



# *Members* **FIRST**

## N E W S L E T T E R



## 15TH ANNUAL ULS RULE OF LAW SYMPOSIUM AND LAUNCH OF THE 3RD QUARTER RULE OF LAW REPORT

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## Message From Members First Newsletter Chairperson



**D**ear Readers,  
I trust this message finds you in good spirits. It gives me immense pleasure to extend a heartfelt welcome to you as we share the highlights of November.

This month has been teeming with vibrant activities that have added immense value to our legal community. Our Annual Rule of Law Symposium was a resounding success, fostering enriching dialogue and sharing invaluable perspectives. Additionally, we proudly launched the Quarterly Rule of Law Report, a testament to our dedication to the promotion of the Rule of Law in the country.

Our commitment to knowledge enhancement was further reinforced through more specialized continuous legal training sessions, including the Oil and Gas Training and the Retirement Benefits Law Training, each contributing significantly to our expertise in these vital areas.

We were glad to meet the Chief registrar with an aim of discussing issues affecting membership. The Northern Bar Dinner, and EALS Annual Law Conference were some of the activities that brought the members together in a spirit of collaboration and solidarity, reinforcing the bond within our esteemed legal fraternity.

Within the pages of this issue, you will find a wealth of articles and reports encapsulating the essence of these events, offering you a chance to delve deeper into the discussions and learning opportunities.

May this newsletter bring you information, inspiration, and serve as a catalyst for your personal and professional growth.

I wish you all the best in your endeavors.

Warm regards,

**Counsel Atukunda Isaac - Chairperson Members First Newsletter**

# COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

## 15TH ANNUAL RULE OF LAW SYMPOSIUM

Between 13th and 17th November 2023, the Uganda Law Society organised its Annual Rule of Law Week. The Rule of Law Week climaxed with the annual Rule of Law Symposium and the launch of the third Quarter Rule of Law Report 2023. During the symposium held as part of the week's events, pertinent sub-themes related to **“Advancing the Fight for Human Rights; The critical Security Sector Agencies,”** and **“Harnessing the Power of Public Interest Litigation,”** were extensively deliberated upon. Discussions revolved around the role of security agencies in promoting and respecting human rights, civilian oversight mechanisms and accountability, the importance of human rights compliance in the use of force, transparency, and information sharing within the security sector. Moreover, emphasis was placed on police reforms geared towards community policing, judicial oversight concerning military justice, and seeking justice for victims of security sector abuses. Collaboration between civil society, communities, and the security sector was also a crucial focal point.

In his remarks, the President of the Uganda Law Society, Bernard Oundo welcomed the participants to the event. These included the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, development partners, representatives of Civil Society Organisations, representatives from security agencies including the Uganda Police Force, Uganda People's Defence Forces, and Intelligence agencies, stakeholders, and members of Uganda Law Society.



*ULS President, Bernard Oundo giving his remarks during the Rule of Law Symposium*

He stated that the world continues to experience change at an alarming rate. One constant, however, remains – the indispensability of the Rule of Law in forging a better, brighter, and more equitable future for ourselves and succeeding generations. Achieving an ideal state of Rule of Law in our society is a gradual and often painstaking process, but the rewards are infinitely worth the effort we put in. I am greatly pleased by the sustained hard efforts by both the ULS and our strategic partners in fostering gradual improvements in adherence to the Rule of Law in Uganda. These Quarterly Reports are not only a means of determining what needs to be done as we continue that good fight, but are also a chance to take measure of hard-won gains and thereby replenish our source of inspiration.

The President added that this third Quarterly Report comprehensively analyses critical events and issues including the appointment of new judicial officers, the introduction and passage of new legislation, reports on cases of human rights violations, the empaneling of commissions of inquiry to investigate disputes of wide importance, the rising cases of enforced disappearance, violation of the rights of journalists, and general reports on the state of governance and the Rule of Law in Uganda. It offers a bird's eye view of the general governance landscape in Uganda thereby presenting vital information and tools for the prudent policy/lawmaker, administrative officer, advocate, or civil society activist to effect meaningful change.

He further stated that the ULS is certain that the recommendations set out in the Report will be carefully analyzed and implemented by the relevant Government ministries, departments, and agencies as well as the civil society and the general citizenry in order that we may propel Uganda to the ideal state of governance and development that we all desire.

The Report further sets out the numerous events organized by the ULS in the period of review including a week-long Legal Aid/Pro Bono Week, numerous professional trainings for members, youth engagements, the Ben Kiwanuka Annual Memorial Lecture, and other engagements all of which demonstrate an unwavering commitment to the betterment of our members, the community, and the nation at large.

He ended by thanking all the partners for their continued support in the implementation of ULS programs as well as the compilation and publication of our Quarterly and other analytical Reports adding that with this support the ULS will continue to improve the state of governance and administration of justice in Uganda.

Hon. Nobert Mao, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs who was the Chief Guest thanked the Uganda Law Society for organizing the symposium and continuously contributing to the fight for the Rule of Law.



*Hon. Nobert Mao giving his remarks*





*Dr. Daniel Ruhweza (extreme left) who was the moderator together with distinguished pannelists after a deliberation on the role of security agencies in advancing the fight for human rights during the Rule of Law Symposium*

He emphasized the importance of commitment to access to justice and fostering the Rule of Law, urging everyone to remain dedicated to these principles. Additionally, he highlighted that human rights should not be politicized and stressed the significance of Civil Society Organizations (CSO's) using a language that promotes good relations with the state.

Furthermore, Hon. Nobert Mao condemned various human rights violations and urged the government to take action in addressing these violations. He mentioned the government's efforts in increasing the number of judges and expressed the intention to further increase the number of justices.

He closed by stating that judicial independence is the cornerstone of the rule of law. He cautioned the Resident District Commissioners (RDC's) and district security committees to refrain from interfering with court orders stating that a court order is not negotiable except by appeal and that a security committee is not a court of appeal as per the law.

During the Keynote address, Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana stated that there is need to understand the four key distinct spaces of society everywhere; namely family space and state space. These are supplemented by the other contested spaces- market space

(private sector), and civil society space for example NGOs, etc. The dominant space is the state because they have powers over the other spaces and these powers must be used well so that they don't affect the functionality of other spaces. The role of the civil society space is to broaden the space for participation.

Within, the dominant space, there is the security agencies who have been given the role to safe guard the spaces. This safeguarding is done on behalf of the dominant space. As the security agencies try to executive this role, this should be executed bearing in mind that there are other spaces that must be promoted. All security agencies have a responsibility to promote the value of rule of law and human rights, which they must comply with as a major principle.



