



Programme Booklet

IDEATION WORKSHOP ON STRENGTHENING STRATEGIC LITIGATION ON WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' RIGHTS IN THE AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM

 30th September – 1st October 2024  Arusha, Tanzania



Implemented by
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**African Court
Coalition**



**Freedom cannot be
achieved unless the
women have been
emancipated from all
forms of oppression**

Nelson Mandela

Contents

| | |
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| A. Background | 4 |
| B. Objectives of the Ideation Workshop | 5 |
| C. Expected Outcomes | 5 |
| D. Methodology | 6 |
| E. Workshop Participants | 6 |
| F. Workshop Dates, Venue & Language | 6 |
| G. Workshop Convenors | 6 |
| Agenda | 7 |
| About the Speakers and Facilitators | 11 |

A. Background

Women's and girls' rights in Africa are protected by various continental, regional and national human rights normative frameworks. The obligations of States to protect and fulfill human rights encompass the duty to protect women and girls from violations, including those committed by third parties. In addition, States have the obligation to reform discriminatory laws and guarantee accountability for women's and girls' rights violations. The African Human Rights System composed of the African Union (AU) Human Rights Organs – the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR); African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR); and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) – is a key player in holding States accountable for their actions and inactions in the promotion and protection of women's and girls' rights.

Over the years, strategic litigation before the AU Human Rights Organs has been leveraged to advance women's and girls' rights on a range of issues. These issues include gender-based violence; harmful practices; sexual reproductive health and rights; discrimination in socio-economic and political spheres; marriage; and access to education. Such litigation has led to landmark decisions that have contributed to enhancing the protection of women's and girls' rights in Africa. For example, in the 2018 AfCHPR Decision on the Malian Persons and Family Code, the Court found the Code to be inconsistent with human rights standards, including those provided in the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol). In another landmark decision, the ACERWC in 2022 ruled that Tanzania violated its obligations under the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child relating to obligation of states parties, non-discrimination, best interests of the child, protection of privacy, education, health and health services, protection against child abuse and torture, and protection against harmful social and cultural practices under its practice of expelling pregnant and married girls from school.

Despite these landmark decisions, there are still very few cases on violations to the rights of women and girls before the AU Human Rights Organs. For instance, there are only six (6) cases at AfCHPR, 15 cases at the ACHPR and seven (7) cases at ACERWC. This demonstrates how strategic litigation continues to be underutilised as an instrument for legislative reforms and social change, slowing down efforts aimed at transformative change for women and girls in Africa.

Several reasons have been advanced for the underutilisation of strategic litigation in addressing violations of women's and girls' rights. These include the perception that women's and girls' rights are social issues that have no space in the judicial or quasi-judicial systems; weak grassroots movements to mobilise impacted women, girls and other marginalised communities; lack of public awareness about the critical issues faced by women and girls; existence of discriminative laws and policies; limited capacity of women's rights networks/organisations; and lack of cross-sectoral coalition building and partnerships. Additional factors contributing to the underutilisation have included limited access to legal resources, financial constraints, and lack of awareness and education about legal rights and the potential benefits of strategic litigation among women and girls. Moreover, there is lack of understanding about the procedures of the judicial and quasi-judicial mechanisms in Africa and identifying which type of cases can be submitted before these mechanisms. While some regional CSOs have better technical capacity, they lack the evidence and facts of girls' and women's rights violations, which is an indication of nexus that should be built among domestic and regional level CSOs. However, if harnessed effectively, strategic litigation can enhance, promote, and protect women's and girls' rights, as well as lead to legal reforms, changes in policies and provision of remedies to victims.

In addition to the underutilisation of strategic litigation in the protection of women's and girls' rights, the few landmark decisions, judgements, and other directives that have been issued by the AU Human Rights Organs on women's and girls' rights have not had the intended impact due to their inadequate implementation and compliance by Member States. The slow pace or lack of implementation of human rights judgments, decisions, and recommendations of AU Human Rights Organs hinders access to justice for victims of human rights violations, including women and girls. This is often attributed to several factors, including insufficient political will, limited resources, lack of awareness and understanding of the decisions among local authorities,

and sometimes outright resistance from Member States. Additionally, the absence of effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms further exacerbates the situation, as does the insufficient collaboration between civil society organizations and governmental bodies to push for compliance. Consequently, the rights of women and girls remain inadequately protected, and systemic issues that perpetuate discrimination and violence continue to persist. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts to strengthen the implementation mechanisms, increase political accountability, and enhance the capacity of local institutions to uphold and enforce human rights standards.

It is, therefore, premised on these assertions that the Ideation Workshop on strengthening strategic litigation on women's and girls' rights in the African Human Rights System will be convened.



B. Objectives of the Ideation Workshop

The main objective of the Workshop is to provide a platform for AU Human Rights Organs and key partners working on strategic litigation on women's and girls' rights to engage and explore opportunities for collaboration and action towards enhanced protection of these rights.

