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Is World Government Possible?

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Abstract

This paper critically interrogates the concept of world government through an African philosophical lens, contending that while the idea of a unified global political authority has been historically valorised as a solution to international conflict, inequality, and fragmentation, it remains ethically untenable without prior global justice. Drawing on postcolonial African humanism and the principles of restorative justice, the study contends that unresolved historical injustices—particularly slavery, colonialism, institutional racism, and genocide—compromise the moral viability and practical legitimacy of any proposed world government. These historical atrocities have fractured the ideal of a common humanity, thereby rendering global unity a premature ambition without prior ethical reconciliation. The paper critiques classical and contemporary arguments for world government and counters with a proposal for a World Tribunal of Truth and Reconciliation. This tribunal, conceived as a non-punitive, restorative mechanism, would facilitate global acknowledgement of past injustices, promote truth-telling, and recommend reparative actions. By grounding its arguments in African philosophical traditions such as Ubuntu, the paper challenges Eurocentric frameworks that have historically underpinned notions of global governance. It further argues that meaningful political integration must be preceded by moral integration—a shared commitment to historical truth, human equality, and collective responsibility. Without such foundational justice, a world government risks reproducing the very hierarchies and exclusions it purports to overcome. The work thus contributes a critical voice to global political theory, proposing that the path toward legitimate world governance lies not through coercive unification, but through deliberate, historically conscious efforts at ethical reconstitution. In doing so, the paper calls for a reorientation of global political imagination—one that sees truth, memory, and reconciliation not as distractions from progress, but as its indispensable preconditions.

Keywords: World Government; African Philosophy; Historical Injustice; Global Governance; Truth and Reconciliation

Introduction

The notion of a *world government*—the entire human race united under a single political authority—has long captured the imagination of philosophers and politicians. From Dante Alighieri's *Monarchia* in the 14th century to Immanuel Kant's 18th-century vision of a cosmopolitan federation, thinkers have debated the idea of a world state. In the modern era,

proponents ranging from Abbe de Saint-Pierre and H. G. Wells to Albert Einstein have advocated some form of global government. Contemporary political theorists such as Luis Cabrera, Andrew Kuper, Torbjörn Tännsjö, and Jürgen Habermas have revisited these ideas in light of current global challenges. Historical records also show recurring public enthusiasm for world government. For example, Thomas Weiss notes that in the 1940s the idea was so prevalent in the United States that Congress even considered a resolution supporting United Nations reform toward a world federation (Weiss 254). Early post-war optimism persisted elsewhere: Harold K. Jacobson observed that the United Nations offices in Geneva were once decorated with inscriptions envisioning "the entire world being combined in one political unit" (qtd. in Weiss 259). These examples illustrate a longstanding desire for a political order transcending nation-states.

Yet despite its enduring appeal, the idea of world government remains deeply controversial. This paper argues that the feasibility and fairness of world government are fundamentally challenged by historical experiences of injustice, particularly from an African perspective. In the aftermath of colonialism and other "legendary crimes against humanity," many communities question whether a common global governance can be just or stable without first addressing the wrongs of the past. The guiding premise of this study is that certain horrific events in human history have severed the bonds of common humanity in ways that make a world state ethically untenable unless those bonds are repaired. In other words, there are *ethical preconditions* for world government that have yet to be met. To explore this premise, the paper adopts a postcolonial African humanist lens, examining how the legacy of African modernity—marked by slavery, colonial subjugation, and racial ideologies—shapes scepticism toward a one-world order.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. First, I outline the theoretical framework that informs this analysis, grounded in African philosophy and a restorative justice approach. Next, I *rehearse the major arguments in favour of world government* as presented by its proponents, and consider counter-arguments. I then examine *the idea of world government through the "tragedy of world injustice"*—cataloguing key historical injustices that undermine the ideal of one humanity. Following that, I discuss *the "will for world justice"* as a necessary precursor to global governance, proposing the establishment of a World Tribunal of Truth and Reconciliation. This Tribunal is envisioned as a mechanism for truth-telling, accountability, and reparations at a global scale, addressing the ethical deficits identified. Finally, the conclusion reflects on the implications of this critique and proposal for the broader quest of humanity to "grow politically" toward a more just world order.

