

## African Judiciaries Research Network (AJRN) newsletter, no. 16, November 2024

If anyone has any **information that they would like included in the next newsletter** (to be circulated the week of 2 December 2024) please email [g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk](mailto: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](mailto:g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk).

### Call for papers: African Judges Preventing and Responding to Political Attacks, Queen Mary University of London, 26 February 2024

The Centre for Governance and Democracy at QMUL and AJRN are organising an informal workshop on Wednesday 26 February 2025 at 10am-4pm (UK time) at Queen Mary University of London, Mile End, E1 4NS (and online).

Political attacks on judges have long been a feature of politics in sub-Saharan Africa. In recent years, however, they have become prominent in even more seemingly consolidated democracies with powerful and assertive judiciaries, such as Kenya and South Africa. The main aim of this workshop is not simply to criticise politicians for making these attacks. Instead, it aims to 1) understand why these attacks have surfaced when and where they have, and 2) to ask how judges might therefore best prevent and respond to them. Our answers to the second question will be enriched by listening to experiences from across the continent, where the (in)formal norms governing how judges should engage in public debate have differed enormously between jurisdictions.

Workshop presenters will not have to give formal papers. Instead, they should prepare an informal 5-10 minute presentation dealing with one country. This should outline why attacks on judges have emerged, how judges have responded, and (optionally) if attacks could have been better prevented or dealt with. At the end of the workshop there will be time for collective reflection on comparative lessons learned.

If you are interested in participating in this workshop, then please send a brief email to Peter Brett ([p.brett@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:p.brett@qmul.ac.uk)) before **November 15th**. This email should include 1) whether you would be interested in presenting or simply participating; 2) if presenting, which country (or countries) you would prefer to report on; 3) whether you would be presenting in-person or online; 4) if you would have a compelling need to present earlier or later in the day (e.g. because of your time zone, an unmovable work/teaching commitment, or travel distance making it hard to reach East London for 10am); and 5) a very brief one-paragraph CV.

Unfortunately, funding for this event will only cover catering but not accommodation or travel. Online participation will be limited to presenters. Those hoping to simply participate in discussion will therefore have to attend in-person. Space will, however, be limited, so preference will, if need be, be given to those presenting. For any questions, please write to Peter Brett: [p.brett@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:p.brett@qmul.ac.uk).

## **Call for papers: Women in African Judiciaries, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 17-18 March 2025**

The AJRN, International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), and School of Law, University of Witwatersrand are organising a two-day event at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg on 17-18 March 2025. The first day will be an in-person only event and will bring together women judges from across Africa (including a number of ICJ commissioners), state officials, civil society leaders, and academics to discuss women's experiences on the bench and to celebrate the life and work of the late Justice Yvonne Mokgoro (South Africa's first black women judge and an ICJ Commissioner) and appointment of Justice Maya as South Africa's first female Chief Justice. Chief Justice Maya will also give the keynote. The second day will consist of a hybrid academic workshop on women in African judiciaries. If you would like to present research on women in African judiciaries on the second day, please send a **paper title and 300-word abstract to Cathi Albertyn (cathi.albertyn@wits.ac.za) and Gabrielle Lynch (g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk) by Saturday 30 November 2024.**

Papers are welcome on any aspect of women in Africa judiciaries including:

- Judicial appointments and promotions;
- Experiences of women judges on the bench;
- Institutional and societal discrimination;
- Gendered harassment and persecution;
- The impact of women judges on gendered analyses and gender justice; and
- The role of international and regional law standards and guidance.

## **Call for papers: Law in Development, British Institute in Eastern Africa, Nairobi, 1-2 April 2025**

Has the idea of development outlived its usefulness? What role has critical scholarship on law in development to play in contemporary contexts? Would it be better to focus on specific social and economic injustices? What is the role of the law and of legal professionals and judicial officers in socio-economic and political development in contemporary Africa? What challenges do civil society organisations encounter when they engage with the law?

To mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the University of Warwick and the Warwick Law School's long history and continuing engagement with law in development scholarship, the AJRN, Department of Politics and International Studies, Warwick Africa Hub, and Warwick Law School are hosting a two-day workshop at the British Institute in Eastern Africa in Nairobi on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025.

### **Day 1: Critical engagements with African Law in Development workshop and roundtable. 1 April 2025**

This hybrid academic workshop will focus on the evolution, contemporary relevance, and challenges facing the idea of law in and for development in contemporary Africa.

Possible themes include: the potential for law and of legal professionals and judicial officers in pushing forward socio-economic and/or political development; the role of the law and of legal professionals and judicial officers in maintaining the status quo or upholding authoritarianism and injustice; the challenges facing those, including civil society

organisations and activists who seek to pursue social, economic and climate justice through legal means; and neo-colonialism and post-coloniality and the law.

The day will conclude with a roundtable discussion of continuities and discontinuities in 'law in development' to be facilitated by Prof. Ambreena Manji (Cardiff University).

If you would like to present a paper at the workshop, please submit a title and 300-word abstract to Gabrielle Lynch (g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk) by **Thursday 12 December 2024** and indicate whether you intend to participate in person or online. Those selected will need to give a 10 to 15-minute presentation.

