



South African Coalition for Transitional Justice

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South African Coalition for Transitional Justice - Strategic Plan 2023 - 2025

Foreword

The South African Coalition for Transitional Justice (SACTJ) has reached an exciting moment in its history, having been granted seed funding from the Constitutionalism Fund in 2022-2023 and project funding from Open Society - Africa from 2023-2025. At this pivotal juncture, SACTJ members are deciding on the coalition's overall strategic mission for the next three years and how best to set up its structures to implement project work in an efficient, effective and sustainable way. This strategic plan is intended to be a living document. SACTJ will revisit and review this plan in 2024 and may revise it if necessary.

This strategic plan ensures that SACTJ will remain a leader in transitional justice in South Africa, in the region and on the continent. It is geared towards delivery of the reparations work funded by Open Society - Africa. At the same time, the plan will support SACTJ to continue to advocate across a broad range of transitional justice issues.

Our strategy involves building SACTJ's public face, so that we can communicate effectively and timeously with the public, civil society and government. This involves developing a communications strategy, including a website and social media presence. It also involves driving public education concerning transitional justice, so that we can engage a wider audience and especially younger generations as to what transitional justice is and why it matters.

SACTJ has been restructured to separate the operations and oversight functions of the organisation for increased transparency and accountability. This change allows for the development of a secretariat, directed by a part-time Executive Director who would run

the day to day activities of the coalition, with the assistance of the Administrative Coordinator, Finance Officer and any other staff that may be hired. This gives SACTJ increased operational capacity and strategic direction. The management committee has been replaced by a board. Unlike the management committee, the board is not involved in the operational aspects of SACTJ's work. Instead, it exercises a governance role, initially meeting once every two months and then possibly quarterly thereafter.

To achieve our goals, we must formalise our structures, as intended by the grant provided by the Constitutionalism Fund. We have completed our registration as an NPO with the Department for Social Development on 11 October. We are now in the process of registering with SARS as a public benefit organisation.

Ensuring the longevity and sustainability of SACTJ's work means we must turn our attention to fundraising. This will include both working with current donors to understand what they will need to see in order to extend or renew current grants, and submitting funding proposals to new donors.

Our vision:

A humane world in which the South African government and people, and humankind globally respect their transitional and transformative justice obligations, impunity is challenged and social harmony is achieved to ensure that violations never happen again.

Our mission:

To harness the collective skills, experience and expertise of our members in order to:

- *Advocate for and secure the rights of victims of apartheid-era violations including reparations and access to justice;*
- *Support efforts aimed at ensuring criminal accountability for apartheid era-crimes*
- *Hold the South African government accountable to their national and international obligations with regard to victims' rights as well as transitional and transformative justice*
- *Educate, inform and mobilise South African society to ensure their transitional justice rights are advocated for and defended*
- *Engage in and support transitional justice efforts globally*

About SACTJ

SACTJ is a member-based organisation. It began when a group of civil society organisations convened a loose association to respond to President Mbeki's proposal to pardon 149 offenders convicted of crimes which occurred during the Apartheid era. Ultimately, the proposal was struck down as unlawful. These organisations recognised the need for a collective effort to hold the South African government to account to its transitional justice obligations; particularly relating to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). This included further work on pardons, as well as prosecutions of apartheid-era human rights violations, disappearances, and reparations.

In 2011, the coalition was formalised through the development of a memorandum of understanding signed by the founding members: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI), Human Rights Media Centre (HRMC), Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), Khulumani Support Group (KSG), South African History Archive (SAHA), Trauma Centre for Victims of Violence and Torture. This continues to the present where the MOU is signed by new organisational and individual members of the coalition when they join.

Between 2011 to 2022, SACTJ conducted advocacy work on key issues relating to the unfinished business of the TRC. This work was undertaken in a voluntary capacity by members. Throughout this period, SACTJ met regularly through virtual meetings.

In 2022, SACTJ received funding from the Constitutionalism Fund to formalise its structures. It also opened a bank account. SACTJ will now take steps to register with the Department of Social Development as a non profit organisation on the basis of being a voluntary association with a constitution. In 2023, SACTJ received funding from the Open Society Foundation Africa to conduct project work on reparations. This fund is managed by FHR as the fiscal agent.

In March 2023, SACTJ hired an Administrative Coordinator who reports to the board. There are five committees which meet on an *ad hoc* basis to engage in research and advocacy around specific topics:

- Education Committee (new chair currently being decided)
- Reparations Committee chaired by Hugo van der Merwe
- Anti-torture and Disappearances Committee chaired by Shirley Gunn

- Apartheid Convention Committee & Accountability Committee chaired by Chris Gevers & Kataryzna Zdunczyk
- Economic Crimes Committee chaired by Open Secrets
- Communications Committee chaired by Jessie Waldman (Administrative Coordinator)

Our expertise

Our members bring a plethora of expertise in the transitional justice space. Our members are activists, academics, lawyers, investigative researchers, artists, and those working in the counselling and therapeutic space. Most of our members have been working on transitional justice issues for decades, and many were actively involved in the struggle for democracy.

