



Accra Reparations Conference 2023, Ghana

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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1. INTRODUCTION



African Futures Lab at the European Day Commemorating the Abolition of the Slave Trade-December 5, 2023, Brussels

At African Futures Lab, we are driven by a commitment to racial equality and justice. 2023 brought both triumphs and challenges to our journey. As we reflect on the past year, we see how complex global forces shaped our work, from groundbreaking progress at the international level to rising tensions that continue to challenge the cause of justice and reparations.

The year was marked by a historic event—the first African Union summit on reparations in three decades. Leaders from across the continent, including Algeria, South Africa, Ghana, and Kenya, gathered to voice a unified call for reparations. This summit represented not only a collective demand for financial compensation but a broader call for reparations and reform of the global international order that has long marginalized African states.

For African Futures Lab, this moment was a culmination of months of advocacy, with heads of state from across the continent speaking out in favor of a common strategy to address historical wrongs.

Additionally, momentum for reparations reached the international stage. In September 2023, the United Nations General Assembly turned its attention to the legacies of slavery and colonization. UN Secretary-General António Guterres made a powerful address, urging the world to confront its past and take action toward reparations. Leaders from countries such as Ghana and Colombia echoed this, calling attention to the global relevance of reparations and restorative justice.

However, the responses from former colonial powers were mixed. While some European nations, like the Netherlands and Germany, as well as the King of England, acknowledged the harm caused by their colonial histories, their gestures remained largely symbolic. Tangible efforts to repair the economic and social damage inflicted by slavery and colonization were left unaddressed.

Despite these advances, the fight for racial justice is unfolding against a troubling global backdrop. A rising wave of far-right extremism has gained traction, throughout Europe, North America, as well as Tunisia. This disturbing trend has fostered dangerous alliances between far-right groups in Europe and authoritarian regimes, fueling racist narratives and deepening the marginalization of Black African communities. The violence against Black Africans observed in Tunisia in 2023 starkly illustrates how global ideologies continue to spread, with profound consequences for racial justice.

In the face of these challenges, African Futures Lab remains steadfast. We are proud of the progress made in 2023, and our work continues to be guided by two core strategies.

The first is evidence-based advocacy and public discourse. Over the past year, we have published research reports and policy papers that shine a light on the racial injustices, both past and present, that plague Africa and Europe.

Through online media campaigns and participation in international conferences, we have kept the conversation on racial justice reparations alive, ensuring that these critical issues remain at the forefront of the global agenda

The second is **transcontinental alliances for justice and reform**. By forging partnerships with organizations across Africa and Europe, we have focused on specific issues like climate crisis, gender inequality, and socio-economic injustice. These alliances have developed unified strategies for advocacy, pushing for legal reforms on both a national and international level.

As we look back on 2023, we are reminded that the road to justice is long and fraught with obstacles. But with every summit, every speech, and every partnership, we are building a future where racial equality and justice are not merely ideals but realities. Each step forward brings us closer to dismantling systemic inequities.

Liliane Umubyeyi, PhD
Executive Director
2024

2. THE LAB IN ACTION

2.1. Building Knowledge to Support Racial Justice Struggles

Our work is driven by the belief that producing and sharing knowledge is essential to advancing justice and equity.

In 2023, we contributed to this goal through the first publications of our project: “Pursuing an African Agenda for Reparations for Colonial Crimes and Slavery”, which consists of seven research reports that critically examine the urgent need for reparations from Europe in response to the historical atrocities of colonialism and slavery in Africa, each highlighting a specific region of the continent.

Complementing this research, we hosted two mobilization labs, creating collaborative spaces for activists and experts to exchange insights and co-develop practical solutions to the pressing challenges faced by justice movements today.

Through these efforts, we aim to deepen understanding and foster impactful strategies in the pursuit of reparative justice.

2.1.1 The Research Reports

Our research shows that violence tied to colonialism and slavery is at the root of many political, economic, and social crises in contemporary African societies. Yet, these historical crimes have received little interest from international organizations (state and non-state actors). Demands for justice and reparations are often met with hostility, perpetuating colonial logics and, in certain contexts, repression by African governments themselves.

Contrary to the belief that African nations have been silent, voices across the continent have consistently called for justice and reparations over the past sixty years—calls largely ignored or dismissed by international actors.