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by a theoretical framework combining postcolonial African philosophy and the principles of restorative justice. At its core, the analysis is informed by an African humanist perspective—one that emphasizes the dignity of all humanity (often expressed through the concept of *Ubuntu*, or shared humanity) and interrogates the legacy of modernity from the standpoint of formerly colonized and oppressed peoples. African philosophers have long critiqued Western Enlightenment thought for its role in justifying domination; for example, Mogobe B. Ramose's work on *Ubuntu* highlights how the colonial "right of conquest" supplanted mutual recognition with violence and coercion. Such insights form an intellectual lens through which this paper questions the moral foundations of any proposed world state.

In tandem with this postcolonial lens, the paper employs the concepts of truth-telling and reconciliation drawn from restorative justice traditions. Notably, the experience of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (and similar commissions in other countries) provides a model for how societies can address historical injustices through acknowledgment and healing rather than retribution. This approach is extended here to a global scale. The assumption is that establishing a just and sustainable world order requires confronting past atrocities openly and empathetically. The theoretical framework thus posits that *ethical restoration*—through truth, forgiveness, and reparative action—is a prerequisite for genuine

political unity. It challenges purely legalistic or power-driven visions of world government by asserting that ethical integration (a shared understanding of justice and humanity) must precede or at least accompany political integration.

Using this framework, the analysis will evaluate arguments for world government not only in terms of political practicality but also through the moral-historical lens of those who have suffered under imperialism, racism, and other global injustices. It asks: *Can a world government be legitimate and stable without first reconciling the diverse memories and moral claims of the world's peoples?* The African philosophical perspective, with its stress on community and historical redress, provides a critical standpoint for this inquiry. It insists that any push toward global governance be rooted in a truthful account of history and a commitment to rectify the lingering effects of that history. This guiding framework shapes the subsequent critique and the proposal for a World Tribunal of Truth and Reconciliation as an institutional embodiment of global restorative justice.

Rehearsing the Arguments For and Against World Government

What do advocates of world government argue, and what challenges do their arguments face? This section maps out three major arguments traditionally made in favour of establishing a world government, and it also foreshadows the counterpoints that question those arguments.

First, proponents contend that the current system of independent nation-states cannot adequately address global problems in an age of deep interconnection. The forces of globalization—unprecedented human communication, economic interdependence, and transnational challenges—allegedly demand a single world authority for effective governance. A world government, it is argued, would be better equipped to tackle issues that transcend borders, such as climate change, wars, refugee crises, pandemics, and extreme poverty. Torbjörn Tännsjö, for example, supports this position by asserting that only a world government could end the scourge of war and coordinate responses to ecological disaster. The underlying logic is that problems which are global in scope require a unified global policy and that a world-state could enforce peace and collective action where fragmented states have failed.

Second, many theorists argue that a world government is necessary to achieve a just distribution of the world's resources. Under the current state system, resources and wealth are often monopolized by a handful of powerful nations or elites, while large portions of humanity suffer deprivation. This disparity is perpetuated by the sanctity of national sovereignty and the lack of any higher authority to check injustices between states. Advocates like Daniele Archibugi and Luigi ^1 Marchetti contend that subordinating nation-states to a global authority could redirect the benefits of humanity's resources toward the common good. For instance, a world government might enact policies to eradicate hunger and extreme inequality by overriding selfish national agendas. Marchetti (2008) specifically argues that only a world government could ensure a fair distribution of global wealth and prevent the state-based hoarding that leaves billions in misery. In this view, world government is synonymous with global justice — it is seen as the institutional solution to international inequality and the guardian of human rights on a planetary scale.

