



# Members FIRST

## NEWSLETTER



## ULS LAUNCHES DIGITAL IDENTITY CARD

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## Message From Members First Newsletter Chairperson



**D**ear Esteemed Readers,

Happy New Year to you and your families. We appreciate God for the year 2023 and I take this opportunity to wish you a Happy New Year. As a team we appreciate your support in the year 2023 and welcome you to the first issue of 2024 in which we bring you how the council and secretariat served you and how we ended last year.

I thank each of you our dedicated readers for your support and engagement which have been the driving force behind the success of our monthly publications.

Throughout 2023, we had the pleasure of sharing countrywide coverage of what the secretariat and your council have been able to achieve. Our stories also included special features about some of our Senior counsel members which we believe added value to you our members. Our belief is that this communication channel helps to bridge the gap between the council, secretariat and membership. We hope you are informed and engaged as we strive to serve you better this year.

In this issue we focus on the Annual Membership fees breakdown, membership benefits, how you can get your Digital ID, current status of the ULS House and what role you will be playing to help us build. We also share highlights from the Annual Law Dinner and the countrywide end of year celebrations. We thank all the staff at the secretariat, our regional offices and all our members for participating in the Pro bono events and utilizing our CLE Calendar for your professional development.

We thank you for your unwavering support throughout the year and look forward to embarking on another remarkable journey together as we serve you.

Warm regards,

**Isaac Atukunda - Chairperson Members First Newsletter**

## Message From The ULS President



**D**ear Colleagues and Friends,  
I welcome you back from the festive season and use this opportunity to wish you a happy new year. I extend warm greetings and heartfelt gratitude to each one of you and thank the Almighty God for the blessings of life, health and the many prospects to make a difference through our noble profession.

A new year is a season to reset and build on the cornerstone of your unwavering resilience and support throughout the past year. I am immensely grateful to you, our esteemed members, for your continued dedication and participation in the Uganda Law Society (ULS) activities. Your commitment plays a significant role in the pursuit for the realization of our mission and executing our mandate.

A special acknowledgment goes to our donors, sponsors, stakeholders, the Secretariat, Committees, Clusters, and ULS Past presidents for their commendable efforts throughout 2023. Your support and hard work has been instrumental in enabling us to achieve different milestones. We look forward to your continued dedication this year as we continue to advocate for the Rule of Law, access to justice and good governance, and building a skilled empowered legal profession.

Last year as per my address at the Annual General meeting we were able to deliver our promises as laid out in the Members' First Agenda. These achievements were made possible because of the dedicated ULS Council, you our members and the team at the secretariat, Thank you so much. I bring you the highlights in brief;

### **a) Digitization of Services**

In embracing the era of digital transformation, we enhanced our service delivery through the introduction of online services. We introduced the ULS membership portal where members can now easily update their profiles, conveniently pay for subscription and CLE training, receive updates from the secretariat, check their CLE points, get real-time CLE points accreditation, and their CLE digital certificates as well as e-registration for all ULS activities.

We also launched our ULS Digital ID at the Annual Law Dinner. It is a pioneering initiative in our profession that places us at the forefront by streamlining the identification of

our members, making it more convenient and efficient for the members to execute their duties.

We are committed to expanding our online service offerings therefore ensuring that a majority of ULS services will be accessed online, saving our members' time and effort.

## **b) Promotion of Rule of Law and Access to Justice**

Our advocacy for the Rule of Law and access to justice remains steadfast. We have continued to publish our Quarterly Rule of Law Reports, engage in strategic stakeholder engagement and strategic public interest litigation. We have strategically engaged the different stakeholders to address certain areas that need to be improved upon to achieve proper observance of the rule of law in Uganda especially those captured in our Quarterly Rule of Law Reports. We have engaged; the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), Uganda Law Reform Commission on legislative reforms, Office of the Inspector General of Government on fighting corruption, the Chief Registrar on conduct of judicial officers, the Principal Judge on Judicial Accountability, quality of judicial decisions and independence of the Judiciary, security agencies especially the Uganda Police Force and Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF) on their role in advancing human rights and the rule of law, the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and Uganda Human Rights Commission on issues of Rule of Law and Protection of Human Rights, the Chief Justice on judicial performance and Administration of the Judiciary, and Criminal Investigations Department (CID) Director on persecution of Advocates and delays in criminal investigations. Other key stakeholders that we have engaged include; the Parliament of Uganda, the Office of the Administrator General, Inspectorate of Government, Ministry of Lands and Housing, among others.

