



African Judiciaries Research Network (AJRN) newsletter, no. 27, October 2025

If anyone has any **information that they would like included in the next newsletter** (to be circulated the week of 3 November 2025) please email g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk. Similarly, if you have suggestions of people who we should contact about joining the network or would like to unsubscribe from the newsletter please email g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk.

6th International Social Justice Conference (ISJC), Cape Town, South Africa, 15-16 October 2025

The 6th International Social Justice Conference (ISJC), themed **Social Justice, food Security and Peace in a turbulent World: Advancing food Justice and Climate Resilience in pursuit of Equality, Solidarity and Sustainable Development**, builds on the legacy of five prior conferences that have shaped global discourses to social injustice. In 2025, the ISJC seeks to leverage the final lap of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, South Africa's G20 Presidency under the theme Fostering Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability, and the Copenhagen Declaration review, to reflect on the critical nexus of hunger, poverty, equality, solidarity and sustainability. The ISJC will deepen these discussions by fostering transformative dialogue among academics, legal professionals, judges, policymakers and civil society researchers. Hosted in the vibrant city of Cape Town at the Cape Town International Convention Centre from 15-16 October 2025, the two-day hybrid event—held in partnership with United Nations South Africa—will facilitate global participation, **both in-person and online**, to advance interdisciplinary solutions for a socially just world. For further information and to register: <https://www.quicket.co.za/events/328390-6th-international-social-justice-conference/#/>

The role of a judiciary in a democracy conference, Southern African Institute for Policy and Research (SAIPAR) in Lusaka, Zambia, 21-22 October 2025

The AJRN, SAIPAR, and University of Zambia are holding a two-day conference at SAIPAR to coincide with the launch of an edited book celebrating 50 years of the Zambian Supreme Court. For good or ill, the Supreme Court has significantly shaped the country's life by determining high-profile cases across various branches and disciplines of the law. The call for papers has now closed, but any queries about the conference should be directed to Dr Pamela Towela Sambo, University of Zambia (pamela.sambo@unza.zm), Dr O'Brien Kaaba, University of Zambia (Obrien.kaaba@unza.zm), Mr Chanda J. Chungu, University of Zambia (xhanda.chungu@unza.zm), and Dr Marja Hinfelaar, SAIPAR (marja.hinfelaar@saipar.org).

Public opinion of the Kenyan judiciary, Nairobi, Kenya, 6 November 2025

Professor Karuti Kanyinga (University of Nairobi) and Professor Gabrielle Lynch (University of Warwick) have undertaken an analysis of public opinion in Kenya including 9 rounds of Afrobarometer surveys (2003-2024) and two nationally representative surveys conducted by TIFA Research in 2023 and 2025. This workshop will provide an opportunity to discuss key findings and their implications. The first two sessions will allow for a detailed presentation and discussion of what the data tells us (and cannot tell us) about changing levels of public confidence over time, key drivers, and the relationship between formal and informal judicial systems. The final two sessions will be led by judges and will provide space to discuss the implications of the report for the judiciary and areas for further research including questions to be posed in future surveys. The workshop will be held at the British Institute in Eastern Africa and will be **in-person only**. If you would like to attend, please contact Gabrielle Lynch (g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk).

Alternative Justice Systems: New Frontiers for Legal and Social Science Scholarship, Praxis and Pedagogy Workshop, Nairobi, Kenya, 7 November 2025

The Kenyan National Steering Committee for the Implementation of the Alternative Justice Systems (AJS) Policy (NaSCI-AJS) is leading efforts to reimagine and entrench AJS as a key pillar of access to justice in the country. These efforts are rooted in the recognition of Kenya's rich traditions of organic, community-based justice, the constitutional imperatives of people-centered justice under Article 159 of the Constitution, and the global discourse on innovative, people-centred inclusive pathways to justice.

NaSCI-AJS has invested in building county-level models, conceptual ground-clearing work, and practical strategies that demonstrate the viability of AJS as both a pragmatic modality of justice delivery and a philosophical-epistemic project.

Despite growing interest, scholarship and teaching on AJS remain relatively underdeveloped in Kenya and the wider region. There is urgent need for sustained dialogue between practitioners, legal scholars, and social scientists to:

- Interrogate AJS conceptual foundations and critiques.
- Surface emerging research questions.
- Explore pedagogies for embedding AJS in legal and social science curricula.
- Enrich comparative perspectives by connecting local experiences to global debates on plural justice systems.