## **Day 2: Early career writing workshop. 2 April 2025**

This in-person writing workshop will support early career researchers – from MA students through to those who have completed a PhD in the past five years – to prepare articles for submission to academic journals. Papers are welcomed from legal scholars, but also from anthropologists, historians, and political scientists, whose scholarship focuses on the role of, challenges to, and critiques of law in development.

If you would like to submit a paper for discussion, then please submit a title and 300-word abstract to Gabrielle Lynch (g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk) by **Thursday 12 December 2024**. Those selected will need to submit a full draft of their paper by **28 February 2025**.

We have a small budget to support the travel of researchers from Eastern Africa to attend the writing workshop. When submitting your abstract please indicate whether you would need to apply for a bursary to cover travel and/or subsistence and where you will be travelling from and a breakdown of your travel budget.

## **Public lectures by Prof. Justice Joel Ngugi**

Professor Justice Joel Ngugi – a highly respected Kenyan Court of Appeal Judge – is currently in the UK and will be speaking at a couple of different Universities and research institutions over the forthcoming month.

**Conversation on Alternative Justice Systems** between Prof. Justice Joel Ngugi and Dr Aman Hingorani, Inaugural Kapila Hingorani Dialogue, on **Wednesday 13 November at 6pm, Cardiff University**, <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/community/events/view/2874771-inaugural-kapila-hingorani-dialogue>

**Roundtable with Justice Dorothy DeGabriele** (High Court, Malawi) on "Judging and constitutionalism in Contemporary Africa", **Wednesday 20 November at 4.15pm, University of Warwick** in S2.12 (Social Sciences Building, Main Campus). Event co-hosted by AJRN, Centre for Studies in Democratization, Comparative Politics Cluster, and Warwick Law School.

**"Judiciaries under Pressure"**, British Academy Global Perspectives Series Lecture, **Monday 2 December, British Academy, London**, <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=mNaqV-vazkuTDP-jhsLUf8gZDi8lpnxHolMniVGo665UMkVBSzNGU0pWSE9WR1c3ME9QUEY3TjE5Ty4u&route=s horturl>.

## AJRN at the European Conference of African Studies (ECAS), Prague, 25-28 June 2025

The AJRN will have two panels at ECAS in June 2025.

**Panel 1: African Judiciaries. Panel organised by Gabrielle Lynch (University of Warwick) and Mariam Kamunyu (Cardiff University). Chair, Sophie Andreeta (University of Liège)**

African judiciaries are increasingly called upon to decide on matters of the utmost political significance with massive implications for perceptions and realities of equality and justice- from maternal health rights to who has the right to form associations and who wins an election. This panel looks at the role of African judiciaries in helping to promote- and perhaps also inadvertently undermine- perceptions and realities of equality and justice in contemporary Africa.

Jessica Hickie (Yale University), "Post-election Litigation: Why Losing Candidates Contest Election Results in Court"

Mariam Kamunyu (Cardiff University), "Unveiling the minimum core obligation in maternal health: A feminist reading of *Bungoma County v Josephine Oundo Ongwen*"

Gabrielle Lynch (University of Warwick), "Ideas of the good judge"

Mikhail Nyamweya (University of Oxford), "Navigating Political Rhetoric and Public Perceptions in African Identities: The Case of Kenya's Judiciary"

**Panel 2: Judicializing the 'new threats'. African courts facing transnational issues. Panel organised by Sophie Andreeta and Pauline Jarroux. Call for papers to be shared soon.**

## Animated video

Martha Gayoye (Keele University) has created a video animation on judicial leadership in Kenya as part of her British Academy funded project to disseminate research on courts and judges in a publicly accessible format: [Judicial Leadership in Kenya- YouTube](#)

## Recent publications

Nyamweya, Mikhail (24 October 2024) Public perception of Kenya's judicial independence. *The Elephant*. <https://www.theelephant.info/opinion/2024/10/24/public-perception-of-kenyas-judicial-independence/>

## Opportunities to write opinion pieces/blogs on African judiciaries

AJRN has teamed up with [Democracy in Africa](#) 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://democracyin africa.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



Evans O. Ogada is an advocate and researcher who serves as the Editor-in-Chief for *The Platform for Law, Justice, and Society*, a socio-legal publication. He is also a lecturer at the University of Nairobi where he teaches in the areas of Jurisprudence, Trial Advocacy, Civil Procedure and Human Rights. Ogada is also an active member of the Law Society of Kenya's Public Interest Litigation Committee, which is actively engaged in public interest litigation on behalf of the public. He is also a member of the International Commission of Jurists (Kenya). Additionally, Ogada holds a leadership role as Chair of the East Africa Law Society's Rule of Law Committee. Ogada's published works are papers in the areas of judicial independence, human rights, public international law and decolonization and the reimagining of legal frameworks in a way that respects national autonomy and historical context.

## AJRN webpage

The AJRN has a webpage (<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/ajrn>) where we will be uploading the newsletters as well as information on events, opinion pieces and members. **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 below)** with details of positions and institutional/organisational affiliation, up to 5 keywords on relevant research interests, and contact email/Twitter handle to [g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:g.lynch@warwick.ac.uk). E.g.

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

## Network members

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

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