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Women in International Courts

African Women and International Courts is a digital archive of brief descriptions of the career journeys of African women working in various international courts and tribunals. This archive was created to highlight the journeys, and historicize the legacy and contributions of African women working in international courts.

For a comprehensive look into the lives of some of these trailblazing women, click to read:

[Dawuni, J & Kuenyehia, A \(eds.\). 2018. International Courts and the African Woman Judge: Unveiled Narratives. Routledge Press.](#)



Monica Kalyegira Mugenyi (Uganda)

East African Court of Justice (EACJ)

Justice Monica Mugenyi is a Ugandan lawyer and judge of the Ugandan Court of Appeal/Constitutional Court. Justice Mugenyi received her Bachelor of Laws from Makerere University, Uganda, and a Master of Laws in International Trade Law from the University of Essex. She also holds a Diploma in Legal Practice, which she obtained from the Law Development Centre in Uganda. Prior to her work on the bench, Justice Mugenyi worked in the Office of the Attorney General and the Privatization Unit. From 1993 to 1999, she was a State Attorney in the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General's Chambers. She then worked as Senior State Attorney before becoming a Legal Officer of the Privatisation & Utility Sector Reform Project from the World Bank and the International Development Association (IDA).

Justice Mugenyi has served as a Private Legal Consultant and was working as Manager of Corporate Services for the Uganda Road Fund when she was appointed to the High Court of Uganda. She was elected to the Land and Criminal Division of the High Court in September 2010 and was then appointed a judge of the First Instance Division of the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) three years later. The appointment took place during the East African Community Heads of State Summit in December 2013.

In July 2015, she began serving as the 'Principal Judge' of the Court and Administrative Head of the First Instance Division, making her the first woman to take on the role. Justice Mugenyi was later sworn in as Judge of the Court of Appeal by President Yoweri K. Museveni on December 10th, 2019, and ended her term with the EACJ a year later. Justice Mugenyi is a member of the Gayaza Old Girls Association and serves as the Chairperson of the East African Development Bank (EADB) Staff Appeals Tribunal. She is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (FCIArb), UK.



Navanethem Pillay (South Africa)

International Criminal Court (ICC)

Navanethem Pillay is a South African jurist of Indian Tamil origin who served as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights from 2008 to 2014. She obtained a BA from the University of Natal in 1963, and an LLB in 1964 before attending Harvard Law School for her LLM. She obtained her Masters at Harvard in 1982 and received a doctorate in law from the same institution in 1988. In 1967, Pillay became the first non-white woman to open up a law practice in the Natal Province of South Africa. She served as a lawyer for 28 years, defending anti-apartheid activists and fighting for the right of those detained on Robben Island to have access to lawyers. Pillay co-founded the women's rights group 'Equality Now'.

In 1995, Pillay was elected as the first non-white woman and the first attorney to serve on the High Court of South Africa, before swiftly being elected by the United Nations General Assembly to serve in the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Pillay served at the ICTR for eight years, the last four of which were spent as President of the tribunal. While at the ICTR she made groundbreaking judgments, establishing mass rape as a war crime, convicting a former politician for committing war crimes, and condemned the media for its role in instigating genocide.

Pillay was appointed as a judge of the International Criminal Court in 2003, where she served in the Appeal Chamber until 2008. Pillay was nominated as High Commissioner for Human Rights on July 24th, 2008 and the nomination was confirmed four days later. In her time as High Commissioner, she spoke up in support of gay rights being treated as human rights.



Nkemdilim Amelia Izuako (Nigeria)

United Nations Dispute Tribunal (UNDT)

Nkemdilim Izuako is a Nigerian judge who was appointed to the bench in 1998. She earned her law degree from Obafemi Awolowo University, Osun State, and started her journey at the bench with an appointment to the Court of Anambra State. She was later appointed to the High Court of Nigeria, where she served until 2003. During her two decades in the Nigerian judiciary, she lectured at Nnamdi Azikwe University and also worked with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to draft a Judicial Ethics Training Manual for the Nigerian judiciary.

Between 2004 and 2006, Justice Izuako served as a judge of the High Court and Court of Appeal of The Gambia and taught law at Gambia Technical Institute. She made history by being appointed the first female judge to the High Court of Solomon Islands in 2006. As an advocate for women's rights and development, she assisted in mentoring legal professionals and further mobilized local women to form the Honiara Women's Initiative which undertakes micro-projects for the economic and social empowerment of women and girls. In 2009, Justice Izuako was appointed as an ad litem judge of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal in Nairobi. The tribunal, which is located in Nairobi, New York, and Geneva, works to improve the United Nation's system of dealing with internal grievances and disciplinary cases. In May 2017, she was elected as President of the tribunal for one year, from 1 January to 31 December 2018.