This incubational roundtable is co-organised by the AJRN and NaSCI-AJS and will serve as both a stocktaking of NaSCI-AJS' journey and an invitation to scholarship — to expand, critique, and refine the theory and practice of AJS.

The workshop will be held at the British Institute in Eastern Africa and will be **in-person only**. If you would like to attend, please contact Gabrielle Lynch (g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk).

Contextual Approaches to Constitutional Law in Academic Publishing, Roundtable, University of Warwick, UK, 19 November 2025

The Centre for Constitutions in Context (CCC) will be hosting a roundtable discussion on Contextual Approaches to Constitutional Law in Academic Publishing – the first event of its kind.

Moderated by Professor Tom Ginsburg (Chicago), the roundtable will bring together representatives from six leading comparative constitutional law journals to discuss, among other things:

- The recent growth in contextual approaches to constitutional law scholarship
- The relationship between contextual and interdisciplinary approaches
- The future of contextual scholarship
- Common mistakes in contextual work

Participating in the roundtable will be:

- From Comparative Constitutional Studies: Dr Lael (Lulu) Weis and Dr Erika Arban
- From Constitutional Studies: Professor Wen-Chen Chang and Dr José María Serna de la Garza
- From European Constitutional Law Review: Professor Monica Claes and Professor Leonard Besselink
- From Global Constitutionalism: Dr Susan Kang
- From the International Journal of Constitutional Law: Professor Gráinne de Búrca
- From Public Law: Professor Aileen McHarg and Professor Roger Masterman

The event will be chaired by CCC co-director Dr David Vitale.

The roundtable will be **online** on **19 November 2025** at **2pm GMT**. The event will be held via an MS Teams town hall.

You can register for the event- and obtain the Teams link to connect- via the CCC's Eventbrite page for the event [here](#).

For further information about this and other CCC events, visit the ["Events" page](#) of our website.



Transformative Equality Jurisprudence in Africa Conference, Nairobi, 30-31 March 2026

Call for Papers

The University of Nairobi Faculty of Law, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), the South African Research Chair in Equality, Law and Social Justice, School of Law, University of the Witwatersrand, and the African Judiciaries Research Network (AJRN) are organising a two-day conference on transformative equality jurisprudence in Africa to be held at the University of Nairobi on 30 and 31 March 2026.

This conference is motivated by the fact that – despite the work of regional bodies such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the recognition of equality rights in national constitutions and legislation, and the work of many judges, legislators, civil society organisations, and academics – equality rights across the African continent remain underdeveloped in both national and regional jurisprudence. Understanding the potential for transformative equality jurisprudence on the continent as well as the tensions that undermine it and the pathways to its resolution in international, regional, and domestic law are pressing issues for African judiciaries.

This two-day conference aims to increase discussion pertaining to, and to help strengthen the application of, equality and non-discrimination standards and jurisprudence in Africa. The first day (30 March) will be an in-person only event and will discuss the potential for and challenges facing transformative equality jurisprudence from the perspective of African judges. The second day (31 March) will provide space for the presentation and discussion of research papers on related topics and will be both in-person and online. If you would like to present your research on the second day, please send a **paper title and 300-word abstract** to Cathi Albertyn (cathi.albertyn@wits.ac.za), Gabrielle Lynch (g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk), and Lawrence Mute (lmute@uonbi.ac.ke) by Friday 31 October 2025.

Papers are welcome on any aspect of equality jurisprudence including:

- The content and role of international and regional law standards and guidance in domestic adjudication;
- How international and regional jurisprudence can and should be developed to ensure better equality protection;
- The state of comparative jurisprudence in Africa;
- The challenges faced by judges in adjudicating equality and non-discrimination cases;
- The challenges to achieving substantive equality in African judicial and quasi-judicial fora including: establishing institutional and societal discrimination; working with intersectional discrimination; the use of expert evidence in equality cases; the implementation of positive measures to combat discrimination; and the difficulties of ensuring protection for persistently excluded groups, such as women, persons with disabilities, and sexual minorities.