SACTJ's expertise entails:

- Advocacy and dialogue with government and civil society
- Contributions to the academic field of transitional justice
- Legal research, analysis and litigation
- Communications, op-eds and investigative reporting
- Community activism
- Artistic engagement with transitional justice issues
- Community driven memorialization initiatives
- Therapeutic and counselling services to victims of human rights violations

What transitional justice means to SACTJ

Our strategic planning workshop identified an unmet need amongst members to identify a collective understanding of what the term transitional justice means, particularly organisational members whose respective mandates differ significantly. The diversity of our members mean that some are focussed on legal accountability, often engaging litigiously with the government. Some members engage with transitional justice largely in an academic context, whereas other members are focussed on service provision to victims, and occupy the therapeutic, healing and/or advocacy space. Others focus on reconciliation in a manner which entails on-going engagement with the government.

Whilst we should embrace the diversity of our membership in the knowledge that this makes us stronger, identifying a core consensus as to what transitional justice means to us as an organisation, is essential in order to take forward our mandate. This will assist us in understanding the core focus of our work. It will also form the basis upon which our communications strategy can be developed.

To arrive at a position of consensus, further work needs to be conducted on our understanding of what transitional justice means.

To remain relevant, we must continue to probe and discuss what we are attempting to achieve in our society with transitional and transformative justice. Conceptualising the vision of what we are hoping to achieve must be a key part of our work going forwards.

Strategic Objectives

1. Persuade, or failing that, compel the South African government to enact a workable policy on reparations
 - a. Conduct research and provincial consultations on reparations
 - b. Hold a national conference/symposium on reparations
 - c. Develop a draft policy on reparations
 - d. Investigate possible litigation against the government on reparations
2. Develop a visible presence in the public sphere
Through our advocacy and communications initiatives, SACTJ will develop into a responsive, influential and engaged actor on transitional justice issues.
3. Mobilize the population by facilitating and promoting dialogue and collective action to motivate for acknowledgement, redress, and reconciliation concerning the wrongs of the past.
4. Champion the work of our members
 - a. Publicise and advocate for the work being done by SACTJ members
 - b. Encourage and facilitate partnerships between our members within the transitional justice sector
 - c. Make our website a lively and dynamic platform which showcases the diverse work of our members
5. Communicate to the public what transitional justice is and why it matters
 - a. Conduct public education initiatives, particularly focussing on younger generations
 - b. Use innovative communication techniques to reach wider audiences

To achieve our strategic objectives, SACTJ will...

1. Maintain our registered status as an NPO with the Department of Social Development and register with the South African Revenue Service as a public benefit organisation.
2. Implement our new structure, which is a secretariat led by a part-time executive director, overseen by a board.
3. Create suitable structures to oversee the reparations project funded by OSF-A and contract staff to coordinate this.
4. Convene and engage membership through committee work, general meetings and AGMs.
5. Develop a communications strategy that includes:
 - Regularly updated website
 - Social media presence
 - Press release approval policy
 - Targets for op-eds, press releases and online engagement
6. Celebrate the 30th year of democracy (2024) with an event and advocacy activities.
7. Develop evidence-based positions on key transitional justice issues and communicate these via government consultation responses, press releases, op-eds, social media, engaging in stakeholder events and workshops, holding webinars and other advocacy and communications opportunities.
8. Join member organisations such as the Just Detention Forum, Pan-African Reparations Initiative (PARI), African Transitional Justice hub, African Transitional Justice Research Network, and contribute to African Union work on transitional justice to widen our reach and build relationships with regional partners.
9. Develop robust accounting and reporting systems to meet donor requirements.
10. Fundraise to engage in programme activities that are as yet unfunded and to secure the sustainability of the organisation.

Our principles

The goal of these principles is to improve the effectiveness of SACTJ's work;

- **Engaged:** We participate in public dialogue on key transitional justice issues.
- **Active:** We respond timeously to key transitional justice issues when they arise.
- **Victim-centred:** Through our collective voice, we aim to give a platform for victims of Apartheid-era human rights violations to be heard.
- **Human rights orientated:** The rights enshrined in the South African Bill of Rights and international human rights law underlie and inform our work.
- **Evidence-based:** Our research outputs are rigorous, draw on the expertise of members and survivors, are of the highest quality and inform our work.
- **Member-led:** The majority of the Coalition's work is conducted and driven by its members.
- **Organised and accountable:** We will consolidate our committees and ensure agreed tasks are acted upon.

Our values

- **Collaboration:** We harness our collective strength as a coalition to take our work forwards.
- **Democracy:** We are a democratic organisation, deriving our legitimacy from our members.
- **Accountability:** We are accountable to our members and to our donors.
- **Integrity:** We adopt transparent and robust reporting procedures with respect to all areas of our work.
- **Transformation:** We are committed to supporting South Africa's shift towards inclusive growth and development.
- **Anti-oppression:** We recognise the legacy of Apartheid that exists within our society, our work aims to mitigate these effects and contribute towards equalising the imbalances within our communities.
- **Forward-looking:** We aspire to reach young people and ignite a passion for transitional and transformative justice.
- **Ubuntu:** We hold a shared belief in community, connectedness, and the inextricable bond of humanity.