationhood can also be influenced by racial dynamics. The legacy of apartheid and racially segregated development still impacts how national days are observed and who feels included in these commemorations. For instance, the politicization of food during national commemorations can reflect deeper racial and socio-economic divisions. And recognizing certain figures as national heroes can intersect with issues of race, since certain figures resonate differently with various racial and ethnic groups within the country, reflecting historical divisions.

The interpretations and meanings attached to these national days can differ across various levels of government, highlighting the fluid nature of nationhood. In fact, the concept of nationhood is often developed and negotiated not just from a national perspective, but from local and regional authority perspectives as well.⁴⁹

The concerns over national days and stories in Namibia, encompass the lack of recognition of historical atrocities, inequality in celebration practices, persistent racial dynamics, controversy over national figures, and the complex nature of nationhood – all of which highlight deep societal divisions and unresolved issues. It not only reflects historical and current socio-economic disparities but also expose underlying tensions that may increase the risk of atrocities.

Ethnic Bias and Tribalism

“[T]his racism, it’s not always something that is conscious... it’s not always readily visible, but it can be picked up [on] in behavior.”⁵⁰

“There is an unwritten classism based on ethnicity... because being tribalist is doing what the colonialists wanted.”⁵¹

The increasing social and racial division within Namibian communities, exacerbated by a pervasive sense of low self-esteem, stands as a prevalent theme. This division and lack of confidence are believed to originate from a lengthy history of human rights abuses, with subjects linking them to internalized racism and the haunting remnants of genocide.

“When you go into government agencies you come to realize that flow of power is concentrated in [the] hands of individuals from the same region.”⁵²

Issues of cultural bias and the challenge of managing multiple identities in a multicultural society also surface, with an emphasis on the importance of national identity. Acknowledging the tribes’ diversity and their cultural richness is vital to crafting a national identity. However, a cautionary note is sounded about identity politics hegemony, which could foster tribal dominance and impede the nation’s embrace of multiculturalism.⁵³

Interracial marriage and intermarriage between different tribes is still limited in Namibia, although there are signs of progress, particularly among the younger generation. Historical segregation and the belief in the superiority of certain ethnic groups have contributed to a lack of acceptance. While younger generations exhibit more openness and acceptance of diversity, the broader societal view on intermarriage remains mixed. Some participants highlighted that “Whites are not ready to marry Black people especially the White Namibians,” indicating significant barriers to such integration remain. There is also a need to heal historical wounds inflicted by Namibians on one another as one participant highlighted that “we should not only reconcile with the Whites but also our fellow comrades who tortured me in the Lubango dungeons.”⁵⁴

These reflections underscore subtle and latent forms of racism and tribalism within Namibian society, revealing an underlying issue that may contribute to atrocity risk. Unconscious racist behavior, often along with power concentrated within specific regions or ethnic groups, enforces systemic biases. These factors can foster social and racial divisions, further exacerbated by a history and experiences of human rights abuses and genocide. Finally, the sense of internalized racism and tribalism can fuel feelings of resentment, mistrust, and exclusion, which, if left unaddressed, may create an environment ripe for additional conflict and atrocities.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EQUITABLE ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

Another theory is that the government’s decision-making processes, particularly resource allocation, might be influenced by ethnic bias. There is a perceived disparity in regional development, leading to speculation whether government perception of certain communities could be a factor. With regard to area of residence, the rural population was multidimensionally poorer than the urban population, reported at 59.3% and 25.3%, respectively. This indicates that persons in rural areas have a higher chance of experiencing multiple deprivations than those in urban areas. Poverty indices were also examined across the fourteen administrative regions of Namibia. An obvious gradient was observed in the headcount ratios by region, where the incidence of multidimensional poverty was highest in Kavango West (79.6%), Kavango East (70.0%) and Kunene (64.1%)⁵⁵ These patterns highlight an overwhelming sentiment of exclusion, injustice, and dissatisfaction among some communities in Namibia. These sentiments could escalate existing tensions, fostering a climate of resentment and mistrust that might, in turn, lead to conflict or even atrocities if not addressed.