Third, supporters point to the emergence of alternative governance structures beyond the nation-state as evidence that the world is already moving toward a form of global polity. International organizations (like the United Nations), transnational NGOs, regional unions, and various treaties form what can be called a "neo-state paradigm" or nascent world authority. These institutions, while not a world government per se, demonstrate the practicality of cooperation above the nation-state level. Proponents suggest that a formal world government could coordinate and integrate these disparate agencies and regimes, making global governance more coherent and effective. In other words, since we already have *de facto* elements of global governance (in fields such as trade regulation, international law, and human rights monitoring), we should *de jure* consolidate them into a single world state for

efficiency and clarity. This argument implies that world government is the natural next step in political evolution, streamlining what is currently a patchwork of international arrangements.

These arguments in favour of world government—global problem-solving, equitable resource distribution, and the maturation of international institutions—make a compelling case on the surface. Indeed, given rampant issues like terrorism, climate change, and persistent conflicts, the call for some form of world authority is understandable. However, even as these arguments highlight the shortcomings of the current world order, they often ignore deeper issues that underlie those global problems. Before embracing the world government solution, it is crucial to examine the roots of humanity's divisions and crises. The following analysis raises critical questions: Do the same historical forces that produced our flawed nation-state system simply disappear under a world government, or would they carry over? Would a world government truly operate on new ethical principles, or would it inherit the injustices and power imbalances of the past?

For instance, proponents assume that a world government would automatically uphold *universal* notions of rights and law superior to those of any single state. But one must ask *whose* notions of rights and law would prevail. The modern state system itself emerged through philosophies and ideologies—such as the "right of conquest"—that justified domination and inequality. If those ideologies remain unexamined, a world government might simply globalize the injustices of its constituent states. What would concepts like *sovereignty, authority, rights,* or *citizenship* mean under a world state, especially for communities historically marginalized? Without a critical rethinking, there is a risk that a world government could replicate or even exacerbate the very problems it aims to solve.

In summary, while the idea of world government is driven by noble aspirations for peace and justice, any advocacy must contend with the historical and moral baggage that humanity brings to the table. The next section delves into that baggage by exploring the tragic record of world-scale injustices. This is an essential step in our inquiry: it identifies why so many people, particularly in formerly colonized regions, are sceptical of one-world schemes and what it would take to overcome that scepticism.

The Idea of World Government and the Tragedy of World Injustice

If the ideal of a world government presumes a single human community, we must confront a sobering question: *What is the state of the human community today, given our history?* This section argues that a series of profound historical evils—what I term the "tragedy of world injustice"—has fractured humanity's sense of oneness. These injustices present formidable obstacles to the realization of a legitimate world government. In particular, four interrelated atrocities of modern history are examined: (a) the institutionalization of racism, (b) the trans-Atlantic slave trade, (c) colonialism, and (d) genocide. Each represents a case of humanity turning violently against itself on a global scale, and each has left lasting scars on the collective human psyche and the prospects for global unity.

To frame the discussion, let us clarify *world injustice* as used here. *World injustice* refers to egregious violations of human rights and dignity that have impacted vast portions of humanity across generations, to the extent that they distort the very idea of a common human identity. These are not isolated incidents but systemic and far-reaching wrongs—often entwined with the processes of modernity—that continue to influence international relations and intergroup perceptions. They challenge any naive notion that the world's people could seamlessly come together under one government, *as if* history had no bearing on trust and solidarity.

(a) Institutionalized Racism and the Denial of Human Unity

The first great injustice is the institutionalization and intellectual legitimization of racism during the rise of the modern West. In the course of empire-building and the Enlightenment, influential thinkers produced and propagated theories of racial hierarchy that deemed some

human groups intrinsically inferior. These ideas were not fringe; they became embedded in reputable literature, philosophy, and science, effectively *industrializing* racism by reproducing it through generations. Libraries around the world still house volumes in which esteemed figures define non-European peoples as less than fully human.

For example, the Scottish philosopher David Hume wrote in 1753: *"I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white… Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men"* (qtd. in Biakolo 2). Immanuel Kant, a towering figure of the Enlightenment, similarly dismissed an African man's intelligence solely on the basis of his race: *"This man was black from head to toe, a clear proof that what he said was stupid"* (qtd. in Eze 215). The French philosopher Montesquieu mused that it was hard to believe God "would place a soul, especially a good soul, in such a black ugly body" (qtd. in Ogude 109). Perhaps most scathing, the German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel described Africans as *"natural man in his completely wild and untamed state… nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character"*, lacking consciousness of self or capacity for historical development (qtd. in Odhiambo 5–6).

