

# Colonial reparations: Toward Decolonization

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# What we 'll discuss

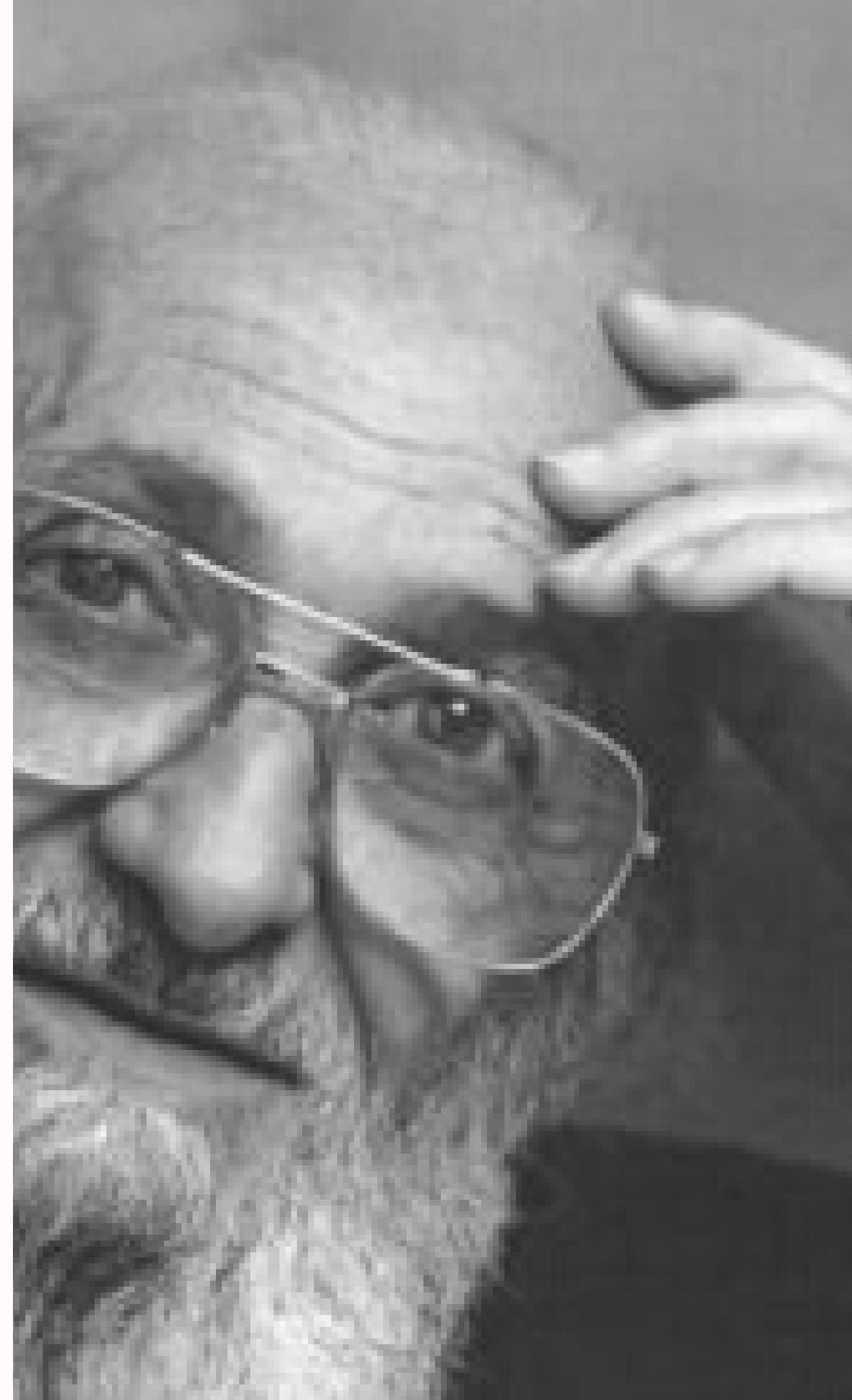
- Colonizing/Decolonizing
- Reparations
- Reparations and IR
- Colonial reparations today

# Citation

"The educated individual is the adapted person, because she or he is better "fit" for the world. Translated into practice, this concept is well suited to the purposes of the oppressors, whose tranquility rests on how well people fit the world the oppressors have created, and how little they question it. "