Having overcome overwhelming odds in her professional career, Nkemdilim has authored several articles including: "Judicial Independence and The Gambian Judiciary", "Walking the Line of Judicial Independence: The Case of Gambian Government and Moral Integrity", "Human and People's Rights and the Administration of Justice in Africa." One of her remarkable pieces of advice to other women in law is that "although it becomes difficultly uncomfortable and even dangerous to give decisions against your conscience; you earn respect, you stand tall and fulfill the oath of your office to work with integrity." (IAWL, n.d.). Justice Izuako was awarded the McArthur Funds for Leadership Development.



Ntyam Ondo Mengue (Cameroon)

African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACtHPR)

Justice Ntyam Mengue is a Cameroonian jurist and judge of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. Born in the Vallée-du-Ntem in 1954, Justice Mengue attended the National School of Administration and Magistracy and graduated in 1982. She worked as a deputy public prosecutor from 1982 to 1987. In 1990, she became President of the Court of First Instance in Yaoundé before becoming Vice President of the Court of Appeal in 1992. In 1998, she became a Counsellor of the Supreme Court of Cameroon, and in 2001, she was nominated as a permanent judge of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Mengue became President of the Administrative section of the Supreme Court of Cameroon in 2010 and remained in that position until 2015 when she became President of the Court's Commercial Section. Mengue was elected as a judge of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in 2016, where she continues to serve today. Mengue has also been a member of the National Commission of Human Rights and Freedoms of Cameroon since 2003.



Prisca Matimba Nyambe (Zambia)

International Residual Mechanism for Criminal
Tribunals (IRMCT)

Prisca Matimba Nyambe was born on December 31, 1951, in Zambia. She obtained her Law degree from the University of Zambia in 1975 and was admitted as an advocate of the High Courts and Supreme Courts of Zambia and Zimbabwe in 1978 and 1982 respectively. Prisca was appointed as a Resident Magistrate in Kabwe, Zambia in 1978 and continued in this capacity until she was appointed Senior Magistrate in Harare and Gwelo, Zimbabwe. Four years after, she became Legal Counsel to the Central Bank of Zambia and transitioned to private legal practice from 1992 to 1996.

Prisca Nyambe joined the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in 1996 as Senior Legal Officer of the Chief Court Management Section for four years. She then became the Chief of the General Legal Services Section from 2000 to 2002 and General Counsel to the ICTR between 2002 and 2006. Nyambe was elected Judge ad litem of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in 2005, where she sat on the trial of Zdravko Tolimir, a wartime Bosnian Serb general convicted of genocide, giving the sole dissenting opinion.

In 2006, she was further appointed as a judge of the High Court of Zambia and served in this position until her retirement in 2015. Her wealth of knowledge and experience led to her election as judge of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) in 2011. Justice Nyambe has previously had special assignments and appointments in both local and international spheres. Notable amongst them are; member of Parliamentary Fact-finding Committee of Legal Experts appointed to report on discriminatory laws against women in government and state-owned enterprises in Zambia (1989), Commissioner of the Elections Commission of Zambia (1992), Human Rights expert/International observer under the International Commission of Jurists (1993-1995), Collaborator on a Direct Contact Mission to the Republic of Ethiopia on behalf of the International Labour Organization (2008) and chairperson of the group on the Establishment of Divisions of the High Court of Zambia (2004). Judge Nyambe was honored with the rank and dignity of State Counsel by the President of Zambia in 2005.



Qinisile Mabuza (eSwatini)

Common Court for Eastern & Southern Africa (COMESA)

Qinisile Mabuza made history when she became the first female attorney in Swaziland in 1978. She obtained her Bachelor of Laws from the University of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland and her Master of Laws from the University of South Africa, where she specialized in Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure. Between 1994 and 2005, Qinisile served as a Non-Executive Director of the Central Bank of Swaziland and simultaneously as Chairperson of the Swaziland Road Transportation Board (1994-1997) and a lecturer at the University of Swaziland (2002 – 2005). Her depth of knowledge and experience led to her appointment on several Commissions of Enquiry including chairing the 2005 Phala Fund Enquiry.

