

German Colonialism and the Law

International Conference in Windhoek, Namibia, April 2025

*** Call for Papers ***

Between 1884 and 1919, the German Empire included overseas territories (‘Schutzgebiete’) in Africa, Oceania and Asia which were subjugated to colonial rule. Only recently a debate about Germany’s colonial past and the (largely absent) response to colonial injustice has emerged in politics, society, and academia. The topic (‘culture of remembrance’) has also been prominently anchored in the coalition agreement of the current German Government. In an attempt to understand and address ‘colonial legacy’, the Government has set itself the goal of advancing the ‘coming to terms’ with German colonial history, overcoming colonial continuities, establishing equal partnerships and initiating independent scientific studies.

So far, the debate has mainly focused on restitution, reparations, the return of human remains, the removal of colonial monuments, the changing of street names and the decolonization of university curricula. *Legal* studies on German colonial past and its continuities, however, are still few and far between: both, the role *of* law and the impact *on* law have been largely neglected. In particular, a systematic analysis of colonial law and its application, possible continuities in current laws and resulting (legal-political) consequences is missing.

The Conference aims to contribute to closing this gap in academic research. It does so by reaching out in particular to scholars from the ‘Global South’ and by providing a forum to start a ‘South-North’ exchange on these issues, ascertain the state of research, clarify research questions and facilitate networking for collaborative research.

Topics and Participants

The overall theme of the Conference is ‘German Colonialism and the Law’. While participants are invited to focus on criminal law and criminal procedure related issues, other areas of law can also be covered. Possible areas of inquiry include:

- Colonial law and its application, including precolonial law;
- Post-colonial law, coloniality and colonial continuities, including remainders of colonial law in the legal systems of the former colonies and the colonizing states.
- (Dealing with) colonial injustice, including mass atrocities, and possible ways to respond, including reparations, reconstruction, and rehabilitation.

The Conference brings together legal scholars, but also scholars from humanities and social sciences as well as practitioners with an academic interest. It aims to focus on voices from the ‘Global South’, in particular, but not exclusively voices from the former German colonies (such as modern-day Burundi, Cameroon, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Togo, New Guinea, Samoa, etc.). Scholars in early career stages are particularly encouraged to submit abstracts.

Abstracts

If you're interested in delivering a paper and participating in the Conference, please submit an abstract of not more than 300 words and a short biographical note of not more than 150 words to Mr Leon Trampe (leon.trampe@hu-berlin.de) by **November 15, 2024** at the latest.

Conference and Publication

Decisions on the acceptance of abstracts/paper proposals will be communicated in December 2024. Authors of accepted abstracts will be invited to present and discuss their draft papers at the International Conference held from April 2 to 4, 2025 at the Namibia University of Science and Technology in Windhoek, Namibia.

Based on the discussions and feedback during the Conference, the authors should develop their initial submissions into a paper of a minimum of 5000 words until July 31, 2025, for peer review. The final versions shall be published as part of an edited volume or in the working paper series of the Franz von Liszt Institute for International Criminal Justice at Humboldt-University Berlin.

Funding

Limited funding is available to cover hotel accommodation in Windhoek (up to three nights) plus a travel grant (lump sum, covering flights, visa etc.) of up to 1.000 EUR (Africa) or 1.500 EUR (Asia, Oceania) respectively.

Timeline

-	Deadline for submission of abstracts	-	November 15, 2024
-	Conference in Windhoek	-	April 2 to 4, 2025
-	Submission of papers for peer review	-	July 31, 2025
-	Publication	-	last quarter of 2025

Scientific committee

Professor Dr Florian Jeßberger,
Humboldt-University, Berlin, Germany
Professor Dr Pilisano H. Masake,
Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek, Namibia

For further information please visit the project website: <https://fli.berlin/crimcol/>.
For inquiries, please get in touch with Mr Leon Trampe at leon.trampe@hu-berlin.de.

The event is convened by the [Chair for Criminal Law and Procedure, International Criminal Law and Modern Legal History](#) and the [Franz von Liszt-Institute for International Criminal Justice](#), both at Humboldt-University of Berlin, the [African-German Research Network for Transnational Criminal Law](#) and [Namibia University of Science and Technology](#). It is funded by the German Foreign Office.