We have filed strategic litigation cases including; an application for an injunction against the implementation of the Computer Misuse Amendment Act, 2022 pending determination of our constitutional petition. We have filed a petition in the Constitutional Court alongside other professional bodies challenging the Income Tax Amendment provision introducing the payment of stamp duty for Practicing Certificates. We challenged NEMA on enforcement of Car Dustbin Regulations, and have been resolute at protecting and defending advocates' rights while they execute their mandate. We have also continuously contributed to the enactment of several new legislations such as; the Museums and Monumental Bill, 2023, the Judicature (Amendment) Bill, 2023, the Public Health (Amendment) Bill 2023, the Law Revision (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill, 2022, Financial Institutions Bill, 2023, Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2023, Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2023 among others.

In the execution of our mandate, we have held several activities like the Annual Law Conference where pertinent issues within the legal profession were discussed, we held the Annual Rule of Week and Symposium, published and launched four quarterly Rule

of Law reports, and operationalized the Rule of Law Series to enhance our members' active participation in matters of Rule of Law.

We also held the Annual Pro-Bono Week through our 23 regional Legal Aid and Satellite clinics where over 38,066 beneficiaries were offered free legal support. I take this opportunity to thank all our members for the active involvement and impact created during the week.

Through our Legal Aid Project, a total of 52,835 individuals have benefitted from the services we offered last year of which 40,941 individuals directly benefitted from the services of free legal representation, legal advice, mediation, while 11,894 indirectly benefitted through legal and human rights awareness.

### **c) The ULS House**

The construction of the ULS House is progressing steadily, thanks to the commitment of you our members, the superstructure has been completed with all four floors erected. During the Annual General Meeting held on September 30, 2023, at Imperial Resort Beach Hotel, it was resolved that a three-tier system of contribution be adopted for the next three years 2024- 2026 where members will contribute to the ULS House as follows; 10 years of practice and above are to contribute Five hundred thousand(500,000) Uganda shillings annually, 5-10 years of practice are to contribute Two hundred and fifty (250,000)Uganda shillings annually and below 5 years of practice are to contribute One hundred (100,000) Uganda shillings annually. These contributions took effect on 1st January 2024 and are over and above the ULS annual subscription fee. We appreciate your support and we are committed to working towards having the ULS House completed by September 2024.

### **d) Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Trainings**

We revamped the Professional Development department at the Secretariat to ensure that all CLE Trainings are tailor-made to address sector-specific demands to foster our professional growth. We worked together with the cluster heads to spearhead the different cluster activities in order to address the professional challenges within the different clusters and membership.

We have also held several regional CLE Trainings that have provided accessible opportunities for regional members, and we aim to expand this initiative this year.

We remain committed to reducing CLE Training costs, especially for young lawyers. We will continue to hold weekly webinars to facilitate knowledge and educational advancement.



## **e) Members Welfare**

The well-being of our members is paramount and therefore we continue to strategize and promote initiatives that will benefit the membership.

Last year we established the ULS Healthcare and Benevolent Fund. Through the year, we lost a significant number of our members, may their souls rest in peace. It is at such times that the ULS Healthcare and Benevolent Fund is required to support such members' families. As resolved at the Extra Ordinary Meeting (EOGM) of the Uganda Law Society that was held on August 18, 2023, at Fairway Hotel, there will be an allocation of UGX 25,000 annually from the members' subscription fees and a compulsory annual contribution of UGX 75,000 from each member to the Fund.

We also managed to increase the members' last funeral contribution from UGX 500,000 to UGX 3,000,000. When an advocate passes on, this money is given to their families to support them financially during the trying time.