Judge Mabuza was appointed as Judge of the High Court of Swaziland in 2005. Prior to that appointment, she was a Founding Partner and Attorney at Q.M. Mabuza and Associates. In 2016, she was appointed as a judge of the court of Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and subsequently as Principal Judge of the COMESA Court – First Instance Division where she continues to serve in that role coupled with her second term as a Commissioner of the International Commission of Jurists following her election in 2013. Mabuza's call for debates on legalizing abortion, enhancing redress and accountability for sexual and gender-based violence, and her landmark case which gave married women the right to own and administer property in their own names in Swaziland are explicit depictions of her advocacy for gender equality.



Reine Adélaïde Sophie Alapini-Gansou (Benin)

International Criminal Court (ICC)

Reine Adélaïde Sophie Alapini-Gansou is the first Beninese woman to serve on the bench of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Born in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, Alapini-Gansou started her primary education in Libreville, Gabon, before completing it in Ouidah in Benin in 1968. She continued her studies at the Catholic Cours Secondaire Sainte Jeanne d'Arc d'Abomey and finished her secondary education at the Lycée Mathieu Bouké in Parakou, where she obtained her Baccalaureate in Literature in 1978. She studied law at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, National University of Benin.

In 1986, Alapini-Gansou was admitted to the bar in Benin and has since been involved in issues relating to human rights. Through her work at the Women's Legal Aid Center of the WILDAF network, Alapini-Gansou provided legal and judicial assistance to many in various courts and tribunals in Benin. She was also a lawyer for the Association of Lawyers without Borders (ASF) as part of the "Justice for All in Rwanda" project in 2001. It was also in 2001 that her career in teaching and research began at the Faculty of Law and Political Science and the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Abomey-Calavi.

From 2005 to 2017, she was a Commissioner of the African Commission on the Human and Peoples' Rights. She served as the president of the Commission from 2009 to 2011. She served as a Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in Africa at three different periods in 2005, 2007 to 2012 and in 2017. In 2012, she was appointed a member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration of the United Nations in The Hague. A year later, Alapini-Gansou established the Fondation défenseurs d'Afrique FDDA (Foundation Defenders of Africa) with the support of the African Human Rights Defenders' Network.

In 2015, Alapini-Gansou was registered on the International Criminal Court's list of counsel until she was elected as a judge of the court in 2017 – a position she holds to date. Since 9 March 2018, when she was sworn into office, Alapini-Gansou has been serving as a judge in the Pre-Trial and Trial Chambers.



Sanji Monageng (Botswana)

International Criminal Court (ICC)

Sanji Monageng is a National of Botswana, and a former judge of the International Criminal Court (ICC). She obtained her Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Botswana and began her legal career as a magistrate. She became a member of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in 2003 and was elected as Commissioner. While at the African Commission, she became Chairperson in 2007 and chaired the Follow Up Committee overseeing the implementation of the Robben Island guidelines prohibiting torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment. Prior to joining the ICC, Monageng also served as a judge in the High Court of The Gambia and the High Court of Swaziland.

Monageng was elected judge of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2009, where she served in the Pre-Trial Chamber and then the Appeals Division in 2012. Monageng served at the ICC for a nine-year term that ended in 2018. While at the ICC, she served as First Vice-President of the Court from 2012 to 2015, and as President of the Appeals Division in 2014. Monageng is a member of the International Association of Women Judges, the International Commission of Jurists, and several other international organizations. She was also the founding Chief Executive Officer of the Law Society of Botswana.



Sauda Mjasiri (Tanzania)

East African Court of Justice (EACJ)

Justice Sauda Mjasiri is a Tanzanian judge who was appointed to the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) on February 1st, 2019, during the 20th Ordinary Heads of State Summit of the East African Community (EAC). Justice Mjasiri worked in the trial and appellate litigation at the Tanzania Legal Corporation for twenty years before working at the Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank between 1998 and 2004. While at the Legal Corporation, she offered voluntary legal services to women, and while at the Bank, she served as executive assistant to the President, as well as a senior legal officer.

Mjasiri also established and directed a compliance unit. Justice Mjasiri was elected to the High Court of Tanzania in 2004, where she served in both the main registry as well as the commercial division for four years before being appointed as judge of the Tanzanian Court of Appeal in February 2008. She took her oath for the East African Court on the same day she was appointed and was assigned to the Appellate Division.