Reparations for Europe's Colonial Crimes in Africa and Slavery: A Critical Step in Tackling Africa's Contemporary Challenges

PURSUING AN AFRICAN AGENDA FOR REPARATIONS FOR COLONIAL CRIMES AND SLAVERY

Reparations for Europe's Colonial Crimes in Africa and Slavery: A Critical Step in Tackling Africa's Contemporary Challenges



In October 2023, Afalab published a paper called "[Reparations for Europe's Colonial Crimes in Africa and Slavery: A Critical Step in Tackling Africa's Contemporary Challenges](#)", which is an introduction to the Lab project, Pursuing an African Agenda for Reparations for Colonial Crimes and Slavery.

The paper summarizes some of the key findings of these reports, which show, notably, that contrary to a commonly held viewpoint, demands for justice and reparations for colonial crimes and slavery have been voiced on the African continent over the last sixty years.

Multiple But Invisible: Reparations Demands For Colonial Crimes In The Great Lakes Region

Released in November 2023, this [first report](#) in our series takes a closer look at the growing demands for reparations emerging from Africa's civil societies.

Focusing on the Great Lakes region—Burundi, the DRC, and Rwanda—it seeks to map out a clear agenda for reparations. Who is making these demands? Who are they directed at? What are the strategies and challenges involved? Through a detailed synthesis of literature and interviews with key figures, this report amplifies the voices of those leading the charge for justice and accountability.

Authored by Aymar N. Bisoka, PhD, the report reflects a collective effort rooted in deep regional expertise and commitment to transformative justice.

MULTIPLE BUT INVISIBLE: REPARATIONS DEMANDS FOR COLONIAL CRIMES IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION



Decolonize Justice! A perspective on the role of international development policies and citizens' experience of justice institutions

DECOLONIZE JUSTICE!
A PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE OF
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
POLICIES AND CITIZENS'
EXPERIENCE OF JUSTICE
INSTITUTIONS



Published in December 2023, the second report in this series seeks to highlight how Western legal and judicial systems have been preserved in African countries, despite their shortcomings, and how their persistence continues to harm African populations.

Co-authored by Inanga's co-managing partner, Julien Moriceau, and Liliane Umubyeyi, this report shines a light on how Western legal and judicial systems—imposed during colonial rule and perpetuated by modern development institutions—continue to harm African societies.

The colonial-era justification of modernization paved the way for the imposition of Western court systems, which remain in place today under the guise of promoting economic growth and foreign investment. Yet, these systems have done little to deliver true justice to African communities. Instead, they have deepened existing inequalities and perpetuated violence.

2.1.2: The Mobilization Labs

Racial crimes and injustices have historically transcended continents, manifesting through slavery, colonialism, and their modern-day expressions in global policies tied to migration, economic disparities, and the climate crisis. Despite their far-reaching impact, international development and human rights organizations often neglect the racial dimensions of global injustices.

The Lab responds to this neglect by building transcontinental alliances between Africa and Europe to address critical issues like climate change, gender equality, and socio-economic disparities. Through these alliances, cohesive strategies for advocacy and legal reform are developed.

At the heart of these efforts are Mobilization Labs (MobLabs)—collaborative spaces uniting experts such as historians, economists, anthropologists, and legal scholars with community organizers and communication specialists. These working group meetings focus on advancing reparations demands through tailored strategies, ranging from short-term initiatives to long-term campaigns.

The West Africa Mobilization Lab

Launched in November 2023, the West Africa MobLab's primary aim was to facilitate the return of ancestral remains that had been taken from African communities during the colonial period and were held in European institutions.

Organized and facilitated by Afalab co-founder, Amah Edoh, the MobLab focused on efforts to restitute ancestor remains from a German institution to the ancestor's village of origin in Togo.

West Africa MobLab members:



Mawusse Ohinko Toffa, PhD
(Colonial history and German studies)

Currently Researcher on the project "Provenance of colonial-era collections from Togo" at the Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden and the GRASSI Museum für Völkerkunde in Leipzig.



Napo Labodja Oubo-Gbati

President, Case-Internationale e.V.: Artist and teacher in Kassel, Germany.



Ablavi Julienne Houssou, MA
(German studies)

Founder and education lead at the LdS (Lern die deutsche Sprache) language center, Lome, Togo.

2.2. Shaping the public debate around racial justice and reparations in Africa and Europe

2.2.1 AfaLive

AfaLive is an engaging discussion platform launched by AfaLab in 2023, hosted on X (formerly Twitter). It served as a dedicated space for exploring critical racial justice issues affecting Europe and Africa.