*Dr. Livingstone Sewanyana delivering the Key-note address during the Symposium*

He stated that the critical role of the security agencies is to safeguard the space, and as citizens they are human rights defenders who should safeguard values for others and ensure that they are constantly aware of the struggle or contest between spaces and procedural guarantees bearing in mind that everyone is a candidate for breach of the law or offend the law.

## ULS COUNCIL MEETS CHIEF REGISTRAR

In what was the first of its kind, the Chief Registrar, Her Worship Sarah Langa Siu, on Tuesday, November 8, 2023 held a meeting with the Uganda Law Society Executive to discuss important matters, and engage in dialogue regarding issues that affect collaborative efforts between the Bar and the Bench.

The meeting which took place in the Chief Registrar's chambers was attended by a seven-member delegation from Uganda Law Society (ULS) led by the President, Mr Bernard Oundo as well as Registrars; Rosemary Bareebe (Registrar High Court), His Worship James Ereemye Jumire Mawanda (Registrar Magistrates Affairs and Data Management/ Public Relations Officer), and Her Worship Pamella Lamunu (Inspector of Courts).

The others included the Private Legal Secretary to the Chief Registrar, Her Worship Patricia Amoko and His Worship Timothy Lumunye, the Personal Assistant to the Chief Registrar.

The Chief Registrar thanked the Society for their support in implementing innovations such as the Electronic Court Case Management Information System. She also commended advocates who had responded to the call for the state brief scheme, noting that requests to join the same were still coming through.

Her Worship Langa briefed the Executive on the progress of the Performance Enhancement Tool, which will enable advocates and other court users to assess the performance of Judicial Officers as well as enhance transparency. This was welcomed by ULS Executive who expressed readiness to assess judicial officers and the quality of judgments. They also proposed the establishment of an anonymous hotline for advocates to address their grievances while maintaining anonymity.

In terms of upcoming Judiciary events, the Chief Registrar informed the ULS Executive that Uganda was set to host the East African Magistrates and Judges Association Conference (December 4th - 8th, 2023), the Registrars & Magistrates Conference (December 14th - 15th, 2023).

The other events included the Annual Judges Conference (February 5th - 8th, 2024), the Opening of the New Law Year 2024 (February 9th) and that a formal invitation would be sent. She further informed them of the planned National Court Open Day whose date would be shared in due course.

The ULS President thanked the Chief Registrar for the meeting and requested that the same be held on a quarterly basis to make it more predictable which idea was actualized. He emphasized the need for improved communication between the Bar and the Bench, highlighting updates on court proceedings and other essential information.



*President of the Uganda Law Society, Bernard Oundo  
airing out grievances of the ULS Members*

Mr. Oundo advocated for the digitization of Practicing Certificates to eliminate the need for advocates to physically obtain hard copies,

aligning with the digital era.

Other concerns raised included; delayed judgments, conduct of some judicial officers, scheduling of court proceedings, sharing cause lists, customer service at certain courts, clerks' conduct, and excessive bail amounts.

In response, the Chief Registrar said the concerns on high bail amounts would be addressed. On the issue of hotlines, she noted that the implementation of the same will be in line with the expansion of the Judiciary Call Centre.



*The ULS Council members, Chief Registrar and other officials from the Judiciary pose for a photo after the meeting*

The ULS team included; Mr. Moses Okwalinga (CEO), Mr. Isaac Newton Kyagaba (Treasurer), Mr. Allan Musasire (Council Member), Mr. Isaac Atukunda (Secretary), Ms Immaculate Namanda (ULS Head of Public Relations), and Mr. Enock Kizito (Clerk to Council).

In conclusion, through these constructive dialogues and shared initiatives, the ULS is working towards a system where justice is not only served but is evident to all stakeholders, fostering trust and confidence in the judiciary.



## NORTHERN REGION END OF YEAR DINNER

On the auspicious evening of November 18, 2023, the Uganda Law Society (ULS) orchestrated a dinner to honor, and celebrate the dedicated lawyers practicing within the bounds of Northern Uganda. The event was a convergence of legal brilliance and camaraderie. It was an evening illuminated by the esteemed presence of several key players in the legal profession headed the Chief Justice of the Republic of Uganda, whose presence added a significant luster to the occasion. Alongside the Chief Justice stood the ULS President, together with ULS council members, senior lawyers, and a host of other distinguished legal professionals, all converging to mark a historic milestone in the Northern Bar Fraternity's journey.



*Hon. Omara Atubo receives an award from the Chief Justice for being among the first students to be enrolled at LDC in 1972.*



*ULS Council Members pose for photo moment with the Chief Justice*





*A collage of photos showing the highlights at the dinner*

The ambiance of the dinner was a wide-ranging blend of sophistication and conviviality, where the esteemed guests engaged in discussions that traversed legal realms, shared professional insights, and fostered connections. This gathering wasn't just a ceremonial event; it embodied the spirit of solidarity among legal practitioners in Northern Uganda, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose. The presence of such prominent figures, including the Chief Justice, underscored the significance of this event, highlighting the ULS's commitment to recognizing and appreciating the contributions of lawyers in the region.

Moreover, the dinner served as the fourth iteration of a tradition—an annual affair that has steadily evolved into a symbol of excellence and solidarity within the Northern Bar Fraternity. Its recurrence speaks volumes about the perseverance and dedication of the ULS and the legal community in Northern Uganda to foster a platform for dialogue, mentorship, and the exchange of ideas. Beyond the sumptuous cuisine and elegant setting, the evening encapsulated a deeper significance—a celebration of legal prowess, a tribute to shared accomplishments, and a testament to the unwavering commitment of legal professionals in upholding the rule of law in Northern Uganda.

This dinner stood as a testament to the unity, resilience, and dedication of the legal fraternity, underscoring the pivotal role played by these individuals in upholding justice and the rule of law in the region. The presence of esteemed dignitaries and the recurrence of this event not only emphasized its significance but also reiterated the commitment of the ULS to foster collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and camaraderie among legal practitioners, thereby enriching the legal landscape in Northern Uganda.

## INTERNATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The International Bar Association (IBA) held an Annual Conference in Paris, France from 29th October – 3rd November 2023. The IBA Annual Conference is the leading conference for legal professionals worldwide to meet, share knowledge, build contacts and develop business. It serves to advance the development of international law and its role in business and society to provide members with world-class professional development opportunities to enable them to deliver outstanding legal services.

The Conference was opened by the IBA President Ms. Almudena Arpon de Mendivil, a Spanish lawyer and Partner at Gomez- Acebo & Pombo, a law firm in Spain. The Conference consisted of several sessions including; ***“The role and practice of the government and a public lawyer”***, ***“Emerging cybersecurity threats and how counsel can help their clients”***, ***“Creating and implementing a diversity and inclusion strategy for the law firm”***, among others.



