



African Judiciaries Research Network (AJRN) newsletter, no. 31, February 2026

Contents:

Workshops & conferences:

- p. 1: Transformative Equality Jurisprudence in Africa Conference, Nairobi, 30-31 March 2026
- p. 3: AJRN African judiciaries stream at the African Studies Association of the UK (ASAUK) conference, Durham, 10-12 September 2026, Call for papers.

Awards:

- p. 4: AJRN workshop grants

Publications:

- p. 4: Recent publications by AJRN members

Network information:

- p. 5: AJRN member profile of the month, Dr Gift Dorothy Mkanje
- p. 5: AJRN webpage
- p. 6: Network members

If anyone has any **information that they would like included in the next newsletter** (to be circulated the week of 2 March 2026) 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.

Workshops & conferences:

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

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 AJRN are organising a two-day conference on transformative equality jurisprudence in Africa on 30 and 31 March 2026.

Day 1, 30 March 2026

Day 1 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.

Day 2, 31 March 2026

Day 2 will provide space for the presentation and discussion of research papers on related topics and will be both in-person and online.

9.00-11.30: Panel 1: The promise of, and challenges to, transformative equality jurisprudence

Walter Khobe Ochieng (Legal Advisor, Kenyan Judiciary), 'Catalytic Courts and the Enforcement of Positive Equality Duties in Kenya: Rethinking the Judicial Role'

Mitchelle Ojaamong (Advocate, Kenya), 'Decolonizing Equality: Reconceptualizing Postcolonial Jurisprudence and its Contribution to Attaining Substantive Equality in Africa'

Linnet Sithole (Africa University, Zimbabwe), 'Bridging Global Norms and Local Realities: The Role of International and Regional Standards in Zimbabwe's Equality Jurisprudence'

Justin Winchester (University of Oxford), 'Equality as solidarity'

11.30-12.00: Tea & coffee

12.00-1.30: Panel 2: Gender

Mariam Kamunyu (Cardiff University), 'Gender Transformative Adjudication in Africa's Regional Human Rights Mechanisms: A feminist appraisal'

Gift Dorothy Makanje (University of Malawi), 'The liberal but justified interpretation of restrictive abortion laws to protect vulnerable women and girls'

Laura Nfomi (Advocate, Cameroon), 'The Bench and the Body: The Failure of Transformative Equality in Cameroon's Common Law Jurisprudence'

Wakoli Sam (Mount Kenya University), 'Gender Equality in Matrimonial Property Division: A Comparative Jurisprudential Review of Substantive Justice and the Economic Valuation of Domestic Labour'

Cynthia Njagi (Advocate Trainee, Kenya), 'Beyond Judicial Discretion: Codifying Cross-Examination to Achieve Transformative Equality in Sexual Violence Trials'

1.30-2.30: Lunch

2.30-4.00: Panel 3: Sexual minorities

Gideon Basson (University of Oxford), 'Anti-discrimination as the first or last feature of an 'African concept of rights'?'

Stephen Brown (University of Ottawa) & Rui Garrido (Portugalense University), 'Jurisprudence on the decriminalization of consensual same-sex acts in Africa: Recent cases'

Dorcas Chitiyo (Bindura University of Science Education, Zimbabwe), 'Judicial Activism's role: Purposive interpretation for LGBTIQ+ equality and dignity in Southern African Jurisprudence', online

Nebert Chirwa (University of Malawi), 'Interrogating the Right to Equality in Malawi: Section 20 and "Any Other Status or Condition"'

4.00-4.30: Tea & Coffee

4.30-6.00: Marginalized and vulnerable groups

Justin Jaftha (University of Witwatersrand), 'The role of equality law in distributing resources and services to poor and vulnerable communities in an equitable manner: Divergent judicial paths in South Africa and Kenya'

Onthatile Olerile Moeti (University of Botswana), 'Judges Can Do Better: Infusing International Law in the Adjudication of Indigenous Peoples Litigation in Botswana'

Lawrence Mute (University of Nairobi), 'From Codification to Enforcement: Litigating Against Denial of Reasonable Accommodation Measures in Employment Under the Persons with Disabilities Act 2025'

Herman Tuhairwe (University of Cape Town), 'Reclaiming Justice: The Transformative Role of Ugandan Courts in Advancing Equality for Accused Persons with Psychosocial Disabilities'

6.00-7.30: Book launch and reception

Cathi Albertyn (University of Witwatersrand)

If you would like to attend the conference, please contact Gabrielle Lynch (g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk) to request a place as space is limited.

African judiciaries stream, African Studies Association of the UK (ASAUK) conference, Durham, 10-12 September 2026

The AJRN is organising a stream of panels on African judiciaries at the ASAUK biannual conference on 10-12 September 2026. If you would like to submit an abstract or panel, please go to the submission portal and select the "African judiciaries" stream.