Through hour-long sessions featuring a diverse range of experts, activists, and scholars, AfaLive facilitated in-depth conversations that aimed to raise awareness and foster meaningful connections between local and global communities.



Each AfaLive session centered on a distinct theme, addressing urgent topics such as state-sanctioned racism, the role of media in racial justice movements, and the systemic inequalities that marginalized populations face.

By bringing these pressing issues to the forefront, AfaLive provided a dynamic platform for exchanging insights, addressing challenges, and exploring actionable solutions in the ongoing fight for racial justice.

March 23: AfaLive #1 – Tunisia: State-Sanctioned Racism?

On March 23, 2023, AfaLab hosted a Twitter Live to discuss racial violence against black people living in Tunisia, following the racist remarks made by President Kais Saïed.

Moderated by AfaLab co-founder Amah Edoh, the discussion featured three guests:

- Huda Mzioudet, Tunisian activist and researcher at the University of Toronto.
- Shreya Parikh, Tunisian PhD student in political sociology at Science Po Paris.
- Saadia Mosbah, Tunisian activist and president of the MNEMTY ANTI RACISM association.



During this debate, Huda Mzioudet highlighted the racial taboo, which exists alongside state racism, which, according to Shreya Parikh, is not at all new. Saadia Mosbah also pointed out that the erasure of memories of the 14-century-long trans-Saharan slave trade makes potential claims for reparations almost impossible.

June 29: AfaLive #2 – The Role of Media in Racial Justice Struggles Across Europe and Africa



The second episode of AfaLive, held on June 29, addressed the role of the media in advancing racial justice.

Led by AfaLab co-founder Amah Edoh, the conversation featured [Natasha Kimani](#), Head of Partnerships & Research at Africa No Filter, and [Joseph Harker](#), Senior Editor at The Guardian.

The panelists delved into how mainstream media shapes public perception and influences racial justice efforts in both the Global North and South, and examined the media's potential in driving reparations discussions forward.

July 12: AfaLive #3 – The French State and Justice for its Racialized Populations

The third session, moderated by Liliane Umubyeyi, took place after the police killing of Nahel, a young man of North African descent, near Paris.

The discussion featured Marwan Mohammed, sociologist at CNRS, Mame-Fatou Niang, director of the Center for Black European Studies at Carnegie Mellon University, and Lionel Zevounou, lecturer in Public Law at Nanterre University.



The panel focused on the French state's failure to address police violence impartially, the erosion of judicial independence, and the harsh legal consequences faced by protestors, highlighting the systemic challenges facing France's racialized populations in their pursuit of justice.

Through these sessions, #AfaLive provides an essential platform for examining racial justice issues in depth, facilitating the exchange of insights and proposing solutions to address the ongoing challenges faced by marginalized communities.

2.2.2 Podcast Future Perfect | Futur Antérieur: Season 2

During spring 2023, the Lab launched season 2 of its podcast [Future Perfect | Futur Antérieur](#). Throughout the new season, AfaLab continues to spotlight the remarkable individual and collective efforts across Europe, Africa, and the Americas in the pursuit of racial equality and justice.

Episode 1 - Mireille Tsheusi-Robert : En quête de respect et de justice : regards sur les luttes antiracistes et décoloniales en Belgique



In this episode, we had the privilege of welcoming Mireille-Tsheusi Robert, a seasoned anti-racist, Afro-feminist activist, and decolonial author.

Mireille shared her extensive experience, enriching our discussion on the ongoing struggles for justice in Belgium.

Episode 2 - Kwanza Musi dos Santos: The need for an intersectional approach to fighting racism in Italy



In conversation with the inspiring Kwanza Musi dos Santos, an Afro-Brazilian activist based in Rome, we explored the importance of an intersectional framework in combating racism.

As a co-founder of Questaèroma, a sports and culture association, Kwanza utilizes arts and cultural initiatives to combat discrimination, particularly among youth and people of color in Rome.

Episode 3 - Jephtha Nguherimo: Reparations to restore dignity: Pursuing justice for the ovaHerero and Nama genocide in Namibia



In this episode, we spoke with Jephtha Nguherimo, founder of the OvaHerero People's Memorial and Reconstruction Foundation.