The specific objectives are to:

- Reflect on laws and practices that are holding women and girls in Africa from enjoying their rights to the fullest;
- Deliberate on the status and challenges of litigating on women's and girls' rights before the AU Human Rights Organs;
- Explore opportunities for strengthening strategic litigation on women's and girls' rights before the AU Human Rights Organs;
- Design strategies/actions aimed at increasing strategic litigation on women's and girls' rights in the African Human Rights System with an aim of improving the situation of the rights of women and girls in Africa; and
- Curate strategies/actions aimed at increasing implementation of decisions, judgements and other directives related to women's and girls' rights in the African Human Rights System.



C. Expected Outcomes

- Background Paper on laws and practices that are limiting women and girls from the full enjoyment of their rights and the status and challenges of litigating on women's and girls' rights within the African Human Rights System, serving as a basis for the Analytical Study on Challenges of Litigating Women's and Girls' Rights at the AU Human Rights Organs to be jointly published by ACHPR, AfCHPR and ACERWC.
- Action Plan detailing steps/actions and responsible parties for increasing strategic litigation on women's and girls' rights in the African Human Rights System.
- Proposed strategies for following up and monitoring implementation of decisions, judgements and other directives on women's and girls' rights in the African Human Rights System.
- Workshop report providing a highlight of the deliberations and proposed way forwards.



D. Methodology

The Workshop will take the format of a facilitated and participatory dialogue to enable open and frank discussions, as well as exchange of ideas, guided by Chatham House rules. AU Human Rights Organs and partners will all have an opportunity to discuss/present their initiatives/ideas, in addition to networking and strengthening collaborations.



E. Workshop Participants

The Workshop participants will comprise representatives of AU Human Rights Organs – ACHPR, AfCHPR and ACERWC, in addition to representatives of selected partners and key stakeholders, including:

- Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa;
- Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa;
- Pan African Lawyers Union;
- The Coalition for an Effective African Court/African Court Coalition;
- Centre for Human Rights – University of Pretoria;
- Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa;
- Equality Now/Solidarity for African Women’s Rights;
- Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI);
- UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights East African Regional Office;
- Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights;
- Clooney Foundation for Justice;
- African Renaissance;
- Center for Reproductive Rights;
- African Child Policy Forum;
- Child Fund International;
- The East Africa Law Society (EALS);
- Legal and Human Rights Center;
- Incorporated Trustees of ISH-61 Human Rights & Social Justice Initiative;
- African Center for Justice and Peace Studies;
- Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (RWI); and
- GIZ African Union Project on African Women Advancing Rights and Empowerment



F. Workshop Dates, Venue & Language

The workshop will take place from 30 September – 1 October 2024, at Four Points by Sheraton in Arusha, Tanzania and will be conducted in English and French languages only.

G. Workshop Convenors

The Workshop will be convened by GIZ African Union AWARE Project and RWI Regional Programme Nairobi in collaboration with the African Court Coalition.

Agenda

| Time (EAT) | Activity | Responsibility |
|---|---|--|
| Day 0 | 29 th September 2024: Arrival of Participants | |
| Day 1 | 30 th September 2024 | |
| 08:30-09:00 | Registration of Participants | Secretariat |
| SESSION ONE: Opening Session and Setting the Scene | | |
| 09:00-10:15 | <p>Welcome Remarks by Sophia Gallina, Head of Project AWARE, GIZ AU (5mins)</p> <p>Remarks by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adiam Zemenfes, Technical Expert Representing ACERWC (5mins) • Grace Wakio Kakai, Deputy Registrar, AfCHPR (5mins) <p>Opening Remarks by Hon. Janet Ramatoulie Sallah-Njie, ACHPR Vice-Chair and Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa (10mins)</p> <p>Presentation of the Background Paper on Laws and Practices that limit the realisation of women and girls' rights in Africa – Prof. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, Law Professor, University of Nigeria and Former UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons (30mins)</p> <p>Reflections on key emerging issues (20mins)</p> | Moderator: Chris Muthuri , Deputy Regional Director, Africa, RWI |
| 10:15-10:45 | Group Photo and Networking Break (Tea/Coffee Break) | Secretariat & Hotel |
| SESSION TWO: Protection Mandate of the AU Human Rights Organs: Lessons Learned, Challenges and Prospects of handling Communications/Cases on Women's and Girls' Rights | | |
| 10:45-11:45 | <p>Presentations by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedro Rosa, Senior Legal Officer, ACHPR (10mins) • Adiam Zemenfes, Technical Expert Representing ACERWC (10mins) • Meredith Lwanga Amia, Senior Legal Officer and Head of Legal Aid Unit (10mins) <p>Plenary Discussion (30mins)</p> | Moderator: Tarisai Mutangi , Head of Post Graduate Programmes, Faculty of Law, University of Zimbabwe |