*IBA President Ms. Almudena Arpon de Mendivil giving remarks at the opening ceremony of the IBA Annual Conference*





*Panel discussion at IBA with legal professionals from allover the world*



*ULS President Bernard Oundo alongside Counsel Joseph Matsiko of KAA at the IBA Conference*



## 28TH EAST AFRICA LAW SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND GENERAL MEETING

The East Africa Law Society (EALS) held its Annual Conference and General Meeting from 22nd – 25th November 2023 under the theme: ***“One Region, One People: The Role of the Law and Legal Profession in Defining the Future of East African Community”*** in Bujumbura, Burundi.

The event was officially opened by the EALS Governing Council alongside the EALS Secretariat and National Bar Presidents. The Conference comprised of various sessions ranging from technology, law firm management, a women lawyers forum, young lawyers forum, in-house counsel forum, among others.

The Conference entailed a Young Lawyers Forum where the Hon. Chief Justice Emeritus of Kenya, Hon. David Maraga led a panel discussion. The Hon. Chief Justice Emeritus shared insights on combating money sighting 3 steps: (1) Playing a relevant advisory and consulting role, (2) Making thorough investigation and exercising proper due diligence, (3) Training and empowering legal professionals and the general public through seminars and trainings.

Uganda was well represented with its members leading discussions on various topics. Ms. Asmahaney Saad, Managing Partner KTA and ULS member gave an enlightening discussion on ‘Exploring Opportunities and Challenges for the In-House Counsel in New Corporate Governance’. Ms. Saad shared the vital role of new corporate governance in securing financial support for private businesses.

Mr. Kenneth Muhangi of KTA participated in a panel that explored the intricacies of legal technology. Mr. Muhangi delved into the profound impact of emerging technologies on legal practice, the seamless integration of artificial intelligence in the legal sector, and the evolving role of technology in significantly enhancing efficiency within the legal profession.

Hon. Joyce Nalunga of the Leadership Code Tribunal participated in the Women’s Forum at the EALS Annual Conference. The Forum converged women lawyers across the region to discuss common areas of concern such as positioning women in areas of influence and mentoring the young generation.

The EALS Conference also held a Sports and Wellness session with friendly matches between the various Bar Associations. The ULS had its match against the Burundi Bar Association and the score was 2 (Burundi) and 0 (Uganda)



*Left: Hon. Dr. Fauz Twaib, EALS President and Retired High Court Judge of Tanzania. Right: Hon. David Maraga, Chief Justice Emeritus of Kenya*



*Left: ULS President, Mr. Bernard Oundo. Right: ULS Council Members pose for a photo at the EALS Annual Conference and AGM*



*Left: Ms. Asmahaney Saad of KTA leading a discussion on In-House Counsel. Right: Participants listening attentively*





*Ms. Joyce Nalunga of the Leadership Code Tribunal (centre) takes a group photo with women lawyers and panelists from across East Africa at the Women's Forum*



*Mr. Kenneth Muhangi (far right) poses for a photo with other panelists at the EALS Annual Conference*





*Group photo of participants*



*The ULS team prepares for a friendly match against the Burundi Bar Association*



## MEET EMMANUEL EGARU OMIAT – ULS NORTHERN REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL MEMBER

### 1. Tell us about yourself?

My name is Emmanuel Egaru Omiat. I am an Advocate of the High Court of Uganda currently serving as the Managing Partner at Egaru and Co. Advocates based in Lira City Northern Uganda, Uganda.

### 2. What motivated you to stand for leadership with the ULS Council?

I was motivated because of the unique challenges members from the northern region face. I also have a personal drive to serve and effectively represent them as highlighted in my manifesto.

### 3. How many members do you currently have in Northern Region?

I currently represent at least 500 members and this number keeps growing annually.

### 4. What do you plan to do for your members? What was in your manifesto? In short, what do you bring to the table?

- i) Welfare of the members – Financially (this involves trainings in billing clients, sustenance of law firms and business, financial management and investment), and health of the members (lawyers are normally so engaged and engrossed in their work with little attention and focus on their fitness and health, I therefore intend to come up with a routine strategy to get members involved in sports and other habits that will enhance their health including trainings on the same).

ii) Bridge Communication Gap– I intend to ensure any gaps that exist between the secretariat and northern region are bridged so that we can engage better and in a timely manner with Uganda Law Society Programs and activities.

- iii) Promote harmonious co-existence between members of the northern bar. I discovered that our members are not very united and as such I intend to create and promote activities that will bring them together. (The planned activities include Annual law dinner, regional tours by the members and sport activities among others).

- v) Promotion of Healthy, conducive and professional working environment between members of the bar and the bench in terms of respect for each other, civility and timely delivery of justice.

- v) Promote rule of law in the region – without observance of the rule of law by institutions our practice as advocates gets highly affected and as such I will work with all the relevant institutions to ensure human rights and rule of law is observed and promoted in the interest of justice for all.

- vi) Advocacy for early inspections of law firms in the region to enable members acquire their PC's in record time.

- vii) Support to Young lawyers – I will focus on

ensuring young lawyers' concerns are discussed and handled as they are high on my agenda. These include their welfare in terms of remuneration, mentorship programs and also respect by senior colleagues.

- viii) Advocacy for more CLE trainings in the region – this will address the High cost of CLE's especially when the members have to travel to Kampala to attend CLE Programs.
- ix) Curbing unqualified individuals from practicing law in the region (In this case members without practicing certificates)
- x) Northern bar SACCO – I am aware the northern bar SACCO was started however it is not progressing the way it should and so I intend to bring members to a round table discussion so as to revitalize aimed at revitalization of the northern bar SACCO.
- xi) Promotion of Pro-bono services to vulnerable people and public interest litigation jointly conducted by members of the northern bar.

**5. What advice would you give to young lawyers?**

I advise young lawyers to find senior lawyers that can mentor them with an aim to promote discipline and professionalism. I believe that they will also be taught the value of hard work as key to enable success.

**6. What challenges does your membership face and how do you plan to tackle them?**

- i) Delayed inspection of the law firms – I will engage with the relevant stakeholders for a timely inspection.
- ii) Execution and enforcements of court orders – I will dialogue with the relevant stakeholders.
- iii) High Cost of CLE trainings – I will advocate for more CLE's in the region.

**7. How will you be able to link your membership to the Secretariat back in Kampala?**

I will ensure there is timely communication and engagement with the secretariat for better service delivery.

**8. At the end of your tenure, what would you want to be remembered for?**

I would like to be remembered for effective leadership as one that promoted unity and welfare of the members.

**9. Please share any closing remarks?**

As a society we should continue to fight for the rule of law in our country, remain professional in our conduct and lastly claim back our professional spaces (areas of practice) that have been heavily encroached on.