Jephtha illuminated the legacies of Germany's genocide against the OvaHerero and Nama peoples from 1904 to 1908, reminding us that the ultimate goal of reparations is the restoration of dignity for African peoples.

Episode 4 - Malcom Ferdinand : Le scandale du chlordécone et la continuité des violences coloniales en Martinique et en Guadeloupe



In this French-language episode, Malcom Ferdinand, a political scientist and environmental engineer from Martinique, addressed the chlordecone health scandal in the French overseas territories.

He discussed the production and use of chlordecone by banana plantation owners, the inaction of the French state, subsequent legal decisions, and the profound impact on the health and livelihoods of West Indians.

Episode 5 - Jean Casimir & Michel DeGraff: Onè ak jistis: Avenues for reparations in Haiti



For the 5th episode, we were honored to host two eminent scholars, Professors Jean Casimir and Michel DeGraff, who discussed the legacies of colonialism in Haiti and the ongoing struggle for justice and reparations.

Despite the immense challenges facing Haiti, they provided a message of hope for the future.

Episode 6 - Juliette Nijimbere : “La montagne qui a accouché d'une souris” : espoirs et échec de la commission parlementaire belge sur le passé colonial



For the last episode of the season, Juliette Nijimbere, a dedicated activist for human rights and women's rights in Belgium, discussed the outcomes of the Belgian parliamentary commission on the country's colonial past.

She described the initial hopes surrounding the commission's launch and the numerous challenges that emerged during its implementation, which ultimately foreshadowed its shortcomings.

2.2.3 Amplifying voices calling for racial justice in public debates and policy making spaces

February 2: The importance of AfaLab's work on reparations and African futures, University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business, Philadelphia, US



On February 2, Amah Edoh, AfaLab's co-founder presented the Lab's work as a guest lecturer in Prof. Kanyinsola Obayan Arigi's "African Futures" class at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business.

Amah gave a presentation on the topic of "Reparations and African Futures," to a class of MBA students in the Lauder Africa General Program. em access to justice.

March 3: Reparations for Colonization/Carbonization, Cornell University's Institute for Comparative Modernities, Ithaca, US



On March 3, 2023, AfaLab co-founder and Executive Director, Liliane Umubyeyi, attended the “Reparations for Colonization/Carbonization” symposium at Cornell University's Institute for Comparative Modernities, where she was part of a panel addressing the “Concept of reparations and the pending reparations for colonialism”.

Liliane pointed out that international human rights organizations (governmental and non-governmental) have for too long been blind to reparations for colonial crimes and slavery, leaving entire populations and states without any access to the instruments and mechanisms that should protect their rights and give them access to justice.

March 30: Decolonizing International Relations and Development, Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium

On March 30th, 2023, AfaLab co-founder and Executive Director, Liliane Umubyeyi took part in the conference “Decolonizing International Relations and Development”.

Organized by the Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain Coopération, and the Centre Placet, it aimed to discuss the need to decolonize international law and the international human rights system as part of the process to advance the reparations agenda for colonial crimes and slavery.



April 26: The Racial Justice Dashboard: Pursuing Racial Justice through Data in Europe and Latin America, UN's World Data Forum 2023, online



On Wednesday April 26th, along with [Data-Pop Alliance](#), the Lab held a panel entitled: "The Racial Justice Dashboard: Pursuing Racial Justice through Data in Europe and Latin America" at the UN's World Data Forum 2023.

Afalab presented the possibilities offered by big data analysis to understand racial discourse in Europe and Latin America, but also the many risks and constraints involved.

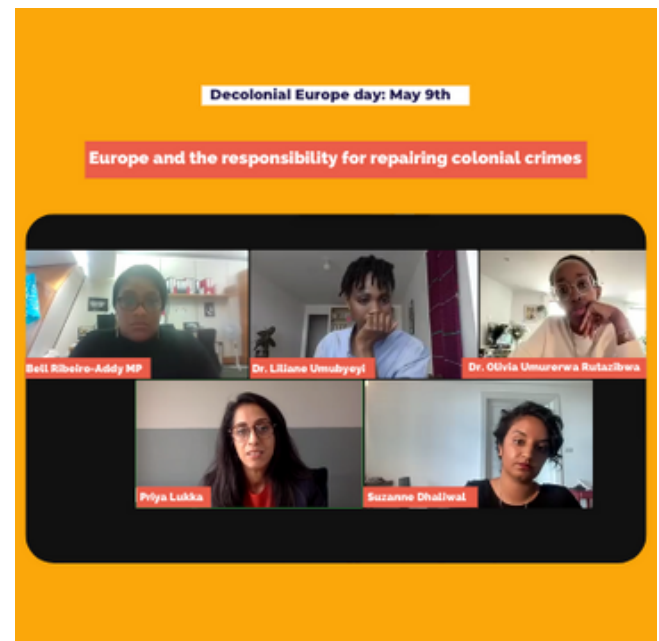
May 9: Europe and the Responsibility for Repairing Colonial Crimes, Decolonial Europe Day, online