Hate Speech and the Role of Social Media

Hate speech and inflammatory rhetoric, particularly on social media, pervade Namibian society, with specific tribes or ethnic groups often singled out and insulted based on their customs, attire, food, or behavior. This situation further intensifies existing divisions and challenges the idea of “One Namibia, One Nation.”⁵⁶ While the Namibian Constitution enshrines freedom of speech and prohibits racial discrimination (enforced through the Racial Discrimination Prohibition Act of 1991), the effectiveness of this act is questioned due to no successful prosecutions and the rise of digital platforms exacerbating the problem.⁵⁷

Another group that suffers from discrimination is the LGBTQI+ community. This was seen after a recent Supreme Court ruling in Namibia, requiring the government to recognize international same-sex marriages.⁵⁸ This decision triggered a marked increase in hate speech and aggressive rhetoric against the LGBTQI+ community. Various members of parliament have since been accused of inciting violence and hate speech, due to statements calling for harassment, abuse, and physical harm against LGBTQI+ persons particularly across social media and WhatsApp groups.⁵⁹

The hate speech targeting specific groups, particularly the LGBTQI+ community, can foster an environment of hostility and division as hate speech is not classified as a criminal offense.⁶⁰ Where hate speech becomes normalized or unchecked, the risk of it leading to more significant atrocities becomes a very real and alarming possibility.

Interconnected Inequality

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISPARITIES

“We inherited this apartheid system and simply replaced it with Black people.”

“The violent culture has not changed...protecting the privileges of minority

Blacks and Whites...enshrined in our political culture.”⁶¹

Namibia’s sociopolitical backdrop, rooted in the repressive history of apartheid, only changed the color of oppression without removing its deadly overtones. The inherited system sustains a divisive culture of power protection, favoring an elite minority of Blacks and Whites disproportionately, while the majority languishes in socioeconomic hardship. This unequal distribution of money and opportunity is firmly woven into the fabric of the country. That leads to a perilous road to criminality for some, further exacerbated by the lack of effective diversion and rehabilitation programs. Complicating matters further, social support institutions are divided, frequently resulting in family relocation, aggravated socioeconomic gaps, and perpetuation of the cycle of violence. Thus, the violent culture persists, not only due to inherited racial ideas, but also as a result of ongoing structural inequalities that feed into this vicious cycle. It is not simply a Black-and-White story, but a larger reflection of power, privilege, and systematic inequity.

INFORMAL MARKETS AND THE LEGACY OF RACISM:

“The future of work is in the informal economy...”⁶²

Informal markets⁶³ in Namibia largely consist of individuals from marginalized communities who lack access to formal economic opportunities, partly due to remnants of the racially prejudiced structures of apartheid. The Namibian Labor Force Survey 2018 Report showed that more than half (57%) of the 725,742 employed people in the country are in the informal sector.⁶⁴ This exclusion from formal economic structures reinforces socio-economic racial divides, leaving those in the informal sector vulnerable to systemic racism. Although the risk of atrocities isn't directly addressed, the underlying conditions and themes certainly highlight potential areas of concern that could lead to such risks.

4 How Communities Have Resisted and Confronted Racism

The Lasting Pain of Transgenerational Trauma

The victims' experiences of witnessing horrific violence have cast a long shadow over subsequent generations. One interviewee's exploration of transgenerational trauma underscores the enduring effects of the genocide. She reflects on this: “that pain and trauma has been transformed from one generation to the next.” This powerful remark demonstrates the long-lasting psychological impact of such atrocities.⁶⁵

In another interview, a development policy expert illustrated the trauma that persists in Namibia and emphasizes the need for healing. “I see a traumatized Namibia, where for the sake of peace, many of us put behind our own pain to serve. There are flashes that come back... We don't even know where their graves are... how do we get closure...”⁶⁶

There are deep-seated scars left by the German genocide on the Herero, Nama, Damara, and San communities, affecting not just their lands but also their identities. One interviewee continued to highlight that neglecting the psychological well-being of the country perpetuates the legacy of colonialism.⁶⁷

A public policy expert also reflected in their interview on colonialism's effects on the psychological impact on Namibia. He raised the question, “Have we done enough work to address the psychological effects?” While acknowledging that “political independence is in place” in Namibia and across the continent, the interviewee laments the lingering mental scars, stating, “We thought independence would be the cure [to] it all... but we neglected the damage done to our minds.” His words reveal a deep concern for the unaddressed psychological wounds that persist in the wake of colonial rule.⁶⁸ The mistreatment and violence inflicted upon certain races and ethnic groups have engendered a culture of anger that has yet to be fully addressed. The culture of violence and mistreatment has affected all communities, regardless of ethnicity, creating a shared experience of trauma. The unhealed wounds of the past continue to impact Namibian society, sustaining social divisions and hindering the nation's path toward reconciliation.