These pernicious views — that Africans or other non-Europeans are inferior, stupid, soulless, or savage — were not only recorded as personal opinions but woven into the very fabric of Western intellectual thought. They provided a pseudo-scientific and moral justification for slavery, colonial conquest, and apartheid. Crucially, they also planted enduring doubts about the possibility of a *single human community*. How can all peoples unite under one government when significant traditions of thought have denied the full humanity of some? The legacy of these writings means that world government advocates must answer a chilling question: On what terms do we unite, when some of the most "civilized" voices in history have excluded large segments of humanity from equal respect?

There have been efforts to challenge and change these narratives. Over the past century, the establishment of African studies centres, the work of African and diasporic intellectuals, and critical scholarship have built counter-narratives affirming the equal humanity of all races. Philosophers and historians from formerly colonized societies have engaged in *epistemic disobedience*, rejecting Europe's self-serving descriptions of them. However, these efforts, while growing, remain overshadowed by the deep-rooted biases still present in global culture. The intellectual infrastructure of racism—hundreds of years of books, art, and ingrained assumptions—does not vanish easily. James Watson's infamous 2007 remark that Africans are inherently less intelligent than Europeans (echoing a long-discredited racial IQ thesis) shows how resilient these ideas are. Such claims, aside from being scientifically baseless, reinforce dangerous myths of hierarchy that make a mockery of the idea of a *unified human polity*. If parts of the human family are viewed as permanently "lesser," how could a world government avoid becoming an institutionalization of that prejudice? It would risk creating a global apartheid rather than true unity.

Furthermore, the ethical consequences of entrenched racism are profound. It breeds a world of inequality and dominance, where empathy extends only to those deemed similar, and others are subconsciously regarded as expendable or second-class. In such a world, the "ambition to dominate" often overwhelms the desire to cooperate. One need only observe stark contemporary realities: in some affluent societies, more money is spent on gourmet pet food than many families elsewhere have for any food; or consider that people may lavish affection on animals while harbouring disdain for fellow humans of a different skin colour. These patterns reflect a hierarchy of value that is fundamentally incompatible with the premise of world government — which assumes a basic equality of all peoples. Until the *ideology of racial prejudice* is confronted and dismantled, any attempt at world governance would be built on a rotten foundation. Thus, addressing institutionalized racism is not a side issue but a central precondition for the idea of one world polity. A true world government would require a world where no group's humanity is in question.

(b) The Historical Injustice of the Slave Trade

The second monumental injustice is the trans-Atlantic slave trade, which constituted one of the most extreme violations of human rights in history. Over roughly three and a half centuries (1500s to 1800s), millions of Africans were violently uprooted, treated as chattel, and transported under horrific conditions to the Americas. This trauma was not just a crime against the individuals enslaved; it was a crime against the very idea of humanity as a family. The scale of the atrocity is almost unfathomable. Historical records indicate that about 12.5 million African men, women, and children were forced onto slave ships between 1526 and 1867, and roughly 10.7 million survived the brutal Middle Passage to reach the Americas. In other words, approximately *1.8 million souls perished* during the voyages alone, their lives extinguished as a direct result of human greed and cruelty. Some estimates, including deaths from the wars and raids used to capture people, put the toll as high as 20 million lives lost when the entire system of the slave trade is considered.

This mass enslavement and its accompanying atrocities inflicted deep and enduring wounds. The trans-Atlantic slave trade was not merely forced labour; it was the systematic dehumanization of an entire race. Enslaved Africans were chained and treated literally like cargo or animals, stripped of all rights. Families were torn apart, languages and cultures suppressed, and countless communities in Africa were destabilized or destroyed. The ripple effects are still felt today in the form of racial inequalities and intergenerational trauma in the African diaspora and on the African continent.