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To contact Council Member Northern Representative;  
**Call +256 772 357 06 or Email [egaruemma@gmail.com](mailto:egaruemma@gmail.com)**



# Upcoming CLE EVENTS



## December 2023

CLE EVENT	CLE POINTS	DATE	FEES
Sports Law Training	5	1st December 2023	Ugx 70,000 (Young Lawyers) Ugx 100,000 (Other Lawyers)
Annual Western Region Dinner	2	2nd December 2023	(Ugx. 250,000 ( Dinner & transport to & from Queen Elizabeth N.P) UGX 150,000 (Dinner only)
Construction Law Training	10	7th-8th December 2023	Ugx. 400,000 - Physical Ugx. 140,000 - Online- Young Lawyers) Ugx. 200,000 (Other Lawyers)
ULS Annual Dinner	2	15th December 2023	Ugx 250,000 (Early Bird) Ugx 200,000 ( Early Bird Young Lawyers) Ugx. 300,000 (Late Payment)
Annual Eastern Region Retreat (Ssesse Island & Kalangala)	2	8th-10th December 2023	Ugx. 600,000 (Per Individual)
Criminal Law Practice	5	19th December 2023	Ugx 70,000 (Young Lawyers) Ugx 100,000 (Other Lawyers)

**FOR BOOKING CONTACT : 0703253733/0774590680/0706317017/0754659981**

**EMAIL: cle@uls.or.ug/programofficer@uls.or.ug**

**How to pay:**



### Airtel

Dial \*185\*62#, option 1-pay fees, input ULS Membership number, enter amount, confirm details of the member & confirm with PIN

### MTN

Dial \*165#, option 4-Payments, option 3- School Fees, option 2- School pay, option 1- pay fees, enter the membership number, confirm member details & enter PIN to complete the transaction

**Bank** Present your Membership payment number only

**5 CLE  
Points**

**Online CLE Training:**



# Sports Law



**1st December 2023**

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## **FEE:**

**UGX 70,000/= (Young Lawyers)**

**UGX 100,000/= (Other Lawyers)**

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**Inquiries:** ☎ | 0774 590680 | 0706317017

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## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MEMBER'S AFFAIRS

### RETIREMENT BENEFITS LAW CLE TRAINING

On November 24, 2023, the Uganda Law Society in collaboration with NSSF organized the Retirement Benefits Continuing Legal Education (CLE) training that focused on the Retirement Benefits Law in Uganda.

The comprehensive presentations from the panelists highlighted the critical role of social protection as a fundamental human right in Uganda, evolving from traditional community-based support to formalized schemes like National Social Security Fund (NSSF) among others. It emphasized the purpose of social protection, guaranteeing a decent life post-retirement, minimizing income shocks due to health issues or unemployment, and contributing to societal cohesion.

Key national policies, including Uganda Vision 2040 and the National Development Plan (NDP), underscored the importance of social protection in addressing vulnerabilities based on age, social class, disability, gender, and disaster. The presentation detailed the components of social protection, encompassing direct income support and social insurance, crucial for income security and access to healthcare.

During the presentations, it was emphasized that the National Social Security System in Uganda aims to promote equity, reduce poverty, and provide a secure foundation for

livelihoods, aligned with international and regional instruments like the East African Common Market Protocol and various conventions on social security.

Various social security schemes targeting different sectors—civil servants, parliamentarians, military officers, formal and informal workers—were outlined, along with the need for legal reforms, inclusivity, and expansion of coverage to enhance social security.

Strategies for the improvement of social security coverage were highlighted, including the establishment of regulatory bodies, expansion of access to health insurance, and legal reforms. Case studies from Tunisia, South Africa, and the Republic of Korea demonstrated successful increases in health and pension coverage through effective social security implementation.

Advocates were identified as catalysts for social security reform, playing pivotal roles in implementation, legal education, representation, advisory services, and policy enforcement.

#### Key Takeaways:

1. Social protection is crucial in maintaining minimum acceptable standard of living and dignity.
2. Every Ugandan, regardless of employment status, requires guaranteed social protection throughout their life cycle.



3. Social protection enhances the capacity of vulnerable individuals and families to meet basic needs, build resilience, access opportunities, and improve their quality of life.



*Ms. Joanne Sewaali, Manager Regulatory Affairs NSSF and Ms. Agnes Tibayeita Isharaza, Corporation Secretary NSSF leading a discussion at the Retirement Benefits Training*



*Simon Semaganda, Kimuli Faith and Ms. Agnes Tibayeita Isharaza, during the training*

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## OIL AND GAS CLE TRAINING

On November 7, 2023, the Uganda Law Society organized an oil and gas training. This was a hybrid event that was hosted by Uganda National Oil Company (UNOC). Participants were trained on the progress of the oil and gas industry and the future prospects of the industry.

On the influence of Environmental Social Governance (ESG) factors to the legal landscape, it was stated that ESG's influence on the legal landscape is predominantly traced to the Paris Agreement, a legally binding international treaty on climate change that was adopted by the 196 parties at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris France on 12th December, 2015. Mr. Charles Mwesige Mutabazi- Ag Environmental Specialist at UNOC emphasized the importance of compliance for lawyers in advising clients, enhancing law firm reputation, attracting investors, and navigating regulatory complexities, while acknowledging the challenges of ESG adherence.

Mr. Muhereza Nicholas, the Managing Director and Consultant at Muhereza Energy Consults Limited shared that the road to sustainability involves a transition from fossil fuels to sustainable sources of energy, environmental, social and economic benefits of sustainable energy and global efforts towards sustainability and Uganda's contribution.

On Exploring alternative sources of energy in Africa he shared about utilizing African resources stating that there is an abundance of natural resources in Africa for energy production. He further discussed the potential of renewable energy sources in Uganda such as solar, wind, hydro and geothermal. Mr. Muhereza also informed members about the challenges and opportunities in the sector.

The first challenge he noted was in transitioning, where he stated that the initial investment costs and infrastructure development are a challenge. One of the opportunities he alluded to is job creation, economic growth and energy security. He then encouraged active participation in shift towards sustainable energy.

Mr. Denis Kakembo, the Managing Partner at Cristal Advocates & Consultants on exploring opportunities with the oil and gas regulatory landscape said that whereas there are some unique features of the oil and gas industry, their need for legal and advisory services is not materially different from the other sectors. He added that legal services are the same across all sectors. He denoted that for one to position themselves to be a legal service provider in the oil and gas sector they should identify their legal service niche and this should be their banner of entry in the sector, running publications, trainings, webinars and looking within clients to identify those to interest to participate in the sector.