Currently, we are finalizing the operationalization of the ULS SACCO, this project will help members to save and borrow money at low interest rates. We believe that the growth of this SACCO will be fundamental to our members' financial growth.

We have also partnered with Total Energies Ltd, as part of our Members First Agenda. ULS members can now purchase Total Energies products at a discount using the Total Energies cards. While using these cards, members will be entitled to a discount of UGX 40 per liter for diesel and UGX 50 per liter for petrol. I encourage you all to take advantage of this opportunity.

## **f) Membership Updates**

With the aim of informing and educating our membership, we have been able to keep our membership and stakeholders updated through our monthly newsletter. I wish to thank the Members First Newsletter team chaired by General Secretary, Isaac Atukunda for the great work they are doing in keeping our members updated.

Other key benefits include our partnership with UNICAF where our members are able to access master's scholarships of up to 80% .

As we start the New Year, it is with steadfast determination and resilience that we look forward to the opportunities ahead. The past year has not been without its trials, but your support has been instrumental to our success.

Our commitment to championing the Rule of Law remains resolute. In the face of adversity, we are more determined than ever to strengthen our efforts to advocate for a fair administration of justice and rule of law. In 2024, we will strategically

deploy more strategic litigation to address critical issues, challenge unjust laws, and champion the rights of our members, individuals and communities, fostering open dialogue and collaboration with our stakeholders. This approach will play a crucial role in advancing our mission and ensuring that the legal system serves the greater good through influencing policy and legal reforms, and contributing to the overall improvement of our legal and justice system.

The challenges of today only fuel our resolve to build a society where the rule of law, fairness and equality prevail.

As we embark on this journey, I invite each one of us to actively participate in our collective mission. Your insights, dedication, and support are invaluable as we serve you. Together, we can improve our practice environment by addressing the legal challenges, overcoming obstacles, and building a society that stands as a beacon of justice and the rule of law.

Let us approach this year with optimism, resilience, and a shared commitment to the principles that define our profession. May 2024 be a year of progress, growth, and positive transformation of ourselves and the legal profession.

Thank you.

**Bernard Oundo - President Uganda Law Society**

## Message From The Chief Executive Officer



*“Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.” - Henry Ford*

**D**ear Members,  
Happy New Year, 2024 to you all from the Uganda Law Society (ULS) Secretariat. I first of all wish to appreciate everyone for your love, and support throughout the past year. All our achievements and milestones could not be attained without you.

A special acknowledgment goes to the ULS Council, donors, sponsors, stakeholders, committees, clusters, and the entire membership for the continued support rendered to the ULS and Secretariat team throughout the year 2023. We look forward to more collaboration this year as we strive to serve to the realization of the ULS' goals and objectives as per the ULS Act and our strategic plan.

As the ULS Secretariat, we continue to work towards our vision which is; *‘A proficient Bar Association in fostering Access to Justice, the Rule of law and good governance in Uganda.’* In the execution of our mandate, our focus is on developing a skilled and empowered legal profession and improving member benefits and welfare. We commit to continue advancing the digitization processes to ensure smooth accessibility of all ULS services online, enabling easy access for all advocates country-wide.

With the leadership of our dedicated Council, we shall continue working diligently to further our efforts in the promotion of professional development of our membership, enhancing the rule of law, and providing free legal aid services to indigent, marginalized, and vulnerable communities across the country.

As we embark on the New Year, we look forward to your continued partnership and collaboration.

I welcome you to our first newsletter of 2024 and wish you a delightful reading experience in this issue and more to come.

May this year bring new happiness, new goals, new achievements, and many new inspirations in your life.

Warm regards.

**Mable Nimwesiga - Ag. Chief Executive Officer**



# COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

## THE ANNUAL LAW DINNER, 2023

On the 15th of December 2023, the Uganda Law Society held its Annual Law Dinner at the Sheraton Gardens, Kampala. The theme for the occasion was ***“Celebrating our Milestones and Defining the Future.”*** It was an evening dedicated to reflecting on past achievements while looking forward with ambition and purpose.