For the purposes of this discussion, the significance of slavery lies in its legacy of distrust and moral rupture. The descendants of those who were enslaved and those who enslaved (or benefited from it) carry very different historical memories. To propose that all should now come together under one government without addressing this legacy is to ask people to forget an injustice of world-altering proportions. How "one" can humanity feel when a significant subset was, within historical memory, subjected to such abject oppression by others? The scars of slavery have translated into persistent racial injustice and socio-economic disparities. In global forums, calls for reparations for slavery indicate that this history is not settled; it remains an open account. Thus, the idea of world government runs up against the unanswered moral questions of the slave trade. Without reconciliation and some form of justice for this brutal past, any global political unity would rest on a hollow claim of solidarity.

(c) The Injustice of Colonialism

Following the end of the major slave trades, another vast injustice took shape: colonialism. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the imperial powers of Europe formalized their conquest and division of large parts of Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the Pacific. Colonialism was essentially the political subjugation and economic exploitation of one people by another, justified by doctrines of superiority similar to those discussed above. The "Scramble for Africa," for instance, was famously cemented at the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, where European powers literally partitioned Africa into colonies with scant regard for indigenous nations or cultures. By the early 20th century, nearly the entire African continent, much of South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and the Caribbean were under some form of foreign colonial rule.

The impacts of colonialism were enormous: land and resources were expropriated, local industries and governance structures dismantled, and traditional societies were often restructured to serve the colonizer's interests. Colonial regimes frequently ruled through violence and coercion, as well as ideological control. As Frantz Fanon powerfully observed, colonial rule created a world divided in two – the colonizer and the colonized, separated by entrenched systems of repression. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon describes the colonial world as one where, "*It is the policemen and the soldier who are the official go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler's authority*", and where the native sector is a "starved" ghetto kept under perpetual subjugation (Fanon 29–31). The colonized were treated as inferiors in their own homeland, taught to feel envy and awe for the colonizer's world while being denied its

benefits. Fanon lays bare the psychological and material brutality of this system: "*You are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich,*" he notes sarcastically of the colonial mind-set (Fanon 30).

For the colonized peoples, colonialism was a multi-generational trauma. It was not just the loss of sovereignty; it was the denigration of their cultures and the internalization, in many cases, of a sense of inferiority. Although the era of formal colonial empires largely ended by the mid-20th century, with many nations gaining independence, the after-effects linger in the form of neo-colonial economic patterns, unstable state boundaries, and cultural disruption.

In considering world government, colonialism presents a direct challenge: Can there be a legitimate world authority when much of the world directly experienced the abuse of authority under colonial rule? From the perspective of formerly colonized nations, any world government might appear as merely *colonialism writ large*—a return to domination by powerful interests, but now on a global scale. This suspicion is reinforced by the lack of genuine remorse or acknowledgment from some former colonial powers. Tellingly, a YouGov poll in Britain in 2016 found that 44% of British respondents were proud of Britain's colonial history, while only 21% regretted it. Such attitudes indicate that the injustices of colonialism have not been fully recognized by its beneficiaries. For those who suffered under it, this lack of acknowledgment is a sign that the world has not yet achieved the moral consensus needed for a common government. The *psychology of supremacy* that underpinned colonialism must be dismantled; otherwise, any global government could perpetuate the same structural violence. As this paper claims, the idea of world government "*cannot be found worthy*" unless the historical injustice of colonialism is honestly confronted and redressed.

(d) Genocide and the Question of Human Oneness

The fourth obstacle to world government is the grim record of genocide in human history, especially in the modern era. Genocide—the deliberate attempt to annihilate an entire people defined by nationality, ethnicity, race, or religion—is often seen as the ultimate crime against humanity. The Holocaust of European Jewry during World War II, in which about six million Jews were systematically murdered, stands as the most notorious example. In the wake of that atrocity, the world community, through the United Nations Genocide Convention of 1948, vowed "Never again." And yet, since 1945, genocides have recurred in almost every corner of the globe. From the killing fields of Cambodia in the 1970s (where roughly one quarter of the population perished under the Khmer Rouge), to the massacres in Rwanda in 1994 (where an estimated 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered in 100 days), to the ethnic cleansings in the former Yugoslavia (early 1990s), and many other instances, genocide has proven to be a recurring human phenomenon. Indeed, scholars have identified at least seventeen genocides worldwide in the decades after the Holocaust, a shocking tally that underscores how fragile our commitment to human unity truly is.