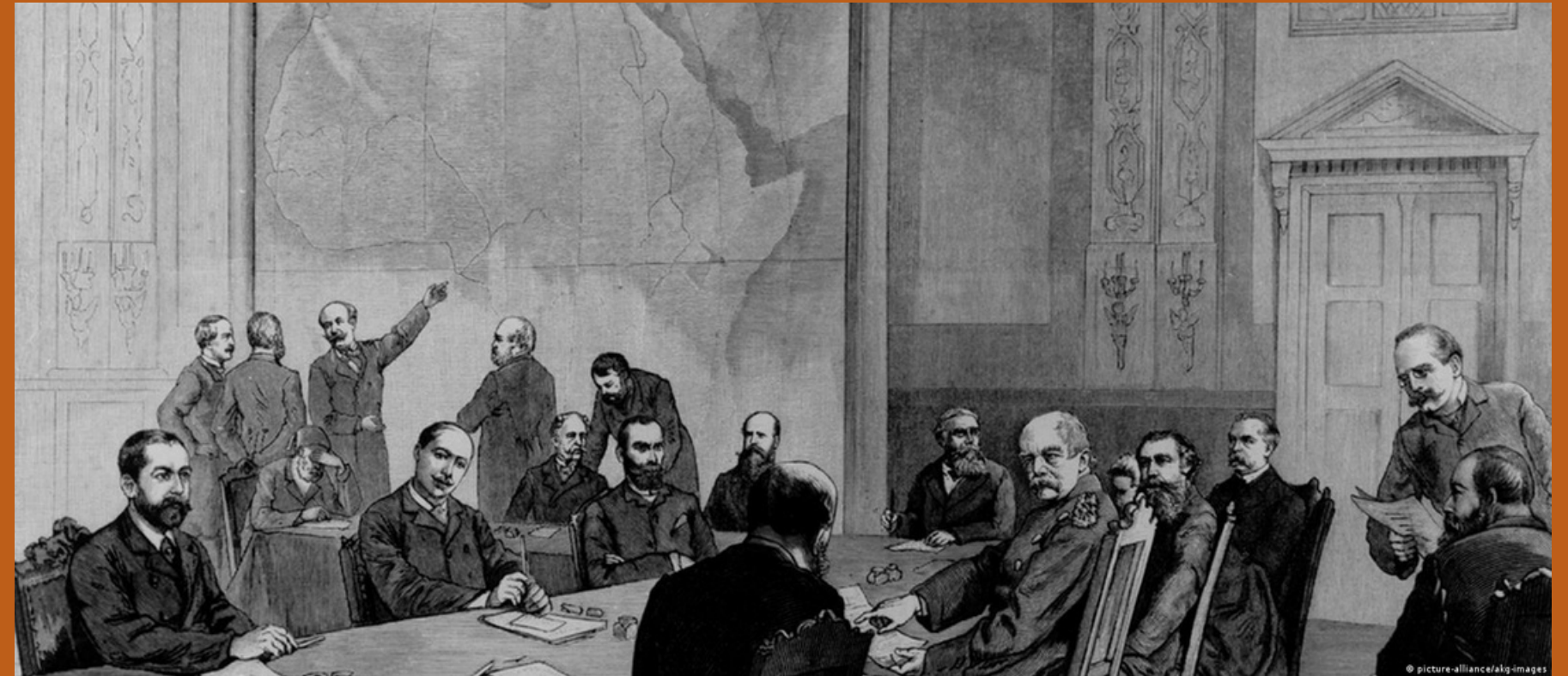
*Paul Freire (1921-1997), Pedagogy of the oppressed*

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# Colonizing Africa

- Berlin International Conference (1884-1885): European delegates "carved up" the African continent.
- Voracious exploitation of human and natural resources
- Systematic racist dehumanization, in theory and in practice
- Revolts, munitions, and a series of revolutionary forms of organisation on the part of the African natives
- Activist voices such as Mark Twain, Joseph Conrad, Booker T. Washington, and Bertrand Russell (Congo Reform Association) exposed these atrocities