Cultural Genocide

Cultural loss among Namibian communities is another crucial theme. One interviewee observed: “Our systems and values as culture are now seen through a European lens. Academia is [a] Eurocentric way of teaching, the people we are quoting, the content, dead White men live in our classrooms through the education system.”⁶⁹ The interviewee also noted the distinction in Namibia curriculum between German colonial genocide in Black Africa and German genocide in Europe. “The Namibian national curriculum does not include much on the genocide in Namibia, but it covers the crimes of Nazi Germany. Up until grade 10, history is a compulsory subject, but it is very general and more factual, along the lines of ‘this happened on that day’. It is only in grades 11 and 12, where history is an elective, that the curriculum becomes more detailed, involves students and demands a more critical reflection of history.”⁷⁰

“A pipeline of indoctrination is active and alive and often memorials represent the oppressor, not the victims. Pre-colonial culture is often demonized. There remains a need to contextualize these statues and what they took from us.”⁷¹

Mental liberation through the decolonization of academia across the continent is important but yet to be achieved. Eurocentric influences in teaching methods, curriculum content, and reliance on Western expertise overshadow indigenous knowledge and practices.

Furthermore, a critique of the prevailing iconography and memorials that reinforce colonial narratives and downplay the suffering endured by indigenous communities was expressed. These symbols perpetuate a skewed version of history and undermine the significance of pre-colonial culture. Finally, it addresses governmental indifference to indigenous art and culture, which reflects a broader societal issue of favoring Western ideals at the expense of indigenous traditions and practices. This neglect is seen as another aspect of cultural loss and a barrier to achieving decolonization.

Advocacy by Local Communities

LEGAL FRONT

*“The brutal murder of my brother catalyzed my pursuit of justice.
“At that time, there is no way we will ever get justice... there was a White judge,
White prosecutor, and White polices. I went to study law to get justice.”⁷²*

Community groups in Namibia have taken the lead in a 2023 legal battle challenging a joint declaration between Germany and Namibia on the genocide of the Herero and Nama people from 1904 to 1908. This significant step emphasizes the community’s demand for direct reparations and transparent negotiations.⁷³ Meanwhile, in a related but separate 2019 case in the United States, descendants of the Herero and Nama tribes, representing community interests, sought damages from Germany for historical atrocities. However, their efforts were thwarted when U.S. District Judge Laura Taylor Swain dismissed the lawsuit, invoking Germany’s immunity under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act. Together, these community-led legal actions reflect the intricate and ongoing struggle to address historical injustices stemming from German colonial rule in Namibia, showcasing the crucial role of community advocacy in international law and negotiations.⁷⁴

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

Activists and community members in Windhoek successfully campaigned for the removal of the statue of Curt von François, which symbolized colonial oppression and violence against the Nama people. The removal of the statue represents a collective effort to confront historical injustices and racism.⁷⁵ Similarly, activists started an online petition to remove the gallows, a monument representing lynching and White imperialism, insisting that it should have been removed after Namibia gained independence.⁷⁶ Both examples showcase efforts by activists and communities to challenge and remove symbols that represent and perpetuate racial oppression and colonialism in Namibia. There was a recommendation that historical statues be replaced with more representative figures which encapsulate the various tribes of Namibia driven by the local communities, not just the national government.

5 Successes and Challenges in Confronting Racism

Successes and Progress in Namibia

We can summarize some of the successes we observed through the conversations with interviewees, policy development, and legal changes that can help reduce systemic racism and legal biases in Namibian society. These include legal reforms, for example the end of nearly a century of apartheid under South African rule. The establishment of legal frameworks to promote equality might be seen as steps in the right direction. We also note the international community's pressure on Namibia to address current racial and ethnic divisions have led to the country's alignment with global human rights principles and agreements, which signifies a commitment to addressing these issues. We also credit the increased groundswell awareness and advocacy from groups, both within and outside Namibia, which could be considered positive, though effectiveness may vary.

Challenges That Remain for Greater Racial and Ethnic Equity in Namibia

Despite the successes articulated above, the lingering effects of apartheid continue to create racial disparities and divisions. Among the most prominent issues is the economic disparity. This includes historical dispossession of lands, the decision post-independence to recognize and maintain the existing disparity in land ownership and the spatial segregation of communities. Minority groups like the San continue to suffer, while a White and minority Black elite thrive. We also note the ineffective government policies where current development programs exist but are not well resourced with clear and measurable guidelines. There remains a lack of robust legal protection. Even where laws exist, they are not enforced effectively and consistently enough to have the desired impact. And as many interviewees explained, some racial biases are the more subtle cultural attitudes and perceptions about race. This includes everything from how inclusive national days are, to attitudes about interracial and interethnic marriage. Despite some improvements among the younger generation, the social beliefs about disenfranchised groups continue to damage their acceptance in society as well as their internal narrative about themselves.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Government

POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Affirmative action, constitutional protections, and the New Equitable Economic Empowerment Framework are some of the proactive strategies addressing historical marginalization and systemic discrimination. However, these mechanisms cannot single-handedly remove racial disparities—unequal outcomes and opportunities that different racial or ethnic groups face across various societal domains such as employment, education, wealth, housing, and resource accessibility.