What genocide signifies for our discussion is the extreme failure of humanity to recognize itself as one. In genocidal ideology, the targeted group is typically dehumanized—described as vermin, disease, or evil that must be exterminated. This level of hatred and othering is the very antithesis of the empathy and solidarity required for a world government to function. Every genocide not only devastates the specific community attacked but also *poisons the well* of global human relations. It creates deep fissures of fear, trauma, and mistrust between groups that can persist for generations. For instance, the effects of the Rwandan genocide still influence regional politics and inter-ethnic relations in Central Africa today. Similarly, the memory of the Biafran genocide against the Igbo in Nigeria (1966–1970) and other lesser-known genocides remains a wound for those communities.

From a moral standpoint, the recurrence of genocide indicates that the notion of a common humanity is far from realized. If within individual countries or regions, people could so brutally annihilate their neighbours, what guarantees do we have that a single world state would be immune to similar destructive impulses on an even larger scale? Detractors might argue that a powerful world government could prevent genocide by intervening early

anywhere in the world. However, the counter-argument—and the one this paper leans on—is that unless the underlying hatreds and prejudices are addressed, a world government might simply have the means to commit even larger genocides should a faction gain control of global power. In a scenario where the wrong ideology takes hold at the centre, "*mega-political machinery*" could facilitate horrors even beyond those history has witnessed.

In summary, the tragedy of world injustice — spanning institutional racism, slavery, colonialism, and genocide — presents a sobering reality check for the idea of world government. These injustices have cultivated enduring burdens of memory (trauma, grievance, and shame), crises of identity and pride (feelings of inferiority or superiority among different groups), and pernicious doctrines of inequality. Together, they raise a fundamental challenge: *How can humanity form a single political community when its members are divided by such heavy legacies of harm?* Any serious advocacy for world government must first grapple with this question. The next section of this paper argues that acknowledging and addressing these historical injustices is a non-negotiable precursor to any feasible or just world government project. Only through a process of truth and reconciliation on a global scale can the idea of "one world" move from myth to possibility.

The Idea of World Government and the Will for World Justice

In light of the many challenges outlined above, it becomes evident that the desire for a world government is not merely a political or administrative question—it is profoundly an ethical and historical question. World government, if it is ever to be realized in a meaningful way, must be built on the firm ground of *world justice*. This section posits that humanity needs to cultivate a collective will for truth and justice that matches or even precedes the will for political unification. In other words, before asking "How do we govern the world as one?", we should ask "How do we *heal* the world as one?"

Reflecting on the injustices discussed, at least three critical issues emerge that a global community would need to resolve:

(a) The burden of memory: The pains and grievances caused by historical evils are not easily erased. Victim communities carry the memory of atrocities like slavery, colonization, or genocide as part of their identity, and these memories can shape perceptions for generations. Empathic transfer of trauma means that even those who did not directly experience an event (younger generations) can inherit an emotional and psychological imprint of it. Just as humanity celebrates great achievements of the past, it also bears shame and sorrow for past horrors. Ignoring these memories "in favour of world government" would be an exercise in dangerous abstraction—it would ask people to suppress real, lived history for an idealized unity. Such suppression is neither ethical nor sustainable. If world government is to be more than a facade, it must involve a collective confrontation with history: acknowledging wrongs, honouring the suffering of victims, and ensuring that these memories are respected and addressed. Only then can humanity be "at home with herself," to use an expression meaning at peace internally, which is a prerequisite for any stable political union.