*ULS President, Bernard Oundo, giving his remarks*

The ULS President, Bernard Oundo, in his remarks appreciated members, invited guests, past Presidents, donors and stakeholders for attending the dinner and for the support rendered to the ULS Council to reach the various milestones including but not limited to the digitization of services at the secretariat, restructuring of CLE trainings to fit into the needs of the current legal practitioner, fostering of the rule of law and promotion of human rights, construction of the ULS House, stating that the Construction of ULS House had progressed steadily during the year despite a limited resource budget. However, the ULS Council resolved to prioritize the completion of the superstructure. The current position is that the superstructure has been completed with all four floors erected and the new milestone yet to be achieved is having the ULS House completed by September 2024 and having the Secretariat shift from Ntinda to Acacia. He thanked the membership for the support rendered thus far and encouraged the membership to continue ‘laying a brick’ and working together to see that the ULS House is completed.

The President also stated that in the year 2023, significant challenges surfaced within our professional community notably the escalating instances of professional misconduct among some of the members.

There were a number of key highlights at the Uganda Law Society's Annual Dinner, among which was the official launch of the ULS Digital ID by the ULS President and esteemed dignitaries. This launch marked a pivotal moment for the society, signifying a leap towards digital innovation in managing memberships and streamlining services digitally.



*The ULS President, the Guest Speaker and other dignitaries during the launch of the ULS Digital ID*

Adding more vibrancy to the evening, attendees were treated to a captivating and lively performance by Irene Ntale and the talented De'Maestroz Band. Their music and stage presence not only entertained but also added a delightful and memorable touch to the event, creating a lively atmosphere for everyone present to enjoy.



*Local artiste, Irene Ntale and the talented De'Maestroz Band perform at the dinner*

The Guest Speaker, Justice Irene Mulyagonja who spoke on the subject ***“Legal Ethics and Professional Responsibility of a Modern Advocate,”*** questioned advocates over the rising cases of professional misconduct which has caused a case backlog at the Law Council due to the stiff increase in the number of complaints against advocates.

Justice Mulyagonja highlighted critical ethical challenges affecting the legal profession, emphasizing two key areas: legal education and the problem of numbers in the profession. Regarding legal education, the guest speaker expressed concern over the disconnect between modern legal education and the traditional principles of the noble profession. She discussed how legal education focuses more on the practical aspects, often separating law from morality. She underscored the historical origins of the legal profession, stating that practitioners were initially noble individuals serving without fees, contrasting it with the present perception of law as a highly lucrative business.

The guest speaker highlighted the need for a revamped approach to legal education, suggesting a shift towards specialized training for different legal roles such as solicitors, barristers, and judicial officers. She critiqued the current standardized training at the Law Development Centre (LDC) in Uganda, which lacks specialization based on preferred legal career paths.

She delved into the issue of an overwhelming number of law graduates seeking enrolment into the legal profession stressing the strain this places on resources and the challenge for regulatory bodies like the Law Council to manage and evaluate numerous applications for enrolment. This influx leads to concerns about employment opportunities for newly enrolled advocates, potentially leaving many unemployed and contributing to societal issues.

Additionally, Justice Mulyagonja touched upon specific aspects of legal ethics in contemporary practice, addressing competence, candour, social media usage, and billing practices among advocates. She highlighted instances where incompetence in drafting applications and ethical lapses in truthfulness were observed, suggesting a need for improved educational standards and adherence to ethical guidelines.

In discussing social media, the speaker of the day highlighted the misuse of these platforms by legal professionals, often engaging in unprofessional behavior or making inflammatory remarks about colleagues or judicial officers. She emphasized the need for clear guidelines within the legal profession regarding social media usage.

She also emphasized the importance of upholding ethical standards in the legal profession as this is key in maintaining ethical integrity, particularly in a society where trust in institutions is declining. The ethical dilemma of lawyers balancing their duties to clients, the courts, the profession, and society at large was also highlighted, emphasizing the need for moral principles to guide decision-making in complex ethical situations.