To address inequality, amend existing frameworks, and open opportunities for marginalized communities focus on macroeconomic environment, infrastructure, skill development, and financial accessibility. It is also important to ensure robust housing, universal healthcare, and improved public policy. Open opportunities through affirmative action policies and anti-discrimination legislation and promote marginalized voices in decision-making bodies. Reconsider economic policies, as unemployment and economic growth are important factors, as wealth concentration can persist or worsen inequality.

NATIONAL DAYS AND MORE INCLUSIVE COMMEMORATIONS

Namibia's population, although small, is composed of diverse ethnic groups, each with their own unique stories, traditions, and historical experiences which should be celebrated and acknowledged. Therefore, we must ensure that national holidays and museums represent all communities and reflect all historical events of the Namibian story arc. From the heroism of the Herero and Nama people in the resistance wars to the legacy of the San people as the earliest inhabitants of Namibia, these narratives should be incorporated into national day celebrations. It is worth noting how the changing demographics and shifting attitudes are also impacting how these days are celebrated, often politicizing the events and leading to debates about their relevance.

FACILITATE A NATIONAL DIALOGUE ABOUT THE PAST

Namibian museums can offer opportunities to both confront and understand the nation's multifaceted history, including the painful legacies of colonization including the genocide and apartheid. While museums can serve as repositories of the collective memory, curating exhibitions that delve into the historical experiences of each ethnic group and pay attention to underrepresented voices, can provide a platform for dialogue, forgiveness, and restorative justice. There is need to present an inclusive and unbiased view of history, while navigating the delicate balance between truth-telling, reconciliation, and justice.

INCREASE PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS

There needs to be a systematic integration of psychosocial support within all spheres of public policy, from education and health to criminal justice and social welfare. This will help address various levels of trauma, whether individual, familial, or community-wide, since experiences and manifestations of trauma can differ. Investing in community-led healing initiatives is also key as evidenced by countries

such as Rwanda. It is essential to recognize the power of communities in healing and reconciliation processes. However, all these measures should be executed with great caution to ensure they do not unintentionally turn deeply painful personal experiences into a public spectacle. There should be a clear emphasis on respect and dignity for survivors of trauma, and their stories should be handled with sensitivity and confidentiality.

IMPROVE COLLECTION OF RACIAL DATA AND INFORMATION

The lack of exhaustive racial data collection impedes a thorough comprehension of the progress made in addressing these issues. By quantifying these disparities, policymakers, researchers, and activists can gain insight into the underlying causes of inequality, how they are reinforced, and create targeted interventions to combat them. In addition, the compilation of racial data provides historical context and permits the monitoring of progress over time. Finally, data can help quantify and amplify the perspectives of underrepresented groups and cast light on the experiences of various racial and ethnic groups.

MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The government must ensure that indigenous and minority communities are meaningfully engaged in the decision-making processes concerning the planning, execution, and assessment of development programs. There should be room to amend programs if the communities involved voice their opposition through a consultation process that is independently overseen.

Civil Society

IMPROVE THE PROCESS: ENGAGE LEADERS FROM AFFECTED COMMUNITIES AND BUILD ALLIANCES

A consistent approach should be adopted, regardless of race or ethnicity, to address historical injustices and seek reparations. State and non-state actors should play a significant role in the negotiation and implementation, ensuring that affected communities' voices are amplified and that members are active participants in shaping the reparations process. Traditional authorities within these communities should be involved to ensure a comprehensive understanding of past atrocities and the needs of affected populations. Reparation negotiations should focus on healing, rehabilitation, and development, including educational programs, memorialization initiatives, healthcare support, and economic empowerment for affected communities.

In addition to making sure that the affected communities are part of the process, it is important to also give them the support of other groups. This includes collaboration with other civil society organizations, international bodies, and government agencies to build intersectional response.

SPECIFIC GOALS OF CIVIL SOCIETY IMPROVEMENTS.

In addition to improving the process by including the community and organizational allies, it is important to identify specific goals. For example, it is key to improve education about genocide and apartheid, as well as current systemic racism and social biases. Collaborate with academia, media, and other stakeholders to create public awareness about racism, cultural diversity, and inclusion. Integrate and

strengthen indigenous knowledge alongside Western knowledge. Similarly, legal assistance is important and therefore it is recommended to offer support services, such as legal assistance to individuals and communities affected by racial discrimination. This can help them navigate legal challenges. Providing psychosocial support can help heal the negative self-image of affected communities and therefore it is important to offer community-led services to individuals and groups affected by racial discrimination. In order to track the progress of all of these initiatives, there must be monitoring and reporting on racial discrimination. Establish community-based monitoring systems to track incidents of racial discrimination and the implementation of relevant policies to combat it.