(b) The question of pride and identity: The injustices have also wounded the pride and sense of identity of both the oppressed and the oppressors. On one side, peoples who were subjugated (through racism, slavery, etc.) have had to reclaim their worth and humanity. On the other, groups that benefited from historical privilege have often downplayed or rationalized the past to maintain a positive self-image. For a global community to cohere, there must be a levelling of these historical narratives—a mutual recognition of truth that allows every group to have dignity without false pride. As one scholar, J. O. Mbanefo, noted, the initial encounter between Europe and Africa set a tone of imbalance that still affects the African psyche in its relations with the West. Likewise, the Nigerian philosopher and critic Chinweizu has referred to the long period of Black subjugation as the *Maafa* (a Swahili term for "great disaster"), arguing that the psychological legacy of this era must be overcome for Black people to fully regain their agency. These insights suggest that *identity healing* is needed. World government cannot be a gloss that papers over feelings of inferiority or superiority.

Instead, it should arise from a global culture where each people's history is validated and where committing injustice is universally seen as shameful rather than heroic. If, for instance, colonial conquests are still celebrated by some descendants of colonizers, as the British poll indicated, then the world has not yet reached the ethical cohesion required for a joint government. A change in mind-set is required: pride must come from having transcended past injustices, not from clinging to them.

(c) The principle of human equality: Finally, and most importantly, the historical horrors we reviewed were all predicated on a gross denial of human equality. A world government, by definition, implies that all human beings stand on equal footing as citizens of the world, with equal rights and value. Yet the traditions of slavery, colonialism, racism, and even genocide were built on the opposite notion—that some humans are less worthy than others. Slavery treated people as property, colonialism treated nations as children or possessions, racism treated persons as biologically unequal, and genocide treated entire groups as expendable. These are radical negations of equality. Therefore, a central challenge is whether we can purge those notions completely from the global consciousness. The persistence of racial thinking or xenophobic nationalism even today shows that the task is unfinished. To truly embrace a world government, humanity must universally affirm a concept of sameness and equality that leaves no room for the old assumptions. Philosophically, it means we need a new social contract for the world that refutes the "might makes right" and "conqueror's right" ideologies that have been too prevalent. The promise of a world state would ring hollow if any subset of humanity believes that the state sees them as lesser—or if any subset aims to dominate the rest. Thus, establishing *real* equality (social, political, and economic) is both the goal and the precondition of world government.

In light of these considerations, this paper argues that the next crucial step toward world government is not drafting a global constitution or building a global army, but fostering a global movement of truth and reconciliation. Specifically, I propose the creation of a World Tribunal of Truth and Reconciliation. This would be a *global institution dedicated to uncovering truth, acknowledging wrongdoing, and facilitating restorative justice among all peoples of the world*. The concept takes inspiration from national truth and reconciliation commissions, such as those in post-apartheid South Africa or, more recently, in The Gambia, which have sought to heal nations after periods of intense conflict or oppression. A world tribunal would operate at the international level, providing a platform for any group—ethnic, racial, national, or otherwise—that has been the victim of historic injustice to voice their experiences and seek acknowledgement and redress from those responsible.

The essence of the proposed World Tribunal would be *open confession and acknowledgement* of historical wrongs. It is not envisioned as a judicial court to punish crimes (many perpetrators are long dead, and the aim is not retribution). Rather, it is conceived as a *"court of truth and reconciliation,"* oriented toward restorative justice. In practical terms, such a tribunal could document cases of injustices (like those four outlined above and others), formally recognize the suffering caused, and recommend measures for reparation and restoration where possible. Reparations need not be strictly financial; they could include official apologies, public memorials, educational reforms, return of looted artifacts, or developmental support to affected communities. The overall goal is to cleanse the wounds of history to the extent possible, so that humanity can move forward with a shared understanding.

Importantly, numerous precedents and building blocks for this idea already exist, though on a smaller scale. The Nuremberg Trials after World War II, while punitive, set a precedent for international accountability for gross crimes. Truth commissions in various countries have shown the value of narrative and acknowledgement. The ongoing discourse on reparations for slavery and colonialism indicates a growing global awareness that these issues must be addressed. The proposed world tribunal would aggregate and elevate these efforts to the global stage. It would require, of course, an unprecedented level of international cooperation and trust in the process. Selecting impartial and respected members of such a tribunal, perhaps elders and moral leaders from different continents, would be crucial. So too would be ensuring that it is not dominated by any one power's interests. These are challenges, to be sure,

but not insurmountable ones—especially given that the alternative is to proceed toward global integration without healing, which could be catastrophic.