| Time (EAT) | Activity | Responsibility |
|---|---|--|
| SESSION THREE: Deep Dive into the Challenges of Litigating women’s and girls’ rights before the AU Human Rights Organs: Lessons Learned | | |
| 11:45-13:20 | <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Donald Deya, Chief Executive Officer, PALU (10mins) - Christine Kirabo, Legal Officer, African Center for Justice and Peace Studies (10mins) - Deborah Nyokabi, Program Officer Equality Now (10mins) - Achieng Orero, Violence Against Women Lawyer, ISLA (10mins) - Oluyemi Oludare Fajuyitan, Head of Programmes, Incorporated Trustees of ISH-61 Human Rights & Social Justice Initiative (10mins) <p>Plenary Discussion (45mins)</p> | <p>Moderator: Ikechukwu Uzoma, Africa Staff Attorney, International Advocacy and Litigation, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights</p> |
| 13:20-14:30 | Networking Break/Lunch | Hotel |
| SESSION FIVE: Design Workshops to develop Strategies/Actions aimed at strengthening strategic litigation on women’s and girls’ rights in the African Human Rights System | | |
| 14:30-16:00 | <p>Facilitated Design Workshops on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Litigating women’s rights issues before ACHPR - Litigating girls’ rights issues before ACERWC - Litigating women’s and girls’ rights issues before AfCHPR | <p>Facilitator: Prof. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, Law Professor, University of Nigeria and Former UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons</p> |
| 16:00-17:00 | <p>Presentation of Feedback by selected representatives from the Design Workshops on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Litigating women’s rights issues before ACHPR (10mins) - Litigating girls’ rights issues before ACERWC (10mins) - Litigating women’s and girls’ rights issues before AfCHPR (10mins) <p>Reflections by Participants (30mins)</p> | <p>Facilitator: Prof. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, Law Professor, University of Nigeria and Former UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons</p> |
| 17:00 | Networking Break (Tea/Coffee Break) & End of Day 1 | Hotel |

| Time (EAT) | Activity | Responsibility |
|---|---|--|
| DAY 2 | 1st October 2024 | |
| 09:00-09:30 | Recap of Day 1 by the Rapporteur | Rapporteur: Tarisai Mutangi , Head of Post Graduate Programmes, Faculty of Law, University of Zimbabwe |
| SESSION SIX: Reflections on the Implementation and Impact of Decisions by the AU Human Rights Organs focusing on Women’s and Girls’ Rights | | |
| 09:30-11:00 | <p>Presenter: Matilda Lasseko-Phooko, Women’s Rights Unit Manager, CHR University of Pretoria (20mins)</p> <p>Respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hon. Janet Ramatoulie Sallah-Njie, ACHPR Vice-Chair and Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa (10mins) - Grace Wakio Kakai, Deputy Registrar, AfCHPR (10mins) - Adiam Zemenfes, Technical Expert Representing ACERWC (10mins) - Japhet Biegong, Africa Regional Advocacy Coordinator, Amnesty International (10mins) <p>Plenary Discussions (30min)</p> | Facilitator: Sophia Ebby , Coordinator, African Court Coalition |
| 11:00-11:30 | Networking Break (Tea/Coffee Break) | Secretariat & Hotel |
| SESSION SEVEN: Strategies for monitoring implementation of decisions, judgements and other directives on women’s and girls’ rights by the AU Human Rights Organs | | |
| 11:30-13:00 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role of NHRIs: Foluso Adegalu, Programs Officer Regional Mechanisms & SDGs, NANHRI (10mins) - Lessons Learned from the UN System – Catherine de Preux De Baets, Regional Gender Adviser, UN OHCHR-EARO (10mins) - Perspectives from the Field: Wanjiru Kamanda, Senior Advocacy Advisor for Africa, Center for Reproductive Rights (10mins) - Role of CSOs/Women’s Networks: Dr. Faizat Badmus-Busari, Regional Programme Manager/ Head of Programmes, SIHA (10mins) - Exploring Digital Approaches: Linda Owuor, East Africa Programmes Manager, AfricaLII Faculty of Law, university of Cape Town (10mins) <p>Plenary Discussions (40mins)</p> | Moderator: Tondi Mulaudzi , Legal Program Manager, Waging Justice for Women, Clooney Foundation for Justice |
| 13:00-14:30 | Networking Break/Lunch | Hotel |

| Time (EAT) | Activity | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|
| SESSION EIGHT: Interactive Session with a Beneficiary of Strategic Litigation/Litigant before an AU Human Rights Organ | | |
| 14:30-15:30 | This is my Story: Tike Mwambipile , Executive Director, Tanzania Women Lawyers' Association & Lead Litigant in The African Court Case Application 042/2020 - Tike Mwambipile & Equality Now vs United Republic of Tanzania | Facilitator: Mumbi Maina , Programme Officer Gender, RWI Nairobi |
| 15:30-16:00 | Networking Break (Tea/Coffee Break) | Secretariat & Hotel |
| SESSION NINE: Closing Session | | |
| 16:00-16:45 | - Presentation of the Workshop Outcome Statement/ Action Plan and way forward (45mins) | Rapporteur: Tarisai Mutangi , Head of Post Graduate Programmes, Faculty of Law, University of Zimbabwe |
| 16:45-17:00 | - Remarks by Chris Muthuri , Deputy Regional Director, Africa, RWI (5mins) - Closing Remarks by Grace Wakio Kakai , Deputy Registrar, AfCHPR (10mins) | Moderated by Rizzan Nassuna , Senior Advisor AWARE Project, GIZ AU |
| END OF THE WORKSHOP | | |