*Left: Mr. Sam Ahanya- Partner, Ahanya Associates & Advocates and the Chairperson of the ULS Oil and Gas Cluster.  
Right: Mr. Denis Kakembo – Partner, Cristal Advocates*



*Ms. Jessica Kyeyune- National Content Specialist at UNOC making a presentation during the Oil and Gas Training*



## BANKING LAW SYMPOSIUM

The Banking Law Symposium was held virtually on 9th and 10th November 2023. The discussion was led with speakers from Post Bank Uganda, Bank of Baroda, Byenkya, Kihika & Co. Advocates, Signum Advocates, DIT Advocates, J Byamukama & Co. Advocates, BDO, among others.

Mr. Emmanuel Partaker- Head Legal, Post Bank Uganda highlighted that financial institutions must adopt the Sustainability Certification System to not only compete successfully in the market but also safeguard business continuity and build unshakable resilience.

Ms. Ninsiima Agatha, Partner at Byenkya Kihika & Company Advocates delved into the regulations that have been put in place against e-fraud. She urged financial institutions to ensure client safety measures in digital banking, and called for continuous cyber security education in financial institutions for both staff and clients.

Mr. Ian Mutibwa Partner, Signum Advocates shared profound insights into Islamic banking, a financial system that distinguishes itself by excluding interest components. Islamic finance is not limited to Muslims only and it operates on the pillars of Islam, promoting ethical and equitable financial practices that anyone can embrace. It is similar to taking a different route to the same destination. The destination being a financial world where ethics, fairness, and inclusivity take precedence, offering a fresh perspective on how we manage money. He urged lawyers to embrace the principles of Islamic banking and join the journey towards a more responsible and equitable financial landscape.

In addition, Mr. Ahmed Senkumba, the Legal & Compliance Manager at Bank of Baroda defined Islamic Banking as a system of

banking that is consistent with the principles of Islamic law and its practical application through the Islamic rules on transactions. Contrary to misconceptions, he highlighted that Islamic banking isn't exclusive to Muslims; it's a financial paradigm rooted in collaboration. It doesn't just provide interest-free loans; instead, it fosters joint enterprises where partners share profits and losses. He also noted that the Financial Institutions Amendment Act of 2016 and 2023 provides for Islamic banking under Section 10(3)(1) of the Act.

Mr. Jude Byamukama made a presentation on recent judicial decisions affecting Uganda's banking sector where he noted that the courts of law have delivered important decisions touching conduct of banking business, mortgagee rights, lender's recovery rights, digital fraud, among others. Some recent decisions he cited include;

*Aida Atiku v Centenary Bank (HCCS No. 754 of 2020)* in which it was held that bank customers have the duty and responsibility to keep banking information, user IDs, passwords and PINs confidential and in default, any fraud resulting from such omissions or negligence cannot be visited on the bank.

*Ferdsult Engineering Services Ltd & another v AG and Absa Bank CP No. 18 of 2021*, where the Constitutional Court upheld the validity of Regulation 13(1) of the Mortgage Regulations No. 2 of 2012 which requires a deposit of 30% of the forced sale value of mortgaged property or outstanding amount in order to be able to postpone a sale by auction.

Ham Enterprises ltd & 2 others v Diamond Trust Bank SCCA 13 OF 2021 in which the Supreme Court unanimously held that syndicated lending which involved foreign banks doesn't contravene the Financial Institutions Act, 2004.



Left: Mr. Emmanuel Partaker - Head Legal, Post Bank Uganda. Right: Mr. Jude Byamukama Partner, J Byamukama & Co. Advocates



Group photo of panelists on day 1 of the Banking law symposium

# LEGAL AID AND PRO BONO PROJECT

## Success story – Kabale Legal Aid Clinic

Mr. Kyarugahare Urban was a party to a suit where he lost the case after an arbitral award and execution order was lodged against him. He was remanded to a civil prison. The ULS Legal Aid clinic in Kabale found him at the civil prison where he had spent two months.

The Legal Aid team filed an application at the Chief Magistrates Court of Kabale to set aside the arbitral award and execution order citing irregularities under which the orders were made. These included:

- Failure to give the applicants any notice of appointment of an arbitrator.
- Failure to give notice of arbitral proceedings.
- The applicants were not given a chance to present their case.
- The composition of the arbitral tribunal was not in accordance with the agreement of the parties.
- The applicants were informed about the arbitral award while being committed to civil prison.

Judgment was entered in favour of our client and the Court took cognizance of the illegalities which had led to his detention in civil prison. The client was immediately released and remains grateful for the free services offered to him by the LAP team in Kabale.



### THE ANNUAL RULE OF LAW WEEK, 2023

Between the 13th and 17th November 2023, the Uganda Law Society commemorated the Annual Rule of Law Week. This event has been a longstanding tradition for the past thirteen years, fostering discussions, engagements, and activities focused on upholding the rule of law in Uganda.

This year's annual Rule of Law week was under the theme; ***“Advancing the Fight for Human Rights,”*** with the objective of inter alia raising awareness and understanding of human rights principles. The objectives of the rule of law week was to ensure that citizens from various backgrounds comprehend the relevance of human rights in their daily lives and to strengthen capacity and access to Justice. These were achieved through providing training sessions and capacity-building programs for legal practitioners, law enforcement officers, community leaders, and civil society organizations.

The sessions focused on human rights laws, advocacy strategies, and mechanisms. Throughout this week, various initiatives were undertaken to address topical rule of law issues, including radio and television talk shows held in different regions of the country, activities conducted by Rule of Law Clubs in high schools and universities, prison visits, community outreaches, as well as engagements with diverse stakeholders.

The week's activities also further included community outreach in Komamboga by the Kampala LAP Clinic, prison outreach at Soroti government prison by the Soroti LAP Clinic, community outreach in Nakawa market by the Kampala LAP Clinic, prison outreach in Luzira (Murchison bay) and Kitalya by Luzira LAP Clinic, university students debate in Mbarara hosted by the Bishop Stuart University Rule of Law Club, prison outreach in Masindi government prison by the Masindi LAP Clinic, prison outreach in Ndorwa Area B, Kabale by the Kabale LAP Clinic, prison outreach at Katojo, Jinja remand prison, Gulu main prison, women section, among others.



*A team from the ULS Luwero Legal Aid Clinic poses for a photo with prison officers after conducting a sensitization at Butuntumula Government Prison situate in Luwero District on 13th November 2023*



*ULS staff from the legal aid clinics appearing on radio talk-shows during the week*



*ULS Staff at Kabale LAP and Masindi Clinics pose for a photo after a sensitization at Kisoro and Masindi government prisons respectively.*



*ULS Staff from Soroti Clinic appearing on Voice of Teso FM sensitizing the masses in the region on human rights*



Additionally, during the week through the ULS established Rule of Law clubs, there were also carried out community sensitizations in Kancence in Mbarara, Kikoni, Makerere, Kansanga, Kamwokya, and in Butuntumula in Luwero through the Luwero LAP clinic.