On May 9th, AfaLab participated in [Decolonial Europe Day](#) with a panel on "Europe and the Responsibility for Repairing Colonial Crimes".

AfaLab's session explored Europe's role in addressing colonial crimes, ongoing racial inequalities, and the impact of European policies on global racial justice.

The Lab's moderated by Liliane Umubyeyi, brought together four distinguished panelists whose extensive experience and expertise allowed to us to have a particularly rich exchange:

- [Dr. Olivia Umurerwa Rutazibwa](#), international relations scholar (London School of Economics).
- [Priya Lukka](#), international development economist.
- [Suzanne Dhaliwal](#), climate justice campaigner, researcher, lecturer, and trainer.
- [Bell Ribeiro-Addy](#), Labour MP for Streatham, UK.



May 31: European Conference of African Studies, Cologne, Germany



On May 31, Afalab's Liliane Umubyeyi and co-author [Julien Moriceau](#), presented a paper on the urgency to decolonize international development policies in the Rule of Law sector at the European Conference of African Studies in Cologne.

The paper shows how international development policies in the Rule of Law field prolong and amplify the violence of colonial domination in the name of legal modernity and the need to attract foreign investments.

From Left to Right: Liliane Umubyeyi (African Futures Lab) and [Julien Moriceau](#) (co-author) at African Futures Conference- May 2023, Cologne, Germany

May 12-16: Retreat, Lisbon, Portugal

Liliane Umubyeyi represented the Lab at a four-day retreat in Lisbon (Portugal), organized by the [Othering & Belonging Institute](#) at UC Berkeley and the [BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt](#) from May 12-16.

This powerful gathering brought together 50 visionary leaders from across Europe to reflect on the practices of othering that play out through racial inequalities, islamophobia, gender inequalities, migration, climate injustices and socioeconomic marginalization, and on how belonging might be achieved.



For AfaLab, those discussions highlighted the fact that the drive towards racial justice cannot be pursued in isolation. The interconnected nature of social justice issues requires us to build bridges and alliances across movements.

July 7: Annual Pan African Lawyers Union's Congress, Livingstone, Zambia



On July 7th, Liliane Umubyeyi took part in a panel discussion organized by [Open Society Africa](#) as part of the annual Pan African Lawyers Union's Congress in Zambia.

She called for vigilance in the face of proposals by European states to proceed with reparations that focus solely on the restitution of artefacts and human remains, while avoiding more structural forms of reparations, namely reparations that address the contemporary economic injustices inherited from colonialism.

She proposed capitalizing on the current momentum for reforming international economic institutions (i.e. the Bridgetown Initiative) to demand the overhaul of the World Bank and the IMF - in particular, a more equitable representation of African states in these institutions - as a form of reparation.

July 19: In conversation with Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Brussels, Belgium

On July 19, AfaLab, represented by Amah Edoh, attended the event "In conversation with Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights."

This was part of its partnership with a collective of mixed-race people (métis) seeking reparations for the Belgian colonial state's segregation policies and forced abduction of mixed-race children in its Congo colony and the UN mandates of Ruanda-Urundi during the 1950s and 1960s.



From left to right: members of the Collectif Métis, Yanine Karapatakis and Claudine Jadot, with Amah Edoh, AfaLab co-founder during the event "In conversation with Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights" - Brussels, July 19 2023

September 19: European Civic Academy 2023, Brussels, Belgium



AfaLab, represented by Amah Edoh took part in the European Civic Academy 2023 in Brussels on September 19.

Launched by the [European Civic Forum](#) in 2016, the European Civic Academy aims to connect and build bridges between civil society and academia.

The 2023 edition addressed the challenges posed by decades of policies that heightened inequalities and eroded democratic trust, leading to increased societal and environmental vulnerabilities.