About the Speakers, Moderators & Facilitators



Janet R. Sallah-Njie

*Vice-Chair and Special Rapporteur
on the Rights of Women in Africa,
African Commission on Human and
Peoples' Rights*

Hon. Commissioner. Janet R. Sallah-Njie, a legal luminary, serves as the Managing Partner of TORODO Chambers, a premier law firm in The Gambia. She also imparts her legal expertise as a Lecturer at the Gambia Law School and holds the esteemed position of Commissioner on the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Notably, she was appointed as the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa at the 69th Ordinary Session of the Commission and is currently the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission.

Recognized as the Women of the Year 2022 by She Awards, Commissioner Sallah-Njie champions women's rights with fervor and dedication. Her illustrious career spans over three decades, marked by many achievements and accolades. With qualifications including LLB (Hons), BL (Hons), LLM (Hons), and a Post Graduate Diploma in Legislative Drafting, she is a seasoned legal practitioner and a fervent advocate for women's rights.

Throughout her career, she has held various pivotal roles within the public service of The Gambia, culminating in her position as Solicitor General and Legal Secretary. Commissioner. Sallah-Njie's unwavering commitment to human rights advocacy is evident in her instrumental role in championing legislative reforms to empower women and promote gender equality.

Beyond her legal practice, Commissioner. Sallah-Njie has spearheaded numerous initiatives and served in key capacities, including as Chairperson of The Gambia's Competition and Consumer Protection Commission and as a Consultant to UN Women and the Commonwealth Secretariat. Her extensive expertise in women and gender rights, access to justice, and good governance underscores her profound impact in shaping legal frameworks and promoting social justice.

Commissioner Sallah-Njie, a trailblazer in her field, continues to advocate for the rights of women and marginalized groups, embodying a steadfast commitment to advancing justice, equality, and human rights in The Gambia and beyond.



Prof. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo

*Law Professor, University of Nigeria
and Former UN Special Rapporteur
on Trafficking in Persons*

Professor (Dr.) Joy Ngozi Ezeilo (Nigeria) is a distinguished Law Professor and Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) with expertise in public international law, international human rights, criminal law, and the rights of women and children in Africa. She is Emerita Dean of Law at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN). Additionally, Dr. Ezeilo is a visiting professor at multiple universities. Furthermore, she is the Founder and Director of the Women Aid Collective (WACOL), a Nigerian NGO dedicated to advancing the human rights of women and young people, including free legal aid and Tamar Sexual Assaults and Referral Centre (Tamar SARC).

Between 2008 and 2014, she served globally as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. She also served from 2019 and 2021 in the UN Secretary General Advisory Board on Sexual Abuse and Exploitation. She is currently one of the three experts the United Nations Human Rights Council appointed to the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Sudan in October 2023 to investigate the root causes of the ongoing conflict and document and preserve evidence on violations of human rights and international humanitarian law for purposes of accountability.

She has received numerous national and international accolades, including the Nigerian Government's Officer of the Order of Niger (2006) and a place on the BBC's 2022 listing of 100 women of impact in the world, and Newsweek/Daily Beast recognition in 2013 for her global work on women's rights, human rights and human trafficking.



Grace Wakio Kakai

*Deputy Registrar, African Court On
Human and Peoples' Right*

Mrs Grace Wakio Kakai is a national of the Republic of Kenya. She holds a Bachelor of Laws Degree from the University of Nairobi, Kenya (1999), a Post-Graduate Diploma in Law from the Kenya School of Law (2000) and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Public Relations from Kenyatta University, Kenya (2002). She also holds a Master of Laws in Human Rights and Democratisation in Africa from the University of Pretoria, South Africa (2006). She is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya, a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, and a Chevening Fellow. Mrs Kakai has over 20 years' experience as a human rights lawyer and public international law specialist working with non-governmental and international organisations and international courts.