*Photos of the community outreach held in Kikoni, Makerere through the Makerere University, Rule of Law Club*



*The ULS Chief Executive Officer, Moses Okwalinga, and the Probono Manager, Anthony Asimwe appearing for a talk show at CBS*



*Winners of the University debate (Bishop Stuart University) pose with their certificates after the competitions in Mbarara*





*Sensitization at Kamwokya Market through the Cavendish University Rule of Law Club.*

Through these various interventions, the ULS was able to raise awareness on human rights to all the people in the different communities regionally, prisoners were educated on their pre-trial rights, trial procedures, right to bail, and plea bargain processes. The activities also created empowerment, especially for women and the youths in universities, and contributed to the overall fostering and promotion of human rights and the rule of law in general.

The Rule of Law Week provided a crucial platform for stakeholders from both state and non-state entities to reflect on the status of the rule of law in Uganda. It facilitated an assessment of successes, identified existing challenges and gaps, and encouraged the sharing of suggestions and recommendations aimed at further upholding and strengthening the rule of law in the nation.

## RULE OF LAW DIALOGUE AT CAVENDISH UNIVERSITY

An event themed around youth participation in fostering the rule of law and good governance in Uganda, geared towards enhancing youth involvement in promoting the country's rule of law, was hosted at Cavendish University. The Rule of Law Dialogue took place on 23rd November 2023 and was organized by the Uganda Law Society's Rule of Law Department, aligning with its third objective of nurturing the rule of law and good governance in the nation.

Over seventy (70) students, including attendees from the Islamic University in Uganda, participated in the event. The dialogue encapsulated the essence of Mahatma Gandhi's words, encouraging attendees to become the change they wish to see in the world.



*Participants listening in during the various sessions of the dialogue*

During the event, Turyasingura Gaudius, who was the keynote speaker emphasized the importance of justice, mediation, and leadership in resolving conflicts and upholding the rule of law within communities. He added that today's world presents numerous complexities and challenges that demand the active involvement of visionary young minds in furthering the fight for the rule of law. In the face of global issues, from social injustices to human rights violations, everyone's leadership is crucial, and it is this dedication that will bring about positive change, advocate for fairness, and champion the rule of law in our society.







*Out-going Rule of Club Committee posing for a photo after receiving their certificates of appreciation (on the right); In-coming and Outgoing Committee for the Club during cake cutting*

During his address, the speaker fervently underscored the paramount importance of embracing empathy, seeking wisdom, and upholding justice in every facet of life, regardless of one's position or standing. He passionately articulated that these values serve as the bedrock of a just and equitable society. Emphasizing the transformative power of empathy, he urged the audience to cultivate a deeper understanding of others' perspectives and challenges. Additionally, he extolled the virtues of seeking wisdom, encouraging continual learning and a thirst for knowledge as indispensable tools for informed decision-making and just governance. Moreover, he reiterated that the steadfast commitment to upholding justice should be a guiding principle for every individual, permeating through all spheres of society, from the highest echelons of leadership to the grassroots level. This holistic approach, he asserted, fosters a harmonious and fair society, where every person's rights are respected and upheld, laying the foundation for sustainable progress and societal cohesion.



*In-coming Club Leadership photo with Mr. Turyasingura Gaudius, Ag. Head Rule of Law Department (in the centre)*

The dialogue served as a platform for insightful discussions and reflections, aiming to inspire the young people to champion the principles of fairness, equity, justice and the rule of law in the country.



### FINANCIAL REPORTING AWARDS (FiRe) AWARDS, 2023

The Financial Reporting Awards (FiRe), organized by the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Uganda, was a prestigious event held at Serena Hotel. It served as a platform to acknowledge and celebrate outstanding achievements in financial reporting among various institutions in Uganda. This event was attended by numerous prominent entities in the country, emphasizing the importance of upholding high standards in financial reporting practices.

During this notable event, the Uganda Law Society received a certificate of recognition in the Regulatory Bodies and Associations Category for its exemplary performance in financial reporting. This recognition signifies the society's exceptional dedication and competence in maintaining transparency, accuracy, and compliance with financial regulations within its realm.



*The ULS Chief Executive Officer and the Accounts team pose for a photo after receiving the award*

The recognition bestowed upon the Uganda Law Society serves as a commendation of its commitment to excellence in financial reporting. It underscores the society's pivotal role in promoting ethical practices, ensuring accountability, and upholding standards that contribute positively to Uganda's financial sector.

Overall, this achievement not only reflects the Uganda Law Society's proficiency in financial reporting but also highlights its significant impact on fostering a culture of transparency and adherence to financial standards within the country.

### ULS PARTICIPATES IN THE 5TH EAST AFRICAN HUMAN RESOURCE SYMPOSIUM, 2023

The 5th East Africa Human Resources Symposium took place at Mestil Hotel Kampala, Uganda, spanning from Wednesday, November 15th, to Friday, November 17th 2023. The HR Symposium was attended by HR professionals from the East African Community (EAC), including Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, and South Sudan. This event was organized by Rise & Learn Limited, a human resource, and leadership consulting firm that specializes in Strategic leadership development, training, and human resource services for micro, small & medium enterprises.

During the symposium, discussions revolved around the theme of “Navigating the Future of Work in BANI Workspace.” The discussions provided a comprehensive exploration of the challenges and opportunities posed by emerging technologies, shifting demographics, and evolving business models. The platform served as a space for participants to exchange innovative ideas, share valuable best practices, and collaboratively develop strategies to address the dynamic landscape of the future workplace.

At the event, a significant highlight was the recognition and awarding of outstanding participants for their exemplary contributions. Among these deserving individuals, ULS Head Human Resources Christine Abwaka was honored with an award for Outstanding Leadership by the Leadership Circle. Her remarkable achievements and impactful leadership in the field of Human Resources were recognized during the symposium. This recognition not only highlighted her dedication but also served as an inspiration to all attendees, emphasizing the importance of visionary and effective leadership in shaping the future of work within the East African Community.



*Ms. Christine Abwaka, the ULS Head Human Resource receiving the leadership award at the East Africa HR Symposium from the Regional Director, Leadership Circle, East Africa, Sam Njoroge*

# NEWS FROM THE JUDICIARY

## Judiciary Performance Report -2022/2023

**O**n November 15, 2023, several court users and members of the public turned up at Isingiro Chief Magistrates Court for the Court's first Open Day. The event's activities were presided over by the Principal Judge, Dr. Flavian Zeija.

The Principal Judge was received by the Mbarara Resident Judges; Lady Justice Joyce Kavuma, Justice Allan Nshimye, His Worship Ereemye James Jumire Mawanda, who represented the Chief Registrar and Judicial Officers under Mbarara High Court Circuit among other justice actors.