Successful participants will be advised by 15 November 2025 and should submit written papers in advance of the conference, by 16 March 2026. Publication opportunities in a special edition of the *East Africa Law Journal* will also be explored at the conference.

Public Law Conference, Cape Town, July 2026



Public Law and the Future of Constitutional Democracy

Cape Town, 1–4 July 2026

Call for Papers

The 2026 Public Law Conference will be held at the Faculty of Law, University of Cape Town on the theme 'Public Law and the Future of Constitutional Democracy'.

As with previous conferences in the Public Law series, the chosen theme aims to set meaningful parameters while facilitating a variety of responses from public lawyers across a range of legal systems in the common-law world. While the theme is especially apposite to the 30th anniversary of South Africa's democratic Constitution of 1996, it also speaks to challenges confronting constitutional democracy in other common-law jurisdictions and indeed globally.

Prospective speakers are invited to engage with the theme from a range of disciplinary perspectives and using doctrinal, theoretical, empirical, comparative or other suitable approaches. Papers might address specific topics relating to the following (non-exhaustive) list of subthemes:

- The future of constitutional democracy and the rule of law / the separation of powers.
- The legislature, electoral systems, democratic participation and the future of constitutional democracy.
- Executive power (hard or soft), accountability and the future of constitutional democracy.
- Judicial independence, the judicial role and the future of constitutional democracy.
- Administrative justice and the future of constitutional democracy.
- Populism, nationalism, fundamentalism and the future of constitutional democracy.
- Private disruption of public power in a constitutional democracy.
- Identifying and upholding the unwritten norms, values and cultures that sustain constitutional democracy.
- The role of integrity institutions and other public-law bodies, including the public service, in supporting constitutional democracy.
- Public law as a bulwark against the erosion of individual, indigenous or community rights, including socio-economic rights.
- Constitutional democracy for future generations: environmental law, climate change, climate litigation.
- The intersection of international law and public law.
- Technology and the risks and benefits to constitutional democracy.
- Restricting protest, speech or dissent and the impact on democratic participation.
- The expansion of punitive state power and the erosion of constitutional democracy: surveillance, incarceration and militarised policing.

- The ways in which race, class and spatial inequality shape public law, including the experience of the criminal justice system.

Submission of Abstracts

Prospective speakers are invited to submit an abstract of no more than 500 words addressing any aspect of the conference theme. Abstracts must be submitted via the Oxford Abstracts electronic system, which will open on **Monday 1 September 2025** and close on **Friday 14 November 2025**. You will be informed by **Monday 12 January 2026** whether your abstract has been accepted for presentation. Please submit your abstracts by following the Oxford Abstracts link [here](#).

Abstracts are invited from those at any career stage. Papers will be accepted on the basis of merit and fit with the conference theme. Those who have their abstracts accepted will be required to submit a full written paper by **Friday 15 May 2026** for distribution in advance to conference delegates. Please note that speakers will have to meet their own expenses and pay the conference fee in the ordinary way.

Limited funding will be available to subsidise intending speakers resident in Africa who face financial challenges in attending the conference. Speakers in this category may apply for assistance on acceptance of their abstract. Regrettably, such funding cannot be assured.

In common with previous conferences, it is intended that an edited collection will be published by Hart Publishing, the conference sponsor, of a small selection of papers given at the 2026 conference.

Doctoral Students

Like previous conferences, the 2026 conference will include dedicated panels for doctoral students. A reduced fee or, it is hoped, a fee waiver will apply to doctoral students whose papers are accepted.

Richard Hart Prize

The Richard Hart Prize for the best paper by an early-career scholar will be awarded at the 2026 conference. Those who are eligible and wish to be considered for the prize should indicate this by ticking the relevant box in the electronic application system. The eligibility criteria are as follows: *Anyone who (a) is studying for, but who has not yet been awarded, a doctoral degree in Law; or (b) was awarded a doctoral degree in Law on or after 1 July 2023; or (c) was appointed to their first full-time academic position on or after 1 July 2023. No person who has held a full-time academic position for more than three years as of 1 July 2026 shall be eligible for the prize. The conference convenors' decisions as to eligibility shall be final.*

Please note that the prize will be awarded on the basis of the full written papers submitted in advance of the conference.