In light of the upcoming 2024 European elections, the event specifically explored strategies for democratic renewal. Amah presented the Lab's work on reparations as part of a workshop addressing how underrepresented voices can be centered in European civil society actions and discussions.

September 20: Rethinking sustainable development through repair: Why reparations are fundamental to the future of sustainable development, New York, US

On September 20th, the Lab represented by Liliane Umubyeyi, co-hosted a gathering with the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, [Open Society Foundations](#) and [Amnesty International](#), as a side event at the [United Nations General Assembly](#) in New York.

Titled "Rethinking sustainable development through repair: Why reparations are fundamental to the future of sustainable development," the event gathered world leaders to confront the pressing issue of global racial and reparative justice, and to reimagine sustainable development through the lens of repair.



During the event, Liliane had the great pleasure of meeting and speaking with Her Excellency Francia Marquez, Vice President of the Republic of Colombia, the first Black woman to hold this position in Latin America. Marquez is among the strong voices from the South calling on global superpowers to pay reparations for slavery and colonialism.

December 4: 16th CODESRIA General Assembly, Dakar, Senegal



On December 4th, Liliane Umubyeyi, participated remotely in the 16th General Assembly of The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), based in Dakar, Senegal.

During the panel discussing the "Legacies of the other 'pandemics': a case for reparations," Liliane presented the key findings of our series of research reports on reparations for Europe's colonial crimes and slavery in Africa.

December 5: European Day Commemorating the Abolition of the Slave Trade, Brussels, Belgium

On December 5th, the European Commission and the European Parliament organized a joint event to mark the European Day Commemorating the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

AfaLab, represented by Liliane Umubyeyi, was part of a panel discussion on EU and UN approaches to reparatory justice and sustainable development.

Liliane highlighted the importance of integrating reparative justice in efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

She emphasized that addressing the historical economic, political, and social disparities between the Global North and South, which are rooted in colonial legacies, is crucial for genuine progress in pursuing the SDG agenda.

Failing to acknowledge and rectify the enduring impacts of colonialism in international development policies may significantly obstruct the SDGs' ambitious objectives.



3. GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

Our work at AfaLab has long emphasized the importance of transcontinental collaboration in the global fight against racial injustice. To establish transcontinental networks, we have reinforced our collaboration with new partners while simultaneously reinforcing existing partnerships.

- **Open Society-Africa** has partnered with the Lab since November 2022, by funding our research project "Advancing the reparations agenda for the colonial crimes and slavery in Africa."
- **Noesya**, the France-based web developer cooperative, Noesya, is dedicated to crafting high-quality, ethical, and sustainable digital spaces. They were responsible for creating the website for AfaLab, aligning their values with the project's vision for a responsible and impactful online presence.
- **The University of Victoria's EU Study Tour and Internship Program**, which offers an experiential learning opportunity for university students across Canada through a program of guided visits to the major institutions of the European Union and internship placements in various institutions, connected us with our first intern!
- **Reform Initiatives** is a prominent pan-African think tank dedicated to advancing dialogue on reparatory justice, human rights, and democracy across Africa. Based in West Africa and founded by renowned human rights activist Makmid Kamara, Reform Initiatives brings nearly two decades of experience in advocacy and research across Africa and the UK to this new endeavor.
- **Seun Anikulapo Kuti** generously granted us the rights to use clips of his track, "African Dreams," for the podcast.



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4. 2024-2025 OUTLOOK

While 2023 brought many challenges, we approach 2024-2025 with renewed enthusiasm and determination to continue our fight for racial equality and justice across Africa and Europe.

Over the next two years, we have decided to sharpen our focus on thematic priorities, focusing on racialized gender-based violence, climate injustice and economic inequalities with a racial dimension. This strategic prioritization will allow our organization not only to deepen its expertise, but also to strengthen a core network of partners in both the Global North and the Global South. This thematic focus will guide our knowledge production and dissemination, ensuring that our findings shape public debate through podcasts and conferences.

In the coming years, we will place a strong emphasis on cementing transcontinental partnerships and collaborations with organisations across Africa and Europe. These collaborations will strengthen our commitment to embedding racial justice more deeply in both regions. In addition, by collaborating with organisations active in our key areas of focus - gender, climate and economic justice - we will broaden the racial dimension in the operational strategies of actors who may have been less familiar with or responsive to these issues.

We recognise the immense challenges that lie ahead, and we sincerely hope that you will join us in addressing them.