*The Principal Judge, Dr. Flavian Zeija being received at the open day*

The Principal Judge inspected a guard of honor and planted a tree of justice at the Court in commemoration of the Day. He also held a meeting with Judicial Officers and stakeholders in which he urged them to embrace Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms such as Mediation as a way of enhancing access to justice.





*The Principal Judge giving his remarks during a meeting with the various stakeholders during the open day*



The Principal Judge later also inspected the exhibition stalls set up by different justice actors. Deputy Registrar Mbarara High Court, Her Worship Nanteza Zulaika, sensitized the public on their rights and the court system. And different information materials were distributed to members of the public who turned up for the open day.

Deputy Inspector, His Worship Twakyire Samuel, Chief Magistrates; His Worship Patrick Bamuhiga, His Worship Andrew Kabombo, Her Worship Shelagh Agnes Nantaawo, His Worship Julius Mwesigye and His Worship Moses Mfitumukiza were also in attendance. His Worship Timothy Lumunye and Communications Officer, Mr. Deo Akugizibwe are the ones that moderated the event.



## ONE ON ONE WITH COUNSEL ERON KIIZA

### **1. What motivated you to pursue a career in law, and how did your early experiences shape your commitment to the legal profession?**

As a young student from Muntuyera High School Kitunga, I was generally quiet and reserved. I however had determination and willingness to plunge into debates on governance, literature and history whenever opportunity arose. During my school days as a senior four student I was a vocal supporter of Kiiza Besigye and also served as one of his campaign agents. My initial interest in legal affairs was sparked by my consumption of media reports of the Kiiza Besigye versus Yoweri Kaguta Museveni Presidential elections petition case in 2001. I found Kiiza Besigye intellectually and politically enthralling. That case had attractive euphoria that I found magnetic and kept glued to media reports about it. Besigye had hired 40 lawyers and flew in a legal consultant from the USA. A more resourced Museveni had about 100 lawyers and the judiciary including the Supreme Court was much better than it is today. The likes of Peter Walubiri, Joseph Balikuddembe and Mohammed Mbabazi on the side of Besigye and the great lawyers Museveni made a good enough case for law as a force for good.

My legal career therefore seemed to have started accidentally however I always had interest in law. I attribute my success and achievement to my parent's support after I had been encouraged to try my luck at a scholarship offered by Uganda Christian University.

The regal process to choose the best candidate to join the scholarship program at Uganda Christian University saw us produce reports on our motivation for the scholarship.

In my case I shared that I was driven by a desire to contribute to human rights, rule of law and social justice, especially using the law to benefit vulnerable members and groups in society. The start of my legal career was winding and rocky and even saw me have a stint as a legal officer in a factory but by 2013, I had embarked on public interest litigation and have never looked back from using law as a tool for social justice. I am finalizing a memoir on our legal intervention in the ordeal of Kakwenza Rukirabashaija. That legal intervention is an example of how lawyers can leverage law, public institutions, the media and people to resist state repression. The memoir also shades light on such concepts as human rights, rule of law and the Constitution.

### **2. In the evolving landscape of law and technology, how do you stay abreast of changes and ensure your skills remain relevant?**

Technology is for human beings to direct. A lot of what we fear about technology is a disguised fear of ourselves and our neighbors. Technology is neutral and can be used for good or bad.

Legal skills will always be relevant and needed. Technology will ease, simplify and speed up most of our work. Young lawyers must know that their skills are required to solve complex human problems including those in governance, peace building, climate, environment, economics, education etc. We must leave routine tasks to machines and honed skills that only humans can provide.

**3. What advice do you have for young lawyers entering this dynamic field?**

I advise young lawyers to keep hungry. Do not stop reading, learning and discussing human affairs. Lawyers are providers of solutions to societal challenges. Concentrate on being a good lawyer and emulating the ethics of lawyers and other industry leaders you admire. You will learn a lot from them including how to meet the costs of your services including how to charge clients.

Real life is multidisciplinary so young lawyers need to combine legal skills with communication, entertainment, negotiations, mathematics and leadership skills. Banking, manufacturing, environment, politics, civil service, civil society, media, health, education and basically all fields of human endeavors need legal skills and solutions because they are wrought with legal challenges, regulatory, compliance and other requirements where legal minds are needed.

While traditional law jobs in the law firms and the courts remain, there are more exciting opportunities in aviation, technology, media, insurance, health, education, stocks, telecoms, construction, fashion, energy, textiles, diplomacy, engineering, politics, academia, civil society, civil service, local government, research and science among others where legal skills will serve you well and make you a valued member of teams providing solutions needed in communities or markets. It is important to read about the environment, insurance, diplomacy or telecoms if you decide to get employed or hired by them.

Lawyers must prepare to be on teams and work with bankers, auditors, investigators, researchers, policy makers to serve society better. Knowledge and life are multidisciplinary. You need skills beyond the law to be an amazing professional. Study and read the law as well as other topics including politics, biographies, autobiographies, economics, philosophy, science, art, poetry and music to prepare for a wonderful legal career. Even as a specialist lawyer, you need an array of various skills to succeed in your specialization. You must know how to work with others.

**4. As a successful lawyer, what habits or practices have contributed most to your professional growth, and what advice would you give to aspiring lawyers to foster their own development in the legal field?**

I attribute my success and professional growth to Integrity, passion, hard work and creativity. From experience our clients desire the services of competent, trustworthy and above all the best lawyer they can afford. Few clients will enlist your services merely because you are friends, relatives, village mates or went to the same school or go to the same church or mosque unless it is a minor legal issue where the stakes are low in which case they will need or expect free services.

Colleagues therefore need to create a reputation for excellence so as to offer the best services. Our biggest asset is the name we have, especially among your peers as this will inform whether or not we get referrals.

**5. How do you balance the demands of a legal career with personal well-being, and What strategies do you recommend to maintain a healthy work-life balance in a challenging profession?**



Our work as lawyers is both mentally and physically very engaging and yet our health is paramount. I therefore recommend that we need to be very organized in how we execute our work as lawyers. We need to purpose to schedule non-legal pursuits like exercising, rest, tours, family time and networking with friends especially those that are non-lawyers so we can discuss other subjects like Investments and Health matters among many other subjects. It's important to remember that "We are what we eat" so we shouldn't eat our way to diabetes or obesity simply because we can afford meat and alcohol. Avoid or moderate alcohol. Use the nights and weekends to rest, not to consume alcohol. Visit a psychologist once in a while especially if you cannot name the cause of your fatigue.