Mrs Kakai was appointed as Deputy Registrar of the Court on 1 October 2022. She was first employed at the Registry of the Court in November 2008 as a Legal Officer, a position she held until her appointment in July 2014 to the position of Principal Legal Officer. She served as a Principal Legal Officer until her appointment on 1 December 2015 to the position of Head of the Legal Division. Mrs Kakai served as the Head of Legal Division until 30 September 2022. In these different capacities, Mrs Kakai has been involved in the operationalisation of the Court and the Registry on its judicial and administrative functions, through the promulgation of various texts, policies and guidelines. She has also been involved in the Court's outreach activities with various stakeholders at national, regional, continental and international levels. Prior to working with the African Court, Mrs Kakai worked as an Expert on the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union in the African Union Commission's Citizens and Diaspora Directorate. She also worked as a Legal Expert in the Interim Registry of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights pending the operationalisation of the Registry. This was for the period January 2007 to October 2008.

Between 2001 and 2005, Mrs Kakai worked on research and advocacy programmes on human rights, rule of law and access to justice with various civil society organisations in Kenya, including the Centre for Governance and Development, the Kenyan Section of the International Commission of Jurists and the International Foundation for Election Systems-Kenya Programme. During this period, she also worked with the Secretariat of the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Branch Office in Nairobi.

Mrs Kakai has a number of publications to her credit, including "The African Union's Economic, Social and Cultural Council: An evaluation of its mandate in facilitating civil society participation in the African Union" (March 2012), "The role of continental and regional courts in peacebuilding through the judicial resolution of election-related disputes" published in the African Human Rights Yearbook Volume 4 (2020) and a book review on "The performance of Africa's International Courts using litigation for political, legal and social change" published in AfronomicsLaw in March 2021.



Adiam Zemenfes Tsighe

*Technical Expert, African Committee
of Experts on the Rights and Welfare
of the Child*

Adiam Zemenfes Tsighe is a legal professional with a focus on human rights and child rights with over 10 years of experience working on children's rights within the African human rights mechanisms. She holds a Master of Laws in Human Rights and Democratisation in Africa from Center for Human Rights, University of Pretoria. She is currently working as a Child Rights Technical Expert at the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC).



Chris Muthuri

Deputy Regional Director, Africa, RWI

Chris has spent the last decade working on human rights, rule of law and governance issues with several organisations across Africa. He has extensive experience in advocacy, programme management and fundraising having taken up leadership roles on several instances. Chris joined the Institute in October 2017 working as a Senior Programme Officer in RWI's Regional Africa Programme before being appointed Deputy Regional Director for Africa in 2021. Chris works from RWI's Regional Office in Nairobi. Prior to joining RWI, he worked with Oxfam's Pan Africa Programme. He has also served on the board of several non-profit organisations.



Sophia Gallina

Head of Project, GIZ-AU AWARE

Ms Sophia Gallina is a social psychologist, working in the fields of governance and peace & security at a regional level for over two decades. She worked for the GIZ-SADC portfolio for several years, with the Organ on Politics Defence and Security Cooperation, and then joined the GIZ-AU Portfolio in January 2020, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

In July 2023, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) commissioned the GIZ-AU Project African Women Advancing Rights & Empowerment (AWARE), supporting continental efforts in the promotion of human rights and women's empowerment.



Pedro Rosa

Senior Legal Officer, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

Pedro Rosa C6 is Senior Legal Officer and Head of the Protection Team at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. He is a Former Senior Legal Officer at the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. Before joining the African Court, he taught at the Faculty of Law of Bissau and at the University of Colinas of Bo6. He also held a number of positions in his home country, Guinea Bissau, including that of Legal Adviser. He holds Master in International Law and Post-graduate in Political and International Sciences.



**MEREDITH D. LWANGA
AMIA**

Senior Legal Aid Officer & Head, Legal Aid Unit – African Court On Human and Peoples' Rights

Meredith currently heads the Legal Aid Unit of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (Court) which implements the functions of the Courts Legal Aid Scheme. The continental Court is the principal judicial organ of the AU tasked with ensuring the protection of human and peoples' rights in Africa and is located in Arusha, Tanzania. Under the Scheme, the Court provides free legal assistance to indigent applicants who have filed cases before the Court.

She holds a Bachelor's degree from Makerere University, a Post Graduate Diploma from the Law Development Center in Uganda and a Master's Degree from the Loyola University, Chicago on the Rule of Law for Development. She is an upcoming PhD candidate.

Meredith is a skilled coordinator and negotiator, with over 15 years in experience in advocacy. She is passionate about the advancement of the rule of law, justice and human rights, particularly pertaining to vulnerable groups, the climate and environment, as well as contributing towards the advancement of international relations and diplomacy. She also has interest in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it relates to the field of law.

She has previously worked and consulted with the various United Nations organs such as the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)- Human Rights Officer (UNV), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) - Human Rights Officer (Consultant) and the United Nations Joint Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) - Interagency Coordinator & Human Rights Advisor (Consultant); Human Rights Law and Advocacy Advisor (Consultant) and Technical Advisor on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights (Consultant). She also worked with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)- International Humanitarian Law Legal Advisor, the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) - Legal Officer and a Consulting and Management Firm-Horizons International Limited. She served as a Board Member of the African Palliative Care Association (APCA) between 2011- 2016.