Multi-lateral Agencies

SUPPORT COMPREHENSIVE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION INITIATIVES

Support the Namibian government in developing and implementing comprehensive anti-discrimination laws and policies that specifically address the rights and needs of indigenous and minority communities. This includes promoting active and inclusive participation of these communities in decision-making processes, as mentioned earlier, and ensuring that development programs align.

INVEST IN EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

Collaborate with grassroots NGOs and community leaders to create and fund public awareness campaigns that target racism and tribalism. These programs should aim to foster understanding, tolerance, and acceptance among different racial and ethnic groups.

STRENGTHEN MONITORING AND REPORTING MECHANISMS

Establish robust, independent, and transparent monitoring and reporting mechanisms to assess the implementation of policies and the overall situation of racial discrimination in Namibia. This could include supporting the creation of independent bodies that can consult with affected communities.

References

- An analysis of the Namibian Commercial Agricultural Land Reform Process Land, Environment and Development (LEAD) Project* LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE (2005). Available at: <https://www.lac.org.na/projects/lead/Pdf/landwefarm.pdf> (Accessed: 06 June 2023).
- “Committee On the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Examines the Report of Namibia.” 2016. Un Geneva. May 6, 2016. <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/meeting-summary/2016/05/committee-elimination-racial-discrimination-examines-report>.
- Chomba, Salome M. “The universality of human rights: Challenges for Namibia.” *Human rights and the rule of law in Namibia*. Windhoek. Macmillan Namibia, 2008.
- Chothia, Farouk. “Namibia Pulls down German Colonial Officer’s Statue in Windhoek.” BBC. BBC News, November 23, 2022. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-63728105>.

- De Klerk, Eveline. "Gallows Make 'Mockery of Black Pain'... Petition Seeks to Remove Offensive Landmark." *New Era Namibia* (Windhoek), June 3, 2020.
- "Division of Disability Affairs and Marginalized Communities—MGEPEW—GRN Portal." www.mgepesw.gov.na. 2020. <https://mgepesw.gov.na/division-of-disability-affairs-and-marginalized-communities>.
- Global Campaign for Peace Education, "Education about the Holocaust and Genocide in Namibia," *Global Campaign for Peace Education*, April 4, 2020, <https://www.peace-ed-campaign.org/education-about-the-holocaust-and-genocide-in-namibia/>.
- Informal Sector Contributes a Substantial Part of Economic Activities." *The Economist* (Windhoek), November 23, 2022. <https://economist.com.na/75354/retail/informal-sector-remains-a-critical-part-of-economic-activities>.
- Joint Declaration by the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Namibia. "United in Remembrance of our Colonial Past, United in our Will to Reconcile, United in our Vision of the Future." 2021. https://www.dngev.de/images/stories/Startseite/joint-declaration_2021-05.pdf.
- Kaapama, Phanuel. "Commercial land reforms in postcolonial Namibia." *Transitions in Namibia*, 2007: 29.
- Kohima, Jennilee Magdalena, Uchendu Eugene Chigbu, Malcon Liyali Mazambani, and Menare Royal Mabakeng. 2023. "(Neo-)Segregation, (Neo-) Racism, and One-City Two-System Planning in Windhoek, Namibia: What Can a New National Urban Policy Do?" *Land Use Policy* 125 (February): 106480. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2022.106480>.
- Melber, Henning. "Germany and reparations: the reconciliation agreement with Namibia." *The Round Table* 111, no. 4, 2022: 475-488.
- Melber, Henning. *Transitions in Namibia: which changes for whom?*. Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Melber, H. (2019). *Colonialism, Land, Ethnicity, and Class: Namibia after the Second National Land Conference*. *Africa Spectrum*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002039719848506>. 2007.
- "Namibia Pledges Land Reforms to Boost Black Ownership." n.d. www.aljazeera.com. Accessed June 06, 2023. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/10/2/namibia-pledges-land-reforms-to-boost-Black-ownership>.
- "Namibia—Ethnic Groups." Nations Encyclopedia. July 21, 2023. <https://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Namibia-ETHNIC-GROUPS.html>.
- "Namibia Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Report 2021." Namibia Statistics Agency. Namibia Statistic Agency, June 10, 2021. https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Namibia_MPI_report_2021.pdf.
- "Namibian President Wants Land Expropriated to Boost Black Ownership." *Reuters*, October 1, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-namibia-land/namibian-president-wants-land-expropriated-to-boost-Black-ownership-idUSKCN1MB2TM>.
- Namibian Sun. 2021. "SME Bank Depositors Still Licking Their Wounds." *Namibian Sun*. September 15, 2021. <https://www.namibiansun.com/news/sme-bank-depositors-still-licking-their-wounds2021-09-15>.
- "Namibians Turn to Informal Employment." *The Namibian* (Windhoek), April 16, 2019. <https://www.namibian.com.na/namibians-turn-to-informal-employment/>.
- Nguherimo, Jephta, and Henning Melber. "Reconciliation Is Different The Flaws in the German-Namibian Joint Declaration on the Genocide." *The Namibian Newspaper* (Windhoek), December 17, 2021. <https://www.namibian.com.na/reconciliation-is-different-the-flaws-in-the-german-namibian-joint-declaration-on-the-genocide/>.