Solomy Balungi Bossa (Uganda)

International Criminal Court (ICC)

Justice Solomy Balungi Bossa is a Ugandan judge of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Bossa was born in Kampala, Uganda, and studied Law at Makerere University, Uganda. She received her Bachelor of Laws degree with honors and attended Uganda's Law Development Centre (LDC) to study for the bar examination. She left with a Post-Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice and was called to the bar in 1984. Bossa began her career as a lecturer at the LDC. After her father passed away in 1987, she became managing partner of his law firm while continuing to teach. As a lawyer, Bossa advocated for human rights and offered pro bono services.

Bossa joined the judiciary on the High Court bench in 1997 and was later nominated for the East African Court of Justice in Arusha, Tanzania. She was the first woman to join its bench after its inauguration in 2001, and she earned respect from her colleagues despite being the youngest of the inaugural bench of six judges. Bossa was later elected as an ad litem judge of the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal (ICTR) and was sworn in during August 2003. Bossa served at the ICTR for nine and half years before returning to the Ugandan High Court in 2013 and being appointed to the Court of Appeal/Constitutional Court in the same year.

Outside of the courtroom, she served as the founding president of the East African Law Society, Vice-Chairperson of the International Bar Association Human Rights Institute, and as the first woman president of the Uganda Law Society. She was also the founding chairperson of the Kituo Cha Katiba and assisted in founding and leading the Uganda Network on Law, Ethics, and HIV/AIDS. Bossa was nominated for a position in the ICC in 2017 and took her oath of office in March 2018. She currently serves in the Appeals Chamber (AC). Outside of the courtroom, she continues to serve as a member of the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights, the International Association of Women Judges, and as an honorary member of the International Commission of Jurists.



Sophia A.B. Akuffo (Ghana)

African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACtHPR)

Sophia Akuffo is the former Chief Justice of Ghana. She received her Bachelor of Law degree from the University of Ghana and qualified as a barrister at the Ghana School of Law. She was trained as a lawyer under Nana Akufo-Addo and received a Master's Degree in Law from Harvard University. Organizations that she worked at after law school included Akufo-Addo, Prempeh & Co., Mobil Oil, and Ghana Airways, where she served as Legal Director. She was nominated to the Supreme Court of Ghana in 1995, where she used her rulings to protect the rights of Ghanaian women. In the case of *Mensah v. Mensah* (2012), it was decided that women had the right to acquire half of all properties gained during the marriage from the divorce. In 2006, she was elected as one of the first judges of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, alongside Justice Kelello Justina Mafoso-Guni.

In 2008, she was appointed as Vice-President of the Court, was re-elected in 2010, and was appointed as the Court's first female President in 2012. As part of her mandate, Akuffo sought to spread awareness of the Court and what it did across Africa, and she did this through educational outreaches. Akuffo was nominated as Chief Justice in May 2017, and sworn in that same year by President Akufo-Addo, making her Ghana's 13th Chief Justice and the second successive woman to serve as Chief Justice in the country.

Akuffo retired in 2019 but was appointed to Ghana's COVID-19 Fund in February 2020. Justice Akuffo has served on the governing Committee of the Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute, and the Alternative Dispute Resolution Task-Force. She has also participated in several judicial system reforms, including the implementation of a fast-track court system and revamping of the Ghana Law School.



Sophia Ophelia Adjeibea Adinyira (Ghana)

United Nations Dispute Tribunal (UNDT)

Sophia Adinyira was born on September 1, 1949, in Cape Coast, the Central Region of Ghana. She attended Fijai Senior High School and Wesley Girls' High School for her 'O' Level and 'A' Level certificates respectively. Sophia was appointed as an Assistant State Attorney in 1974 following her call to the Ghana bar in 1973. She rose through the ranks to become Principal State Attorney in 1986. Sophia Adinyira began her journey at the bench in 1989 when she was appointed as a High Court judge. Ten years after, she was promoted to the Court of Appeal and was eventually appointed to the Apex Court of the land in 2006. Justice Adinyira was a member of the nine-member panel that heard and decided the "Election Petition "case of 2013. She also served as a Judge of the United Nations Appeal Tribunal (UNAT) from 2007 to 2016, sitting in New York and Geneva. With over 30 years of legal experience, Judge Adinyira took up diverse roles including Chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee of the Ghana Legal Council, Chairperson of the Board of Judicial Training of the Judicial Service of Ghana, and Chairperson of the Council for Law Reporting amongst others.