*Justice Irene Mulyagonja delivering the Key-note address during the Annual Law dinner*





*A photo of some of the distinguished guests who graced the event during the National Anthem*



*A photo of some of the attendees posing for a photo with the ULS President, Bernard Oundo, (Centre) and the Chairperson, ULS Dinner Organising Committee, Counsel Isaac Atukunda*





*The ULS Council during a photo moment with the Guest Speaker, Justice Irene Mulyagonja (centre)*

At the event, the Uganda Law Society also took the opportunity to honor and express gratitude towards their donors, sponsors and development partners whose consistent support has been invaluable throughout the years. This was in addition to commending and appreciating exceptional pro-bono lawyers who demonstrated outstanding dedication and service in providing legal aid without charge or at reduced fees during the year 2023.



*Some of the stakeholders pose for photos during the recognition moment at the event*



# ULS MEMBERSHIP DIGITAL ID



UGANDA LAW SOCIETY



**Membership ID**  
**Test Williams**  
ID Number: **ULS/3175/2022**  
Year of Admission: **2015**  
Date of Issue: **13/12/2023**  
Date of Expiry: **31/12/2023**





Bernard Oundo  
President

SCAN QR CODE



to verify, follow this link  
<https://vc.diwala.io/zezhY5>

## 1. What is the Digital ID?

It is an electronic solution for proof of identity for ULS members. The ID contains cryptographic signatures and data about the issuer and receiver of the ID making a verifiable credential.

## 2. How do I get my Digital ID?

The digital ID credential is issued by the ULS Members' Portal administrator and it will thereafter reflect on the member's ULS portal dashboard. A member can login to their portal and view or download the ID by following the simple prompts to open up their Diwala digital credentials wallet.

## 3. Why should I get one?

- ◆ Convenience. The member can access the ID in a digital format and there is no need to move to ULS offices for the same.
- ◆ It is easy to digitally verify if a member finds him/herself in a scenario that requires proof of identity.

## 4. What are the benefits of having a digital ID?

- ◆ A member can easily access and generate their ID from any where as long as they can access their portal or Diwala wallet.
- ◆ In the event that a member requires verification. The ID has been developed with a QR code feature that can be scanned to verify its authenticity.
- ◆ The ID has been developed with security features that make it tamper-proof and not easy to forge.

## 5. How should I update information on my ID?

- i. Login to the ULS member's portal account on <https://members.ulsportal.or.ug/>
- ii. On your portal dashboard find and click manage my account
- iii. On the manage my account drop down menu, click manage my profile

- iv. A page with the your information will open and you will be able to upload and edit the your desired profile photo, change your title and order of names, change the law firm and also update phone contacts.
- v. Thereafter click on the update button at the bottom of the page to save the changes.

## 6. How often will the ID be changed?

The ID will be valid for one calendar year and renewed upon renewal of the annual subscription.

## 7. Do I have to pay for the ID?

Below are the different categories of members that will pay for the ID.

- ◆ First time/new members to ULS.
- ◆ Members that have lost a copy of their physical Identity cards.
- ◆ Old members that wish to get a physical or hard copy of the digital ID.

## 8. If I am a member based upcountry how can I get my ID?

- ◆ The member can access, generate and download their digital ID from their ULS members' portal dashboard from any where.
- ◆ Physical copies will be sent to the nearest ULS Legal Aid Clinic (LAP Clinic) for pickup. ID pickup points include, ULS Head office in Ntinda, Katabi- Entebbe, Jinja, Soroti, Moroto, Kotido, Nakapiripirit, Pader, Abim, Amuria, Amudat, Gulu, Arua, Masindi, Luwero, Kitgum, Kaberamaido, Yumbe, Kabarole, Mbarara, Kabale, Nabilatuk.

## 9. Please share any other inform on the Digital IDs and contact to support incase we need to get our IDs.

- ◆ The ID cost is **shs. 20,000** for both new members and members that wish to get a physical copy of the ID.
- ◆ ULS partnered with Diwala, a platform known for employing best practices in order to safeguard members' data, making it easy to issue, share and verify members' digital credentials and guarantee authenticity of the credentials.
- ◆ Besides the digital ID, members are able to access their ULS training certificates and can upload their own important documents to the wallet.