- Oppel, Annalena. *Exploring economic support networks amidst racial inequality in Namibia*. No. 2021/102. WIDER Working Paper, 2021.
- Pelz, Daniel. "Herero and Nama File Suit against Genocide Agreement." Deutsche Welle. Deutsche Welle, January 22, 2019. <https://www.dw.com/en/herero-and-nama-dispute-genocide-agreement-with-germany/a-64476907>.
- Peterson, Shelleygan, Eliaser Ndeyanale, and Andreas Thomas. "Katjavivi Cautions MPs on LGBTQI+ Hate Speech." *The Namibian*. May 24, 2023. <https://www.namibian.com.na/katjavivi-cautions-mps-on-lgbtqi-hate-speech/>.
- Reuters. 2017. "Namibia to Make White-Owned Businesses Sell 25 Percent Stakes to Blacks," April 13, 2017, sec. World News. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-namibia-economy-empowerment-idUKKBN17F20I>.
- Shacks Boom in Urban Centres." *The Namibian Newspaper* (Windhoek), November 22, 2017. <https://www.namibian.com.na/shacks-boom-in-urban-centres>.
- Stempel, Jonathan. "Lawsuit against Germany over Namibian Genocide Is Dismissed in New York." Reuters. Reuters, March 6, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-namibia-genocide-germany-idUSKCN1QN2SQ>.
- Suzman, James. *Minorities in independent Namibia*. Minority rights group international, 2002.
- Theurer, Karina, Minimum Legal Standards in Reparation processes for Colonial Crimes: The Case of Namibia and Germany (June 23, 2023). *German Law Journal*, Forthcoming: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4488872>
- Tjivikua, James. "Are We Doing Enough to Combat Hate Speech?" *The Namibian Newspaper* (Windhoek), April 23, 2023. <https://www.namibian.com.na/are-we-doing-enough-to-combat-hate-speech/>.
- "Unemployment, Total (% of Total Labor Force) (Modeled ILO Estimate)—Namibia | Data." n.d. [Data.worldbank.org. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=NA](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=NA).
- United States. Department of State. *Country reports on human rights practices for 2020*. Government Printing Office, 2020.
- Wallace, Marion. *History of Namibia: From the beginning to 1990*. Oxford University Press, 2014.

Author's Acknowledgement

I am humbled for the privilege to tune my ears to the profound stories and lived experiences of dynamic thought leaders and the members of the community impacted by the harsh realities of racism, as influenced by the horrific echoes of apartheid and genocide in Namibia. These conversations reverberated with an unsettling truth that there is more work to be done. The depths of your words, your insightful perspectives and your unwavering courage is testament of Namibia being the land of the brave, soon also to be the land of the whole and free.