[https://pay.durham.ac.uk/event-durham/abstract/eyJpdil6lkxESkiOU01UWFpDQZJsa3U4UWQ5UWc9PSIsInZhbHVlIjoiwjJhNTRpLzQrM014Tzd6MytaOTROQT09IiwibWQxNjA1MGM2MTNiYTU1NmUyZTcwM2U2ZWwEwNjg4NzJkOTkzNjA2NDRmYjZkNzU4ZGY1YjE5Mjc1M2E0NWVhNCIsInRhZyI6IjI9](https://pay.durham.ac.uk/event-durham/abstract/eyJpdil6lkxESkiOU01UWFpDQZJsa3U4UWQ5UWc9PSIsInZhbHVlIjoiwjJhNTRpLzQrM014Tzd6MytaOTROQT09IiwibWFjIjoibWQxNjA1MGM2MTNiYTU1NmUyZTcwM2U2ZWwEwNjg4NzJkOTkzNjA2NDRmYjZkNzU4ZGY1YjE5Mjc1M2E0NWVhNCIsInRhZyI6IjI9). The deadline for individual paper and panel submissions is **30 April 2026**.

Stream abstract: African politics and societies are becoming increasingly judicialized. How judicial actors deal with cases and litigants, whether they act independently and impartially, why different stakeholders bring cases, how they argue them and how they respond to controversial rulings, and whether justice is seen to be done, will help to determine the future of African judiciaries, democracy, and stability. Despite their importance, African judiciaries remain relatively understudied. This stream welcomes papers on any aspect of African judiciaries. This includes the history of courts, judicial reforms and current practices; how judges behave both in and out of courts and explanations of their decision making; the ways in which different actors – from governments to lawyers and litigants – engage with, use and respond to the courts; the relationship between different legal systems; and public opinion. The stream is organised by the African Judiciaries Research Network in collaboration with the British Institute in Eastern Africa.

Awards:

AJRN workshop grants

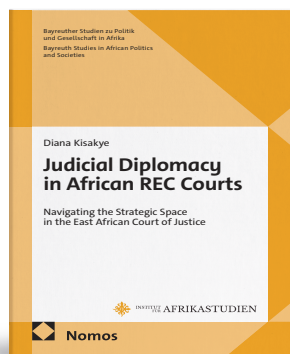
AJRN workshop grants were awarded to:

- Justice Koreen Etambuyu Mwenda-Zimba and the Zambian Judiciary's Advisory Committee on Training and Continuing Education for a workshop on the 'Use of AI and Electronic Resources in Legal Research' to be held in Lusaka in June 2026.
- Prof Jarpa Duwani (Howard University and the Institute for African Women in Law) and Professor Margaret Satterthwaite (New York University School of Law & the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers) for a workshop on 'Safeguarding Judicial Independence and Integrity in the Age of Artificial Intelligence in Africa' to be held in Johannesburg in December 2026.

Workshop grant opportunities for events in 2027 will be advertised later in the year.

Publications:

Recent publications by AJRN members



OPEN ACCESS

**Judicial Diplomacy
in African REC Courts**
Navigating the Strategic Space
in the East African Court of Justice
By Dr. Diana Kisakye
2025, 317 pp., pb., € 84.00
ISBN 978-3-7560-2016-4
E-Book 978-3-7489-5553-5
(Politik und Gesellschaft in Afrika |
Politics and Society in Africa, vol. 16)



This book offers an intricate account of the legal, socio-economic, and political considerations that young international courts go through while trying to establish institutional authority. Drawing on a wealth of original ethnographic and archival data, it advances our understanding of international adjudication beyond prevailing

state-centric explanations. Through the lens of judicial diplomacy, it offers a window into understanding the contemporary transformations of international judicial relations. It foregrounds judicial on-bench and off-bench activities as equally important attributes of the judicial process.

 Nomos
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Customer Service +49 7221 2104-222 | service@nomos.de
All costs and risks of return are payable by the addressee.

 **Nomos**

Miyandazi, V. (2025). The Role of Kenyan Courts in Tackling Persistent Inequalities: Navigating Deference and Accountability. *German Law Journal* 26(2): 234-254.

Network information:

AJRN member profile of the month



Gift Dorothy Mkanje is an academic and legal researcher in the University of Malawi's Public Law Department. Her broad research interests lie in criminal justice, law enforcement, and social reforms. A former magistrate in the Malawi Judiciary, Gift is particularly interested in special measures and best practices for protecting vulnerable witnesses and defendants in criminal proceedings. In this regard, Gift has published two journal articles, 'The protection of vulnerable witnesses during criminal trials in Malawi: addressing resource challenges' and 'The admissibility of expert evidence in criminal proceedings in Malawi: a call for reliability safeguards' in the *African Human Rights Law Journal* (2020) and the *Journal of African Law* (2023) respectively. She is currently working on a chapter for inclusion in an edited book collection titled 'Comparative perspectives on special measures: theory, practice and problems' (edited by Samantha Fairclough and John Taggart).

Gift holds an LLB (Honours) degree from the University of Malawi, an LLM (cum laude) in criminal justice and human rights from the University of Aberdeen and recently obtained her PhD from the University of Durham. Her thesis, titled, *Countering Harmful Cultural Practices Through Criminal Law? A Critical Study Based on Fieldwork in African Communities* centred on widow cleansing, harmful initiation rites, and female genital mutilation in Malawi, Zambia, and Kenya. It advances three evidence-based approaches to enhance the criminal response to harmful cultural practices.

AJRN webpage

Apologies that the AJRN website (<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/ajrn>) is 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.

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