## EASTERN REGION DINNER

Lawyers practicing in Eastern region recently held their End of year dinner event. The event was attended by lawyers practicing within the region and members of the Uganda Law Society (ULS) council. It served as a pivotal juncture to reflect on past successes and fortify plans for the future.

During the event, lawyers engaged in fostering connections among members and council representatives. The dinner also provided a platform for the legal practitioners in the region to celebrate their collective accomplishments, acknowledging the dedication and hard work that contributed to the region's legal landscape throughout the year.

The Council was represented by the Vice President who appreciated members for the unity and encouraged them to keep working together in the coming year.



*ULS Vice President, Counsel Martin Asingwire, speaks to the dinner attendees. He stressed the importance of maintaining the bar-bench relationship in the region and called upon all the advocates to embrace the ULS initiatives.*



*Lady Justice, Faridah Shamilah Bukirwa presents her award acceptance speech for the 2023 Champion of Justice where she thanked everyone for their support and encouragement.*



*The Eastern Dinner Organising Committee pose for a photo.*



*A group photo of some of the lawyers that attended the dinner*



*Hon. Justice David Batema the Chief Guest poses with the Eastern Region Awardees during the dinner.*

## 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.

## WESTERN REGION DINNER

**L**awyers practicing in the western region held their dinner in Fort Portal City. The event served not only as a platform for networking and sharing experiences but also as a forum for discussions on pertinent legal matters.

The speakers at the dinner included the ULS President, Bernard Oundo. He emphasized the imperative need to maintain the prevailing unity within the legal fraternity. He also highlighted the significance of collaboration, cooperation, and solidarity among lawyers to uphold the principles of justice, protect the rule of law, and promote legal excellence within the region.



*Counsel Allan Musasire, Council Member for Western region welcomes the ULS President, Bernard Oundo, to the dinner.*



*Senior Advocates pose for a group photo during the Western Region Dinner.*



*Some of the attendees at the dinner pose for a photo*



*A group photo of the attendees*



*Hon Lady Justice Joyce Kavuma, Senior Resident Judge Mbarara, speaks to the attendees at the Western Region Lawyers Dinner. She thanked the organizers of the event and highlighted that such events are necessary because they help to break the formalities and advocates can freely share ideas.*



## ULS COUNCIL VISIT TO THE UGANDAN EMBASSY IN BURUNDI

The ULS Executive Council, accompanied by selected members of the Secretariat, received gracious hospitality at the Ugandan Embassy in Burundi. During this diplomatic encounter, President Bernard Oundo, emphasized the strategic significance of cross-border legal practice, despite grappling with language barriers. He expressed heartfelt appreciation for the impactful work being undertaken in Burundi, acknowledging the collaborative efforts that transcend borders to shape the future of the legal profession in East Africa.



*ULS Executive Council and some secretariat staff pose for a photo with the officials at the Ugandan Embassy in Burundi.*

## CATHOLIC LAWYERS' DINNER

On the evening of November 24, 2023, the Catholic lawyers in Uganda congregated for a special dinner with the Archbishop of Kampala Diocese, His Grace Paul Ssemwogerere. This remarkable event followed a serene mass held at the cathedral in which the Archbishop prayed for the lawyers.



*The Catholic Lawyers pose for a photo moment with the Archbishop after mass*

The Archbishop took the opportunity to appreciate the lawyers for their dedicated efforts in defending the valuable assets of the church. He acknowledged the pivotal role the legal practitioners play in safeguarding the integrity and rights of the Church, recognizing their commitment as a significant contribution to the faith community.

The Archbishop also shared his aspirations for greater unity among the legal fraternity and the Church. His Grace emphasized the importance of this unity, not just for the welfare of the Church but also for the progression and prosperity of the entire nation. He prayed for continued collaboration and harmony, believing that such cohesion would not only nurture the growth of the Church but also positively impact the broader society.