Adinyira's drive for excellence transcends her successes in the judiciary to her religious life. Sophia is a member of the Anglican Church and has been the Provincial Chancellor of the Church of the Province of West Africa since 1993. In 2019, she was appointed the first female and lay Canon of the Cathedral Church of St. Peter in the Anglican Diocese, Koforidua. Justice Adinyira's passion for child protection, juvenile justice, and women empowerment led to an award for her contribution towards enhancing the destiny of the child by the Ministry of Women and Children in Ghana. She bid farewell to the bench in 2019 with the delivery of her valedictory judgment in *Centre for Juvenile Delinquency v. Ghana Revenue Authority* (J1/61/2018) [2019] GHASC 29 where the Court unanimously ruled that the requirement of quoting one's Tax Identification Number before filing a case was unconstitutional and violates the right of access to law courts.



Sophie Sikwese (Malawi)

United Nations Dispute Tribunal (UNDT)

Rachel Sikwese made history by becoming the youngest judge to ever sit on the United Nations Dispute Tribunal (UNDT) panel. Born on February 9, 1970, Rachel Sikwese was appointed for a seven-year term in 2019. She holds an LLB (Hon.) from the University of Malawi and a Master of Laws Degree from Indiana University, Bloomington, USA.

Before she was appointed to the UNDT, Rachel served in various judicial capacities in Malawi for 21 years - from the magistracy, registrar, chairperson of the Industrial Relations Court to currently Judge of the High Court specializing in commercial law. She has been the editor of the Malawi Law Reports since 2002 and sits on the special Law Commission on the Review of the Supreme Court of Appeal Act as Deputy Chairperson.

Other enviable positions occupied by Judge Sikwese include Expert Contributor to the World Bank Group (Women, Business and the Law), UN Sustainable Development Goals- Goal 16, World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2017-2018 report, and ILO Bureau for Gender Equality. She has also served as an expert contributor on HIV & AIDS Digest for Judicial Application, the International Labour Organization, and as a Temporary Advisor to the World Health Organisation (Social Determinants of Health). Again, Judge Sikwese was an Executive Committee member of the International Labour and Employment Relations Association and serves in various capacities in both local and international associations.

Justice Sikwese is an adjunct lecturer at the University of Malawi and an Associate Research Fellow at the Institute of Development and Labour Law, University of Cape Town, South Africa. Her publication Labour Law in Malawi and her monograph in the International Encyclopaedia of Laws on Labour Law and Industrial Relations, are leading authorities on labor law in Malawi. Sikwese's other publications include HIV and AIDS in the World of Work; Legal Instruments for Judicial Use, Sources and Institutions of Labour Law in Malawi, Access to Labour Justice, Unfair Labour Practices in Malawi: A Guide to Relevant Cases and Materials, Protection and Promotion of Labour Rights: A Judges' Perspective, and Creating a more Conducive Legal Framework for the Industrial Relations Court of Malawi.



Stella Arach-Amoko (Uganda)

East African Court of Justice (EACJ)

Stella Arach-Amoko is a Ugandan judge of the Supreme Court. Justice Arach-Amoko obtained her Bachelor of Law degree from Makerere University, Uganda, and received a Diploma in Legal Practice from Kampala's Law Development Centre. In 1979, she began serving in the Attorney General's chambers. She served as State Attorney and eventually rose to the position of Commissioner for Civil Litigation. In 1997, she was appointed to the High Court of Uganda, where she worked until 2010 when she was appointed as a judge of the Court of Appeal.

While at the High Court, Justice Arach-Amoko headed the Civil and Commercial Divisions and gained a reputation for being a no-nonsense judge. Additionally, she served in the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) from 2006 to 2013, initially as a judge, but later as Deputy Principal Judge of the First Instance Division. She was even nominated for appointment as Chief Justice by Uganda's Judicial Service Commission.

Justice Arach-Amoko served as Chairperson of the Uganda Law Development Centre Management Committee from April 2018 to April 2020 and has been serving in the Supreme Court since June 2013. She has handled several election petitions, and, while at the Court of Appeal, she wrote the lead judgment that nullified the victory of an MP's win in Uganda's Butambala County in 2012.



Stella Isibhakhomen Anukam (Nigeria)

African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACtHPR)

Justice Stella Anukam is a Nigerian judge of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights who was elected to serve in that capacity for a six-year term in July 2018. She obtained her Law degree from Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria in 1984, and her B.L from the Nigerian Law School, Lagos. She was called to the Nigerian Bar in 1985 and began her Civil Service career in 1987. Justice Anukam is a Director of Special Programs at the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, and former Director of the International and Comparative Law department of the Federal Ministry of Justice. She also previously served as Director of the Freedom of Information Unit in the Federal Ministry of Justice. At the time of being appointed to the African Court, Justice Anukam also served as the National Coordinator on Human Rights Issues in Nigeria.