For queries about the conference, please email the organisers at publiclawconference2026@gmail.com.

Job opportunity

The Department of Politics at the University of California, Santa Cruz, is conducting an open-rank search for a **teaching professor in the Legal Studies Program**. The specialization is open. Applications are due **14 November**. For more details see here:

<https://recruit.ucsc.edu/JPF01985>

Call for papers for the *International Handbook on Courts' Management of Self-Represented Litigants*.

Dr. Jona Goldschmidt, professor emeritus at Loyola University Chicago, is preparing an edited collection of papers for a book entitled *International Handbook on Courts' Management of Self-Represented Litigants*. He is inviting scholars, judges, or practitioners in any African country to submit an abstract of a proposed paper for inclusion in the book.

He has no set topics in mind but would like it to have broad international content. There are many aspects of the general subject of self-represented litigants (SRLs) in courts worldwide. The scope of the book will include SRLs in civil and criminal cases, in adversarial and civil code justice systems, and courts in Western, Non-Western, and Islamic legal systems. Other topics might be a history of the right to counsel and self-representation in different countries, programs established by courts to assist SRLs at trial or on appeal, or to process SRL cases efficiently, the law governing judicial assistance to SRLs, court rules permitting limited scope representation, permitting nonlawyer representation, etc. Papers that describe what courts themselves are doing in this area are most appreciated.

He invites interested individuals to submit their abstract of a possible submission along these or other relevant lines. Contributors will have about six months' time to submit the draft paper, but this deadline is flexible.

If this project is not of interest to you, please advise anyone you may know with relevant expertise who may be interested in contributing to this volume that they may contact Dr. Jona Goldschmidt at jgoldsc@luc.edu with any questions or ideas for a possible submission.

Recent publications by AJRN members

Brown, Stephen. "Escaping the multicultural trap: Strategic litigation and the decriminalization of same-sex relations in Mauritius". *Politics, Groups, and Identities*. Online First, 2025, pp. 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2025.2543300>.

L. Enonchong, 'Constitutional Identity, Bijuralism and the Establishment of the Common Law Division in the Supreme Court of Cameroon' (2025) 57(1) *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Critical Social Analysis* 26-50. DOI-10.1080/27706869.2025.2465134.

Proving Corruption and Defending the Corrupt

Constitutional and Evidential Challenges in Africa

John Hatchard, University of Buckingham
UK, UN International Anti-Corruption
Academy, Austria, University of Detroit-
Mercy and Arizona State University, USA and
Commonwealth Legal Education Association

'Corruption undermines democratic institutions, retards economic development, and discourages foreign investments. An essential element in the efforts to eradicate it is the development of a legal and judicial framework at the international and domestic level within which to fight the scourge of corruption. The book discusses a range of approaches to the fight against corruption. It is comprehensive, insightful, and is a significant contribution to the search for effective approaches to the fight against corruption.'

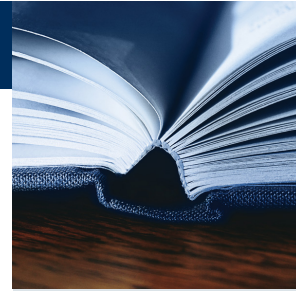
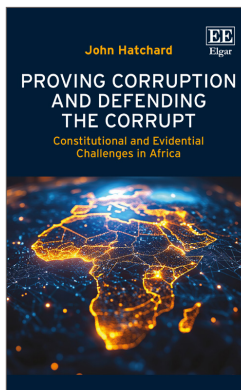
– Muna Ndulo, Cornell University, USA

This insightful book explores the question of why there are so few successful corruption-related prosecutions in Anglophone African countries and considers how this situation can be addressed. John Hatchard analyses the unique challenges faced by anti-corruption investigators and prosecutors in effectively implementing the requirements of the criminalisation pillar contained in the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

Hatchard discusses the tension between proving corruption – that is, providing for effective investigations and evidence gathering, and utilising this to facilitate prosecutions – versus defending the corrupt – protecting the constitutional rights of those facing prosecution and challenging the admissibility of key prosecution evidence. He advocates for the adoption of the 'Golden Triangle' and a fairness approach. This requires balancing a triangulation of interests: protecting the constitutional rights of the accused, considering the interests of victims of corruption and maintaining the public interest in combating corruption effectively. Through analysis of anti-corruption legislation and judicial pronouncements, Hatchard demonstrates how to make the fairness approach effective with a view to strengthening the criminalisation pillar.