# Decolonizing Africa

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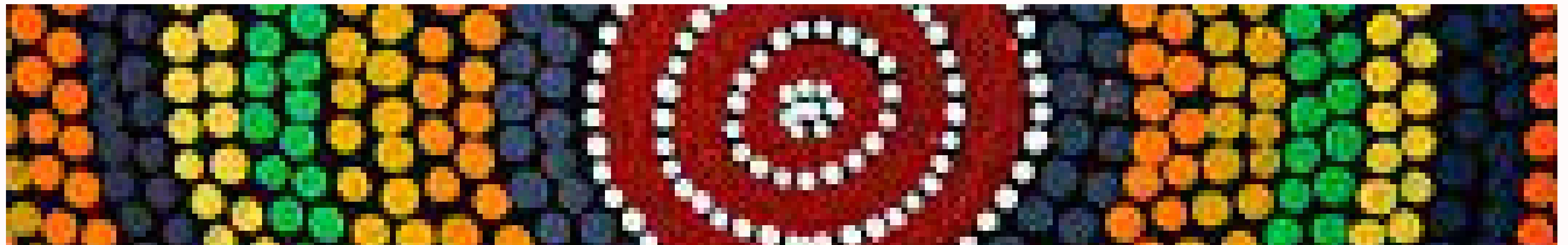
To deal with the "Savages, Victims, and Saviors" syndrome, (Makau wa Mutua, 2001), in human rights institutions

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Decolonize thinking and practices and develop a collective memory through research and analysis of historical events in order to prevent repetition of similar catastrophes for humanity.

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After independence, the archives of colonialism slowly began to open/local population was searching for their historical memories and origins after three centuries of colonial obscurantism.





# Reparations

- Reparation is, under international law, a type of compensation provided to victims of severe abuse and given by the responsible parties.
- Reparation is a multi-level process: monetary compensation and acknowledgement that the perpetrator acted wrongly, violated international law and thereby harmed the victim.
- The purpose of providing reparation is to make the victim whole again



A grayscale image of a marble bust of the ancient Greek historian Thucydides, showing him with a full beard and curly hair, looking slightly to the right.

# Reparations & IR

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In a verbal duel between the Athenians and Miles, Thucydides sets out the issue justice versus power, that encompasses the entire history of imperialism

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“...that according to human reason we can speak of justice (between states) when both parties have equal power” and “The strong (state) advances as his strength allows it and the weak one retreats as its weakness requires it to” (Thucydides History, Book V, 84-114)

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Value, progress, and justice were replaced by the need to safeguard dominance and security, and so Athens declined, by violating its own principles and multiplying its enemies



# Reparations & IR

- When reparation is not provided, it makes the victim live in two times, in the present and in the past. It contributes to the victim's continuing suffering /cycle of victimization/ permanent harm in the relation between perpetrator and victim.
- Providing reparations is an act of power and responsibility/ soft power vs hard power

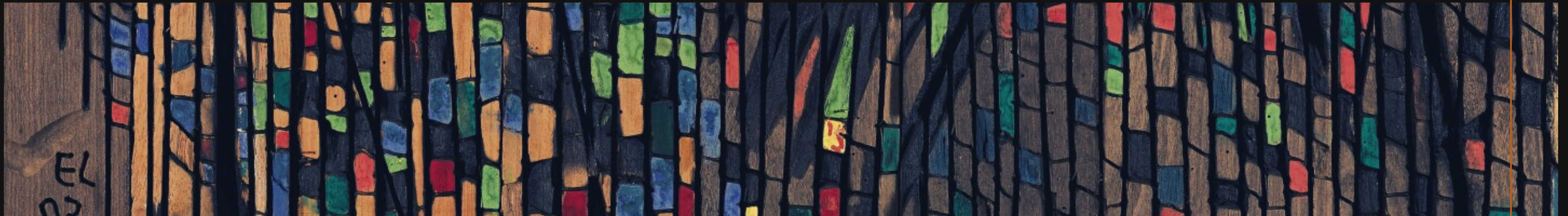


# Colonial reparations today

Norms change by time  
(ex.slavery)

The tragic event of George  
Floyd's death in 2020, reopened  
the issue of rectifying wrongs in  
history

—— The US agreed to compensate victims of slavery, while Germany officially  
recognized the massacre of tens of thousands of people in Namibia and funded  
community projects.



# Colonial reparations today

- Vindication of the victims
- Creation of a legal framework that makes human rights violations and military attacks a strategy that does not benefit the perpetrator
- Legal advocacy, political mobility and joint action in a spirit of universalism and solidarity, could be a constructive plan for reparation claims worldwide

Thank you for listening!



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## Images

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