Retired Justice of the Supreme Court, Christine Kitumba, urged the lawyers not to shy away from defending rights, highlighting the critical role of legal practitioners in upholding justice and advocating for the protection of fundamental rights.

At the same event, the Catholic Lawyers Fraternity unveiled its ambitious and meticulously crafted five-year strategic plan. This unveiling marked a significant milestone, outlining the fraternity's vision, mission, and concrete steps towards achieving its goals in the coming years.

The strategic plan entailed the collective aspirations and commitments of the lawyers present, aiming to further strengthen their support for the Church and the broader society. It encompassed multifaceted initiatives aimed at enhancing legal advocacy, and fostering greater unity among members.





# PROGRESS ON THE ULS HOUSE CONSTRUCTION

**DECEMBER 2022**



Structural framework for basement parking space  
**Completed** ✓



The Structural framework for the Mezzanine floor comprising of the Conference hall, Meeting room and Toilets.  
**Completed** ✓



The Structural framework for ground floor and the reception.  
**Completed** ✓

**MARCH 2023**



Shuttering of second floor slab(complete)

**JUNE 2023**



Three office levels and the mezzanine floor (complete)

**JULY 2023**



**DECEMBER 2024**



- Superstructure is completed with 2 basements, ground, mezzanine, first, second and third floor, as well as the roof terrace and roof slab.
- Walling 50% complete: The walling construction is halfway done.
- Construction of staircase and ramp is pending: The construction of the staircase and ramp, which are important for accessibility, is yet to be completed.
- Subsequent installation of finishing elements is pending.

**Support the ULS House building project today**

# SECRETARIAT NEWS

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MEMBERS' AFFAIRS

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES 2024



S/N	CATEGORY					COMMENT
	FEESTYPE	10 YEARS & ABOVE	5-10 YEARS	BELOW 5 YEARS	DURATION	RESOLUTION
1	ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FEES	UGX 500,000	UGX 500,000	UGX 500,000	N/A	NO INCREMENT
2	ANNUAL ULS HOUSE CONTRIBUTION	UGX 500,000	UGX 250,000	UGX 100,000	2024-2026	<p><b>ULS House</b></p> <p>During the Annual General Meeting held on September 30, 2023, at Imperial Resort Beach Hotel, it was resolved that a three-tier system of contribution be adopted for the next three years 2024- 2026 where members will contribute to the ULS House as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 years of practice and above are to contribute <b>UGX500,000</b> annually.</li> <li>5-10 years of practice are to contribute <b>UGX250,000</b> annually.</li> <li>Below 5 years of practice are to contribute <b>UGX100,000</b> annually.</li> </ul>
3	ANNUAL BENEVOLENT FUND	UGX 75,000	UGX 75,000	UGX 75,000	EFFECTIVE 2024	<p><b>Benevolent Fund</b></p> <p>The Benevolent Fund Extra Ordinary Meeting (EOGM) of the Uganda Law Society was held on August 18, 2023, and attended by over 365 members online. It was resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An annual allocation of <b>UGX 25,000</b> from every ULS member's annual subscription fees to Uganda Law Society be allocated to the ULS Healthcare and Benevolent Fund and that every member contributes a compulsory annual fee of <b>UGX 75,000</b> (Seventy-Five thousand shillings only) to the Uganda Law Society Healthcare and Benevolent Fund.</li> </ul>
4	EAST AFRICAN LAW SOCIETY	\$20 or UGX 80,000	\$20 or UGX 80,000	\$20 or UGX80,000	2024	