Prior to her election to the African Court, Justice Anukam had vast experience in human rights issues and leading the Nigerian delegation to numerous meetings of the Ordinary Sessions of the African Union Commission on Human and People's Rights. Justice Anukam's election to the African Court was historical because her inclusion on the bench, amongst others, brought the gender composition of the Bench up to six women and five men. On top of being an experienced jurist, she is also a Chartered Secretary, a practiced Administrator, and a Chartered Arbitrator.

Anukam is a member of several professional legal bodies, including the International Bar Association (IBA), the African Bar Association, the International Federation of Female Lawyers, and the Institute of Chartered Secretaries & Administrators (ICSA) London, and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators in Nigeria. She is a recipient of the Integrity Driven Women in Public Service, the Outstanding Legal Adviser in the Federation, and The Corporate Amazon Women of Excellence Award.



Tujilane Rose Chizumila (Malawi)
African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACtHPR).

Justice Tujilane Chizumila is a Malawian lawyer and jurist who was appointed as a judge of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in 2017 during the 28th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union. She has over 30 years of experience working in a legal, judicial, governing and democratic, and diplomatic capacity, on international programs, as well as in human rights and rule of law. She has served in Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania, in the Tanzania Legal Cooperation. Justice Chizumila has a Bachelor of Law degree from the University of Dar es Salaam and a Master's degree in International Law. Chizumila worked for Save the Children for around a year before reporting to the Minister of Justice as a State Advocate. She was the first woman to establish a law firm in Malawi, and in 2000, she was the first female African Ambassador to be appointed High Commissioner to Zimbabwe.

In 2003, she was appointed judge of the High Court of Malawi. Justice Chizumila has served as Secretary of the Law Society of Malawi and was appointed Malawi's first female Ombudsman by the Public Appointments Committee of the National Assembly. She served in this capacity from 2010 to 2015. Sticking to her reputation for 'firsts', she was also one of the first officers appointed by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to address issues of displacement and child protection in Malawi. She was elected to the African Court in January 2017 and took up the seat in March of the same year.

Justice Chizumila is also a scholar who released the publication "A widow's perspective-A personal experience", which helped enact a law that made property grabbing illegal. Other publications include: "Women's leadership roles and food security for refugees in Nsanje" and "Food distribution and sexual harassment in Ntcheu".



Vonimbolana Rasoazanany (Madagascar)

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)

Vonimbolana Rasoazanany was born on November 13, 1950, in Antananarivo, Madagascar. She holds a Master's degree in Law from the University of Antananarivo. This, she obtained between 1971 and 1975. Within that period, she concurrently studied for a Diploma from the Institut d'Etudes Judiciaires in the same university.

Vonimbolana started her career as a Deputy Public Prosecutor of Tribunal de première instance in Diego Suarez from 1976 to 1978. She was appointed Judge and examining magistrate at the Section of the Ambositra Tribunal from 1978 to 1981. Whilst serving in that capacity, she was responsible for investigating blood crimes, grand larcenies, killings, amongst others. From 1985 to 1990 she was appointed as Counsellor at the Court of Appeal of Antananarivo and President of the Ordinary Criminal Court. Vonimbolana lectured for about a year at the University of Antananarivo during her tenure at the Court of Appeal.

Judge Rasoazanany was elevated to the Supreme Court of Madagascar as Counsellor from 1991 to 2002. Her responsibilities involved the supervision of the Trial Courts and Appeal Courts. Thereafter, she became the Director of Studies and External Relations of the Ministry of Justice for about a year and in 2006 occupied the position of Presiding Judge at the Supreme Court of Madagascar. Judge Rasoazanany's international career commenced as ad litem judge of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for a four-year term beginning from 2001 and ending in 2005. She was re-elected by the United Nations General Assembly as ad litem judge of the ICTY for another term which ended in 2009. Rasoazanany has collaborated with international organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF on projects related to human rights and children's rights.

Judge Rasoazanany is actively involved in non-governmental organizations, namely; African League for Human and Peoples' Rights since 2000 and "Comité national malgache pour la défense des droits de l'homme", since 2002. She has served on several boards in Madagascar and has participated in numerous conferences and workshops both locally and internationally. She has been awarded on several occasions for her industriousness in legal spheres.



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