Don Deya

CEO, The Pan African Lawyers Union

Don Deya is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Pan African Lawyers Union (PALU). Among other things, he chairs the Executive Committees of the Pan African Citizens' Network (PACIN), the Stop the Bleeding Consortium (STB-C), the Financial Transparency Coalition (FTC) and the International Coalition on the Responsibility to Protect (ICR2P). He is a Steering Committee member (and former Chair) of the African Court Coalition (ACC). He engages various organs, institutions and specialised agencies of the African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities and Mechanisms (RECs & RMs) extensively. He is a prolific litigator in the various African international courts and tribunals. He also engages the United Nations (UN) and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

He is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya, and is based in Arusha, Tanzania.



Christine Kirabo

Legal Officer, African Center for Justice and Peace Studies

Christine Kirabo is a dedicated lawyer with over eight years of experience in advancing human rights, focusing on women's and girls' rights across Africa. Currently, she is the Legal Program Officer at the African Centre for Peace and Justice Studies (ACJPS), where she works closely with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in that capacity. Her previous work includes Assistant Project Coordinator with the Civic Education Network for Eastern and Southern Africa (CENESA), Programs and Legal Officer at the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, and the Programs Officer with the Women's Situation Room.

Christine is an Advocate of the High Court of Uganda, holding a Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the Law Development Centre in Kampala. She is also pursuing a Master's Degree in International Human Rights Law at the University of East London.



Deborah Nyokabi

Program Officer, Legal Equality Program at Equality Now

Deborah Nyokabi is a Program Officer in the Legal Equality Program at Equality Now supporting the Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights, the Global Campaign for Equality in Family Law, and engagements with the Africa Human Rights System. She is a feminist human rights lawyer and a passionate social justice advocate. She holds a Master of Laws LLM degree in Human Rights and Democratisation in Africa (with distinction) from the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, and a Postgraduate Certificate in Human Rights & Sustainable Development from the University of Antwerp. Her professional and academic interests are in women's rights; constitutional law; regional & international human rights mechanisms; fourth branch institutions; nationality/migration rights, and sustainable development.



Achieng Orero

Violence Against Women Lawyer, Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa

Achieng is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya with a law degree from the University of Nairobi, a postgraduate diploma from the Kenya School of Law and a Masters in International Law from the Loyola University Chicago.

She has extensive experience in women's rights stemming from her work in various organisations. As the Violence Against Women lawyer at ISLA, Achieng brings her passion for gender equality, commitment to feminist values and looks forward to entrenching laws, institutions and practices that center women.

She previously worked as Senior Attorney at Women's Link Worldwide where her work was focused on entrenching sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls in East Africa by entrenching international and regional practice in the domestic laws and institutions. She was also a legal associate at Otieno Ogola & Company Advocates where she worked on multiple landmark cases concerning constitutionalism, the rule of law and human rights. She is a member of the Feminist Litigation Network at ISLA, a Board Member at the Center for the Study of Adolescents and Partnership for a HIV Free Generation.



Oluyemi FAJUYITAN
*Barrister and a Solicitor of the
 Supreme Court of Nigeria*

Oluyemi FAJUYITAN co-founded ISH-61 Human Rights & Social Justice Initiative (ISH-61 HRSJI), a civil society organization with focus on human rights protection and enforcement for children, women and persons with disabilities through litigation, advocacy, research and training, and functions as the Head of Programs/Administration. He is an assiduous lawyer with considerable expertise and keen interest in Human Rights, Energy & Environmental Law among others. As a legal practitioner with sound advocacy skills, he has (under the auspices of ISH-61 HRSJI) litigated fundamental human right matters at the national, sub-regional and regional levels including the case that challenged the Lagos state government's policy which made payment of tax a precondition for children to access basic education in public schools, and the case before the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child which challenged lack of uniform child's rights law in Nigeria among other issues.



Ikechukwu Uzoma
*Senior Staff Attorney for Africa,
 International Advocacy and Litigation,
 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights*

Ikechukwu Uzoma is the Senior Staff Attorney for Africa at Robert F Kennedy Human Rights. He is a lawyer with a decade long career in international human rights law and extensive experience litigating cases before domestic and regional Courts and quasi-judicial mechanisms. Prior to joining Robert F Kennedy Human Rights, Uzoma worked with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the Operationalization of the Special Criminal Court in Central African Republic and with Open Society justice Initiative on civic space issues in East and West Africa. Ikechukwu Uzoma holds a bachelor's of law degree from Abia State University, Uturu and a Masters of Laws from New York University Law School. Ikechukwu research focuses on the African human rights and political systems.