Endnotes

- 1 The following case study has been written by an independent consultant on behalf of the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation (GIJTR). This case study is informed by a combination of desktop research, document analysis and interviews. It therefore reflects these perspectives and findings, as compiled and written by the consulting author(s). Interviewees have been anonymized to ensure their safety and privacy but GIJTR extends its gratitude for the time and participation of all interviewees.
- 2 Interview with public policy expert, 2023.
- 3 Talmon, Stephan “Reconciliation Without Reparation: The German-Namibian Joint Declaration on Our Colonial Past”, [German Practice in International Law](#), 2023.
- 4 Rivera, Amy M. “Did the German actions in the Herero Rebellion of 1904-1908 constitute genocide?.” PhD diss., Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 2012.
- 5 Joint Declaration by the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Namibia. “United in Remembrance of our Colonial Past, United in our Will to Reconcile, United in our Vision of the Future.” 2021. Available online: https://www.dngev.de/images/stories/Startseite/joint-declaration_2021-05.pdf.
- 6 Theurer, Karina, Minimum Legal Standards in Reparation processes for Colonial Crimes: The Case of Namibia and Germany (2023). *German Law Journal*, Forthcoming.
- 7 Wallace, Marion. *History of Namibia: From the beginning to 1990*. Oxford University Press, 2014.
- 8 Chomba, Salome M. “The universality of human rights: Challenges for Namibia.” *Human rights and the rule of law in Namibia*, Windhoek. Macmillan Namibia (2008).
- 9 Melber, H. (2019). Colonialism, Land, Ethnicity, and Class: Namibia after the Second National Land Conference. *Africa Spectrum*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002039719848506>
- 10 Melber, Henning. “Germany and reparations: the reconciliation agreement with Namibia.” *The Round Table* 111, no. 4 (2022): 475-488.
- 11 Melber, Henning. *Transitions in Namibia: which changes for whom?* Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2007
- 12 “COMMITTEE on the ELIMINATION of RACIAL DISCRIMINATION EXAMINES the REPORT of NAMIBIA.” 2016. UN GENEVA. May 6, 2016. <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/meeting-summary/2016/05/committee-elimination-racial-discrimination-examines-report>.
- 13 “Namibian President Wants Land Expropriated to Boost Black Ownership.” Reuters, October 1, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-namibia-land/namibian-president-wants-land-expropriated-to-boost-black-ownership-idUSKCN1MB2TM>.
- 14 Suzman, James. *Minorities in independent Namibia*. Minority rights group international, 2002.
- 15 Al Jazeera. (2018). Namibia pledges land reforms to boost Black ownership | News | Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/10/2/namibia-pledges-land-reforms-to-boost-black-ownership>
- 16 Reuters. (2018). Namibia to make White-owned businesses sell 25 percent stakes to Blacks | Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-namibia-economy-empowerment-idUKKBN17F20I>
- 17 “Namibia Pledges Land Reforms to Boost Black Ownership.” n.d. www.aljazeera.com. Accessed June 06, 2023. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/10/2/namibia-pledges-land-reforms-to-boost-black-ownership>.
- 18 Namibian Sun. 2021. “SME Bank Depositors Still Licking Their Wounds.” *Namibian Sun*. September 15, 2021. <https://www.namibiansun.com/news/sme-bank-depositors-still-licking-their-wounds2021-09-15>.
- 19 Namibia—Ethnic Groups.” *Nations Encyclopedia*. July 21, 2023. <https://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Namibia-ETHNIC-GROUPS.html>.
- 20 “COMMITTEE on the ELIMINATION of RACIAL DISCRIMINATION EXAMINES the REPORT of NAMIBIA.” 2016. UN GENEVA. May 6, 2016. <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/meeting-summary/2016/05/committee-elimination-racial-discrimination-examines-report>.
- 21 United States. Department of State. *Country reports on human rights practices for 2020*. Government Printing Office, 2020.
- 22 United States. Department of State. *Country reports on human rights practices for 2020*. Government Printing Office, 2020.
- 23 “Division of Disability Affairs and Marginalized Communities—MGEPEW—GRN Portal.” www.mgepesw.gov.na. 2020. <https://mgepesw.gov.na/division-of-disability-affairs-and-marginalized-communities>.
- 24 Opper, Annalena. *Exploring economic support networks amidst racial inequality in Namibia*. No. 2021/102. WIDER Working Paper, 2021.
- 25 “Unemployment, Total (% of Total Labor Force) (Modeled ILO Estimate)—Namibia | Data.” n.d. Data.worldbank.org. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=NA>.
- 26 Kohima, Jennilee Magdalena, Uchendu Eugene Chigbu, Malcon Liyali Mzambani, and Menare Royal Mabakeng. 2023. “(Neo-)Segregation, (Neo-) Racism, and One-City Two-System Planning in Windhoek, Namibia: What Can a New National Urban Policy Do?” *Land Use Policy* 125 (February): 106480. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2022.106480>.
- 27 Interview with policy leader, 2023.
- 28 Interview with an academic, 2023.
- 29 Interview with public policy expert, 2023.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 “Shacks Boom in Urban Centres.” *The Namibian Newspaper* (Windhoek), November 22, 2017. <https://www.namibian.com.na/shacks-boom-in-urban-centres>.
- 32 Melber, H. (2019). Colonialism, Land, Ethnicity, and Class: Namibia after the Second National Land Conference. *Africa Spectrum*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002039719848506>
- 33 An analysis of the Namibian Commercial Agricultural Land Reform Process Land, Environment and Development (LEAD) Project LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE (2005). Available at: <https://www.lac.org.na/projects/lead/Pdf/landwefarm.pdf> (Accessed: 06 June 2023).
- 34 “Unemployment, Total (% of Total Labor Force) (Modeled ILO Estimate)—Namibia | Data.” n.d. Data.worldbank.org. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=NA>.
- 35 Opper, Annalena. *Exploring economic support networks amidst racial inequality in Namibia*. No. 2021/102. WIDER Working Paper, 2021.
- 36 Interview with national politician, 2023.
- 37 Nguherimo, Jephta, and Henning Melber. “Reconciliation Is Different The Flaws in the German-Namibian Joint Declaration on the Genocide.” *The Namibian Newspaper* (Windhoek), December 17, 2021. <https://www.namibian.com.na/reconciliation-is-different-the-flaws-in-the-german-namibian-joint-declaration-on-the-genocide/>.
- 38 Interview with national politician, 2023.
- 39 Interview with national politician, 2023.
- 40 Melber, Henning. “Germany and reparations: the reconciliation agreement with Namibia.” *The Round Table* 111, no. 4 (2022): 475-488.
- 41 “Unemployment, Total (% of Total Labor Force) (Modeled ILO Estimate)—Namibia | Data.” n.d. Data.worldbank.org. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=NA>.
- 42 Division of Disability Affairs and Marginalized Communities—MGEPEW—GRN Portal.” www.mgepesw.gov.na. 2020. <https://mgepesw.gov.na/division-of-disability-affairs-and-marginalized-communities>.
- 43 Interview with national politician, 2023.
- 44 Interview with theology professor, 2023.
- 45 Interview with public policy expert, 2023.
- 46 Interview with political analyst, 2023.
- 47 Interview with public policy expert, 2023.
- 48 Interview with children’s rights activist, 2023.
- 49 Interview with anthropologist. 2023.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Interview with theology professor, 2023.
- 52 Interview with anthropologist, 2023.