As a bonus, it is also advisable to network by volunteering in other activities including religious, community, school or sports organizations or associations so as to showcase your organizational and leadership skills. Networking will break the ice and remove boundaries between you and your clients. Such platforms may help some people to trust you and that is one way they determine who to onboard as a lawyer.

**6. What is your most memorable case and what makes it stand out?**

Many compete. I have had the privilege of representing and even winning many high-profile cases. The Kakwenza case however stands out because of the people involved and how it ended up.

**7. Who is your mentor in the legal profession and why?**

I have several. Locally, it is Peter Walubiri, Ladislus K. Rwakafuuzi and Mohammed Mbabazi. They are all brilliant, solid and dependable. The ANC lawyers like Bram Fischer and Sydney Kentridge as well as great legal minds like Lord Denning, Hon. Justice Amos Twinomujuni and Lord Sumption. I also love Judges like Justice Engonda-Ntende, Justice Steven Mubiru, Justice Bernard of Land Division, Justice Basaaza. I love the courage and prolific writing of Prof. George W. Kanyeihamba. These names disclose my kind of legal icons.

**8. How would you describe the administration of justice in the country?**

In my view I believe the administration of justice in the country is in a crisis. We score pitifully low on judicial independence, human rights, good governance and rule of law. We are superstars of militarization, impunity and injustice. The Uganda Human Rights Commission is not only starved of resources but has a chairperson who is out of her depth so much so that she cannot recognize basic civil liberties as human rights matters. The judiciary is quiet even as its independence is devoured. Military tribunals still pretend to administer civilian justice with devastating consequences for human rights especially personal liberty, human dignity and freedom from torture or cruelty, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. We have no concrete plans for climate and environmental justice. Parliament is a mere rubber-stamp of the President's wishes and the vanities of its Speaker. Civil society has shrunk into impotence thanks to hostility from the political and military elite. The state patronizes and suffocates the private sector. Politics and business censor the media into submission. Poor people can neither afford nor access justice. Things are unsustainably bad. We need to liberate our country. We need a critical mass of committed social justice lawyers to lead the way like they did against racism, Moi dictatorship and Apartheid among other oppressive systems.

**9. Do you have any regrets in your legal practice and if yes, what can you change if given an opportunity to do so?**

I have no regrets. The risks I have had to take on were inevitable in the serious human rights path. Any mistakes were great teachers. I have had a risky but amazing legal journey.



# THE ART OF BALANCE: EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR LAWYERS TO PRIORITIZE MENTAL HEALTH

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**T**he legal profession is renowned for its demanding workload, high-pressure environments, and the need to constantly stay on top of complex cases. While we thought the struggle would end after completing the Bar Course, as Lawyers, we often find ourselves immersed in a world of stress, which can take a toll on our mental health. The realities of life that we all experience as we navigate the human experience like loss, failure, rejection, disappointment among others also greatly affect our mental health.

In this article, we will explore practical strategies that you and I can adopt to effectively manage our mental well-being so that we can achieve a healthier work-life balance.

## **1. Recognize the Signs of Mental Health Struggles:**

The first step towards effective mental health management is recognizing the signs of potential struggles. As Lawyers we should be aware of symptoms such as chronic fatigue, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and changes in our mood or behavior. By acknowledging these signs, we can take proactive steps to address our mental health in order to prevent further deterioration.

## **2. Prioritize Self-Care:**

Many Lawyers often neglect their own well-being in the pursuit of professional success. However, prioritizing self-care is essential for maintaining mental health. Engage in activities that bring joy and relaxation, such as exercise, hobbies, or spending quality time with loved ones. By carving out time for self-care, we can recharge our minds and bodies, reducing stress levels and promoting overall well-being. Please note that activities that bring joy and relaxation don't include self-intoxication that may result into more harm. If we must, let's drink responsibly at the next AGM. Winks.

## **3. Set Realistic Expectations:**

Most Lawyers are known for their high standards and perfectionist tendencies. However, setting unrealistic expectations can lead to chronic stress and dissatisfaction. It is crucial for you and I to set realistic goals and manage our workload effectively. Prioritize tasks, delegate when necessary, and learn to say no when overwhelmed. By setting achievable expectations, lawyers will reduce stress and maintain a healthier work-life balance.

#### **4. Establish Boundaries:**

The legal profession often blurs the lines between work and personal life. It's important that we establish clear boundaries to prevent burnout and maintain mental well-being. Set specific working hours and avoid checking emails or taking work-related calls outside of those hours. Designate time for personal activities, hobbies, and relaxation. By creating boundaries, as lawyers; you can protect your personal time and recharge, leading to increased productivity and improved mental health.

#### **5. Cultivate a Supportive Network:**

Having a strong support system is crucial for lawyers to manage their mental health effectively. Surround yourself with colleagues, mentors, and friends who understand the unique challenges of the legal profession. Seek out professional networks or support groups where you can share experiences, seek advice, and receive support. By connecting with others who can relate to your experiences, you can alleviate feelings of isolation and gain valuable insights into managing your mental health.

#### **6. Practice Mindfulness and Stress Reduction Techniques:**

Mindfulness and stress reduction techniques can be powerful tools to manage our mental health. Incorporate practices such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, or mindfulness-based stress reduction into your daily routine. These techniques can help cultivate a sense of calmness, improve focus, and reduce anxiety. By regularly practicing these techniques, we can navigate the challenges posed by our profession better so as to maintain a healthier mindset.

#### **7. Seek Professional Help:**

If mental health struggles persist or become overwhelming, it is important for us to seek professional help. Mental health professionals can provide guidance, therapy, and support tailored to the unique challenges faced by lawyers. Seeking professional help is not a sign of weakness but a proactive step towards improving one's mental well-being. By addressing mental health issues with the help of professionals, lawyers can regain balance, resilience, and a sense of fulfillment in their personal and professional lives. Remember nobody is going to look out for you better than yourself.

Effectively managing mental health is essential for all of us as lawyers to thrive in our demanding profession. ( I remember years ago during Clerkship, my supervisor made it clear that "legal practice was not a tea party"- now that I am older, I understand that it meant that some days and some cases have the potential to threaten not just your physical but your mental health too). By recognizing the signs of mental health struggles, prioritizing self-care, setting realistic expectations, establishing boundaries, cultivating a supportive network, practicing mindfulness, and seeking professional help when needed, you can achieve a healthier work-life balance as a lawyer and maintain your mental well-being. Remember, taking care of your mental health is not only crucial for your personal happiness but also for your professional success as you serve your clients.

If you are a lawyer and mental health enthusiast like I am, feel free to reach out to the ULS Leadership and share your experiences on how you effectively guard your mental health while also navigating your day to day legal assignments. We grow, advance, and heal by sharing our stories and experiences with others.

Wishing you holistic wellness and healing this Holiday season.



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