The establishment of a World Tribunal of Truth and Reconciliation would signal that humanity is serious about moral unity, not just political unity. It would institutionalize the principle that *justice and truth are fundamental to global order*. Through this mechanism, humanity can work to answer: What can be forgiven? What can be repaired? What lessons must be immortalized so that "never again" is not just a slogan? Admittedly, not every crime can be fully repaired; the dead cannot be brought back to life, cultures irreversibly lost cannot be fully restored. But the very process of *attempting* to make amends can transform relationships and consciousness. It can turn the page from denial or indifference to responsibility and empathy.

Only after undertaking such a reparative journey can the idea of world government be encouraged in good conscience. If humanity were to reach a point where the major grievances of the past are openly acknowledged and significant steps taken to address them, then a world government would stand on a much more legitimate footing. Its authority would rest on shared values and mutual respect, rather than the might or dominance of some over others. In essence, world justice prepares the ground for world governance. The argument of this paper is that until such preparation is made, pushing for a world government puts the cart before the horse.

This vision of global truth and reconciliation is ambitious. Critics may call it utopian or impractical. However, it is grounded in a sober assessment of the alternative: a world government attempted without healing and justice would likely either fall apart or become an instrument of tyranny. In fact, many smaller-scale efforts at unity (for example, federations or unions of diverse groups) have failed when underlying historical disputes were not resolved. The stakes are even higher on the global level. Thus, as humanity contemplates its political future, the will for world justice must be nurtured as vigorously as any plans for world government.

Conclusion

Humanity's political evolution is at a crossroads. On one hand, the mounting global crises of the present era seem to demand greater unity and cooperation—an impulse that gives life to the idea of world government. On the other hand, the deep-seated divisions and traumas of human history impose caution, reminding us that unity imposed without justice can lead to new forms of oppression. This paper has examined the idea of world government through the lens of African experiences and historical injustices, arguing that a *truly humane and sustainable world government is only possible if preceded by a process of global truth-telling and reconciliation*. In summary, while the *concept* of a world government is noble and even alluring—conjuring images of a "one humanity" living in peace—the *reality* of achieving it is fraught with challenges that are not merely technical or political, but profoundly moral. The analysis presented highlights that "world government" cannot be separated from "world history." To build a common future, we must first come to terms with our uncommon past. The proposal for a World Tribunal of Truth and Reconciliation is offered as a concrete step in that direction, aiming to cultivate the ethical foundation upon which any global political structure should stand.

The implications of this critique are significant for scholars and advocates of global governance. Rather than viewing historical injustice as a tangential issue or an unfortunate backdrop, it should be treated as central to the discourse on world governance. This perspective urges a shift in focus: from designing ideal institutions in abstract (a world parliament, a world executive, etc.) to engaging in the hard work of restorative justice that would make those institutions viable in practice. It is a call for interdisciplinary engagement—political theorists, historians, philosophers, and practitioners of peace and justice must work together. The challenge is to transform the lessons of history into the building blocks of a better political order. Finally, this paper's exploration is grounded in the belief that

confronting unpleasant truths is not a deterrent to progress, but rather the surest path to genuine progress. By clearly identifying the problems that plague the idea of world government, we do not abandon the ideal; instead, we make it more attainable, because we can then seek authentic solutions. If the world can develop the collective will to justice, as argued, then perhaps in time it can earn the *reward of unity*. Only when we have reconciled with the past will we be ready to embark on the political project that so many have imagined across the centuries. In the hopeful words often attributed to Martin Luther King Jr., "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Bending that arc deliberately, through institutions like a World Truth and Reconciliation Tribunal, may be the key to finally realizing the age-old dream of a united human polity—a world government that is not only possible, but one that is just and enduring.

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