- 53 Interview with public policy expert, 2023.
- 54 Interview with policy leader, 2023.
- 55 “Namibia Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Report 2021.” Namibia Statistics Agency. Namibia Statistic Agency, June 10, 2021. https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Namibia_MPI_report_2021.pdf.
- 56 Tjivikua, James . “Are We Doing Enough to Combat Hate Speech?” The Namibian Newspaper (Windhoek), April 23, 2023. <https://www.namibian.com.na/are-we-doing-enough-to-combat-hate-speech/>.
- 57 Chomba, Salome M. “The universality of human rights: Challenges for Namibia.” Human rights and the rule of law in Namibia. Windhoek. Macmillan Namibia (2008).
- 58 Reuters. “Namibia’s Top Court Recognises Same-Sex Marriages Formed Elsewhere,” May 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/namibias-top-court-recognises-same-sex-marriages-formed-elsewhere-2023-05-16/>.
- 59 Peterson, Shelleygan , Eliaser Ndeyanale, and Andreas Thomas. “Katjavivi Cautions MPs on LGBTQI+ Hate Speech.” The Namibian. May 24, 2023. <https://www.namibian.com.na/katjavivi-cautions-mps-on-lgbtqi-hate-speech/>.
- 60 Shikongo, Arlana. “Namibia: Hate Speech Not Defined As an Offence—Ombudsman.” The Namibian. June 15, 2021. <https://namibian.com.na/hate-speech-not-defined-as-an-offence-ombudsman/>.
- 61 Interview with theology professor, 2023.
- 62 Interview with anthropologist. 2023.
- 63 Informal Sector Contributes a Substantial Part of Economic Activities.” The Economist (Windhoek), November 23, 2022. <https://economist.com.na/75354/retail/informal-sector-remains-a-critical-part-of-economic-activities>.
- 64 “Namibians Turn to Informal Employment.” The Namibian (Windhoek), April 16, 2019. <https://www.namibian.com.na/namibians-turn-to-informal-employment/>.
- 65 Interview with national politician, 2023.
- 66 Interview with development policy expert, 2023.
- 67 Interview with creative professional, 2023.
- 68 Interview with public policy expert, 2023..
- 69 Interview with public policy expert, 2023.
- 70 Global Campaign for Peace Education, “Education about the Holocaust and Genocide in Namibia,” Global Campaign for Peace Education, April 4, 2020, <https://www.peace-ed-campaign.org/education-about-the-holocaust-and-genocide-in-namibia/>.
- 71 Interview with creative professional, 2023.
- 72 Interview with development policy expert, 2023
- 73 Pelz, Daniel. “Herero and Nama File Suit against Genocide Agreement.” Deutsche Welle. Deutsche Welle, January 22, 2. <https://www.dw.com/en/herero-and-nama-dispute-genocide-agreement-with-germany/a-64476907>.
- 74 Stempel, Jonathan. “Lawsuit against Germany over Namibian Genocide Is Dismissed in New York.” Reuters. Reuters, March 6, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-namibia-genocide-germany-idUSKCN1QN2SQ>.
- 75 Chothia, Farouk. “Namibia Pulls down German Colonial Officer’s Statue in Windhoek.” BBC. BBC News, November 23, 2022. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-63728105>.
- 76 De Klerk, Eveline. “Gallows Make ‘Mockery of Black Pain’... Petition Seeks to Remove Offensive Landmark.” New Era Namibia (Windhoek), June 3, 2020.