Dr. Tarisai Mutangi
*Head of Post Graduate Programmes,
 Faculty of Law, University of
 Zimbabwe*

Dr. Tarisai Mutangi is a Zimbabwean human rights practitioner and academic based in Harare. He is currently the Head of the Postgraduate Department, Faculty of Law, University of Zimbabwe. In the practice of law he is a seasoned public interest litigator before national courts covering themes such as elections; rights of persons with disabilities among others. He is also an established litigator before African human rights bodies especially the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child before which body he has filed and argued matters. He also provides technical support to organisations litigating before national courts and any of the regional bodies. He has also worked in building the capacity of National Human Rights Institutions in terms of establishing litigation units in their structures and how to engage with regional human rights bodies fore litigation purposes. Dr Mutangi has specific interest in the area of implementation of international human rights standards at the national level, and human rights decisions of international courts and tribunals in particular. As part of his research work he has developed toolkits for strategic litigation especially around the issues of child marriages and female genital mutilation.



Matilda Lasseko-Phooko
*Women's Rights Unit Manager, CHR,
 Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria*

Holds an LLB degree (cum laude), an LLM in Human Rights and Democratisation in Africa from the University of Pretoria and an LLM in Jurisprudence from the University of South Africa. She served as a research clerk at the Constitutional Court of South Africa before joining the Open Society Justice Initiative and the Southern African Litigation Centre as a Law Fellow. She litigated with the international law firm Bowmans (formerly Bowman Gilfillan Inc) prior to joining Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa. She was the thematic lead on Violence Against Women at ISLA where she worked with lawyers from various jurisdictions to provide technical support for women's rights cases and to support feminist litigators on the continent. She has published in the areas of transitional justice, access to information, gender equality, human trafficking, sexual harassment and FGM (upcoming).



Dr. Japheth Biegon
Africa Regional Advocacy
Coordinator, Amnesty
International

Dr. Japheth Biegon is the Africa Regional Advocacy Coordinator at Amnesty International. He leads Amnesty's advocacy engagements with the African Union (AU) and diplomatic representatives accredited to the AU. He is also an Adjunct Lecturer at the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria. Dr. Biegon has more than 15 years professional experience practically engaging with, writing on and teaching about the African human rights system. He holds a Doctor of Laws Degree (LLD) in International Human Rights Law from the University of Pretoria.



Sophia Ebby
Coordinator, African Court Coalition

Ms. Sophia Ebby is the current Coordinator of the Coalition for an Effective African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Court Coalition). In this role, Ms. Ebby coordinates the Coalition's work in the execution of its mandate and mission to mobilize the diverse stakeholders of the African Court to support building of an effective, independent and accessible Court, and to promote the African Human Rights system in general.

Ms. Ebby holds a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree from the University of Dar es Salaam and a Masters degree in International Trade Policy and Trade Law from Lund University. She has more than 10 years of experience in advocacy under the African human rights system. She is passionate about humanitarianism, justice for all, history and nature.



Foluso Adegalu
*Programme Officer on Regional
Mechanisms & SDGs, The Network
of African National Human Rights
Institutions*

Foluso Adegalu is the Programme Officer on Regional Mechanisms & SDGs for the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions. He leads NANHRI's engagement with Regional and International Mechanisms and initiatives on Sustainable Development Goals & Prevention of Torture in Africa. He is a Legal Practitioner with over 12 years of experience as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria and a member of the Nigerian Bar Association.

He is also a Research Associate for the Studies on Human Rights in Context Project at the Human Rights Centre of Ghent University, Belgium. His research interests encompass theoretical and practical aspects of international human rights, focusing on the efficacy of the international human rights system and the broader impact of international human rights norms through the lens of institutional, groups and thematic rights. He has published and provided consultations in these areas.



**Catherine de Preux De
Baets**
*Regional Gender Adviser,
United Nations Office of the High
Commissioner for Human Rights -
East Africa Regional Office*

Catherine de Preux De Baets is the Regional Gender Adviser at the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, East Africa Regional Office (OHCHR-EARO). Since 2021, she has been leading the Gender and Youth Workstream, where she engages with the African Union and its human rights organs, coordinates regional activities, contributes to technical assistance and capacity-building activities, and advises UN Country Teams. Past experiences include working for seven Treaty Bodies, the Universal Periodic Review, the UN Human Rights Council Special Procedures, a Commission of Inquiry, Humanitarian Funds, and country offices in Tunisia and Kenya. Throughout the years, she has gained experience engaging with UN human rights mechanisms, providing advisory services and technical assistance to States and non-state actors, conducting investigation and legal analysis, undertaking monitoring, reporting and advocacy activities, and developing evidence-based knowledge products. She holds a M.A. in International Relations from the Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, Switzerland.



Wanjiru Kamanda

*Senior Advocacy Advisor for Africa,
Center for Reproductive Rights*

Wanjiru is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya and a holder of a Master of Laws Degree from the University of Nairobi. She has 13 years post admission experience in Human Rights, Gender, Sexual & Reproductive Health and Rights, Election Dispute Resolution, Governance and Advocacy.

She is currently the Senior Advocacy Advisor for Africa at the Center for Reproductive Rights. The Center is the premier global legal organization using the power of law to advance reproductive rights as fundamental human rights. In Africa it has program initiatives in 7 countries and at regional level.