This unique and influential book is of worldwide interest for students and academics studying law, politics and business. Its practical insights will also greatly benefit anti-corruption agencies, legal practitioners, policymakers, law reformers, civil society organisations and the corporate sector.

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Opportunities to write on African judiciaries

The **Commonwealth Judicial Journal** is always looking for articles on issues of interest to judicial officers across the Commonwealth. Articles should normally range from 2,000 to 3,500 words in length. Any references and/or citations should be integrated in the main body of the manuscript, as footnotes/endnotes will normally be removed. Hyperlinks should not be embedded in manuscripts submitted for publication. Papers should be submitted to info@cmja.org. All manuscripts received are evaluated by the Editor in consultation with the editorial board.

AJRN has teamed up with [Democracy in Africa](http://democracyinafrica.org) to launch a series of opinion pieces on African judiciaries and democracy. For details on how to write an article for **Democracy in Africa** go to <http://democracyinafrica.org/join-the-new-african-judiciaries-research-network-ajrn-today/>.

The AJRN has also been in touch with **The Conversation Africa** and **The Elephant** and is happy to report that:

The Conversation Africa welcomes articles on African judiciaries that are based on research. These can be republished anywhere in the world under a Creative Commons licence, giving your work a wider reach and introducing it to new audiences. You can pitch your idea for an article [here](#). You can subscribe to the Conversation Africa newsletter [here](#).

The Elephant welcomes articles of 1,500-3,500 words on African judiciaries. The Elephant is a popular online Kenyan news platform which seeks well researched, honest critiques, critical essays and sharp-eyed perspectives on a broad range of topics addressed from a Pan African lens. For details on how to submit a pitch and write for *The Elephant* see <https://www.theelephant.info/write-for-us/>.

AJRN member profile of the month



Agnes Meroka-Mutua is a Senior Lecturer, University of Nairobi, Faculty of Law and a Senior Researcher, African Women Studies Center and Center for Land Acquisition and Resettlement Studies, University of Nairobi. She is also a board member, Africa Coordinating Center for the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation. She teaches and supervises in the following areas: Law and Development; Gender and the Law; Human Rights Law; Disability Rights; Property Rights and Family Law.

Agnes is interested in gender and judging and the role of judiciaries in promoting the rule of law. She has written and supervised postgraduate students in this area, and in 2022, she co-authored a chapter with Annerita Murungi titled “Making Gains for Women’s Rights: Using

Gender Quotas to Achieve Gender Equality in the Composition of the Supreme Court of Kenya,” in Jarpa Dawuni (ed) *Intersectionality and Women’s Access to Justice*, (Lexington Books). In 2025, she authored a chapter titled “*Joyce Aluoch: Feminizing Judicial Spaces*” in J. Dawuni, *African Women Judges: Storytelling as Judicial Freedom*, Palgrave Macmillan. In her role as a Senior Researcher, African Women Studies Center, Agnes is concerned with how female judges participate in women’s movements in the African context, and how this in turn contributes towards strengthening and supporting the women’s movements.

In her current area of focus, Agnes is studying the plurality of law in African contexts, with a specific focus on how women and girls are able to find justice both through formal and informal mechanisms. This view means that judging is expanded and understood beyond the formalities of the written state law, and takes into account informal justice systems.

AJRN webpage

Apologies that the AJRN website (<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/ajrn>) is a little out of date – this is due to personnel changes at Warwick (the website host) – but it will be updated over the next few months.

If you want to be included in the list of network members on the website and future newsletters, then please send a photograph and a bio in the standard format (see list of network members below) with details of positions and institutional/organisational affiliation, up to 5 keywords on relevant research interests, and contact email/social media handle to g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk.

If you have already sent a bio for the newsletter, then please do send a photo for inclusion on the webpage.

Network members

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Tim Fish Hodgson, International Commission of Jurists' global lead on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Disability and Access to Justice. Former clerk to Justice Zakaria Yacoob at the Constitutional Court of South Africa and previously worked for the Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa and SECTION27; @TimFish42.

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