She previously served as the Deputy Executive Director and Head of Programs at the Federation of Women Lawyers- Kenya (FIDA-Kenya). She has also worked with the International Development Law Organization as a legal consultant seconded to the Judiciary Committee on Elections and as the Governance and Advocacy Senior Program Manager at Concern Worldwide.

She is an active member of the Law Society of Kenya where she has previously served in the Gender Committee and the Public Interest Litigation, Legal Aid and Human Rights Committee.



Faizat Badmus-Busari

*Head of Programmes, The Strategic
Initiative for Women in the Horn of
Africa*

Faizat Badmus-Busari is the Head of Programmes at the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) Network. She has previously worked at The Carter Center, UNICEF, and the World Trade Center of New Orleans on various projects related to gender equality, human rights, and social justice. Faizat holds a Doctor of Juridical Science (SJD) in International Human Rights Law, with a concentration on religion and gender, from Emory University, and a Master of International and Comparative Law (LLM) from Tulane University. She has interests in feminist activism, policy analysis, and the intersection of law and religion. Faizat is passionate about empowering marginalized communities and advancing gender equality through inclusive and sustainable development practices.



Linda Awuor

*East Africa Programmes Manager,
AfricaLII Faculty of Law, university of
Cape Town*

Linda Awuor is the East Africa Programmes Manager at Laws.Africa and AfricanLII. She has previously held the positions of Deputy Editor at the Judiciary to Botswana and Head of Legal Research and Development at the National Council for Law Reporting, Kenya. She is a proponent of access to legal information and believes that technology is the key to changing Africa's legal and economic landscape. She has several years of experience in the field of provision of legal information.

Linda has extensive knowledge in legal research and analysis, policy and legislative drafting, legal editing, law reporting and law revision. She has consulted in the areas of access to legal information, environmental law, climate justice and access to justice.

Linda holds a Master's Degree in Environmental Law and a Bachelor of Laws (LL. B) Degree, both from the University of Nairobi, Kenya and a Post Graduate Diploma in Law from the Kenya School of Law. She is currently pursuing a PHD in Law from the University of Nairobi.



Tondi Mulaudzi

*Legal Program Manager, Waging
Justice for Women, Clooney
Foundation for Justice*

Tondi Mulaudzi is a Legal Program Manager at the Clooney Foundation for Justice's Waging Justice for Women Initiative. Before her role at the Foundation, Tondi worked as a lecturer, teaching courses on the foundations of human rights and human rights litigation. Prior to that, she gained valuable experience as a candidate attorney and Bertha Foundation fellow at the Legal Resources Centre in South Africa. Tondi has also been a recipient of the Trust Fund of the Judicial Fellowship Programme (2022/2023), where she served as a judicial fellow at the International Court of Justice. She has also been an Open Society Foundations fellow at the United Nations OHCHR, working with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants. She holds both an LLB and LLM from the University of Pretoria and is currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Witwatersrand.



Tike Mwambipile

*Executive Director, Tanzania Women
Lawyers' Association*

Ms Tike Mwambipile has 10 years' experience in the following: women and children rights, legal and human rights issues, gender, health (SRH&R) programme development and management, fundraising and donor relations, gender governance, research and advocacy, facilitation and documentation.

Tike has worked with civil society organization at grassroots, national and international level. She has excellent skills in leadership, training, research, fundraising and organization management. Excellent written and oral communication skills complement her direct hand- on – approach.



Mumbi Murimi

*Lawyer and the Gender Focal
Person, RWI*


Mumbi Murimi is a lawyer and the gender focal person at the RWI Nairobi Office, with over 9 years of experience in human rights, criminal justice, governance, and gender, both as a programmer and an administrator. She is also a researcher and has presented papers on themes including politics, policing and women's rights in various academic and human rights forums. In her personal time, Mumbi is particularly passionate about helping women escape abusive partners through financial and legal assistance. She enjoys a good laugh, a good song and well-seasoned meat!



Rizzan Nassuna

*Senior Advisor AWARE Project, GIZ
AU*

Rizzan Nassuna is a Senior Advisor at the GIZ African Union (AU) Project African Women Advancing Rights and Empowerment (AWARE) with over 15 years of experience in advancing democracy, governance, and human rights. Previously, Rizzan worked at the AU African Governance Architecture (AGA) Secretariat as a Democracy Assessment and Governance Expert, leading the State reporting process on the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. Her experience includes working with AU Human Rights Organs on initiatives aimed at strengthening the respect for human rights, including women's rights through policy and citizens engagement approaches. Before joining the AGA Secretariat in 2014, she was serving as a Senior Human Rights Officer at the Uganda Human Rights Commission. She is passionate about transforming policy into practice that positively impacts the lives of African citizens.



**Inequality can be
done away with only
by establishing a new
society, where men
and women will enjoy
equal rights**

Thomas Sankara