#### HOW TO PAY

<p><b>ULS SUBSCRIPTION</b></p> <p><b>Account Name:</b> Uganda Law Society</p> <p><b>Account Number:</b> 0102010622400</p> <p><b>Bank Name:</b> Standard Chartered Bank</p> <p><b>Swift Code:</b> SCBLUGKAXXX</p>	<p><b>ULS BENEVOLENT FUND</b></p> <p><b>Account Name:</b> Uganda Law Society -Benevolent Fund</p> <p><b>Account Number:</b> 0102010622402</p> <p><b>Bank Name:</b> Standard Chartered Bank</p> <p><b>Swift Code:</b> SCBLUGKAXXX</p>	<p><b>ULS HOUSE</b></p> <p><b>Account Name:</b> Uganda Law Society - ULS House</p> <p><b>Account Number:</b> 0102010622410</p> <p><b>Bank Name:</b> Standard Chartered Bank</p> <p><b>Swift Code:</b> SCBLUGKAXXX</p>	<p><b>EALS ACCOUNT</b></p> <p><b>Account Name:</b> East Africa Law Society</p> <p><b>Account Number:</b> 3390207384</p> <p><b>Bank Name:</b> KCB BANK Tanzania Ltd</p> <p><b>Bank Branch:</b> Arusha Branch</p> <p><b>Swift Code:</b> KCBLTZTZ</p>
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Please provide ULS with proof of payment for swift reconciliation and for any information please contact [membersaffairs@uls.or.ug](mailto:membersaffairs@uls.or.ug)

# TOTAL ENERGIES FUEL CARDS MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

## 1. Who can get the Total Fuel Cards?

All registered members of the Uganda Law Society are eligible to get the Total Energies Fuel Card.

## 2. Where does one get the Card from?

The cards are available at the ULS Secretariat upon application and due diligence followed with interested members contacting our membership desk.

## 3. What benefits are available to holders?

Benefits attached to the Fuel Card as per the Memorandum of Understanding are as follows;

- a) A discount on pre-paid purchase of fuel and other petroleum products and services as indicated in the table below;

Product	Discount on consumption	Threshold Volume
Petrol	UGX. 40/=	2 litres
Diesel	UGX. 50/=	2 litres
Lubricants	1.5%	As per amount invoiced/ published at the station.
LPG (Gas)	1.5%	As per amount invoiced/ published at the station
Solar	1.5%	As per amount invoiced/ published at the station.

- b) Access to all petroleum products and services at any of the Total Energies service stations countrywide using the Total Energies fuel card.
- c) Easy card loading from any of Total Energies service stations across the country and through any Stanbic Bank Uganda Limited's agent service point.
- d) Zero card charges for the initial purchase of the B2C cards for the ULS members. However, a charge of UGX. 26,800/= is applicable for a ULS member who loses their card and wants a replacement.
- e) The ULS members who are issued with Total Energies fuel cards undertake to prepay for the petroleum products that they purchase at the different Total Energies service stations across the country.





# ULS Member *Benefits*



Ugx. 40 per 2 liters for diesel  
Ugx. 50 per 2 liters for petrol



1.5% discount for other products  
consumed through the card

**Inquiries:** ☎ 0703 253733 | 0774 590680 | 0754659981



[membersaffairs@uls.or.ug](mailto:membersaffairs@uls.or.ug)  
[programsofficer@uls.or.ug](mailto:programsofficer@uls.or.ug)

# Because of *You*



## ULS House



- We resolved to prioritize the completion of the superstructure of the ULS House and currently, the superstructure has been completed with all four floors established
- Our goal is to complete the house by September 2024

## Rule of Law



- We managed to publish four quarterly Rule of Law Reports and we operationalized the Rule of Law series to enhance our members' participation in matters of Rule of Law

## Pro Bono



- We held the Annual Pro-Bono Week throughout our 22 regional Legal Aid Clinics where over 38,066 clients were offered support.

## CLE Trainings



- We managed to hold 48 ULS CLE Trainings and 38 CLE Trainings in partnership with other institutions
- We also held 15 weekly webinars focusing on the emerging areas of law

## Regional CLE Trainings



- We held Regional CLE Trainings in the different regions

## Automation



- We have streamlined the payment and registration for the CLE Trainings through the School pay option
- Issued SMEs right after the CLE trainings.
- Launched the ULS Digital Identity Card.



[www.uls.or.ug](http://www.uls.or.ug)

# Upcoming CLE EVENTS



## February 2024

CLE EVENT	CLE POINTS	DATE	FEES
Opening of the new Law Year	2	9th February 2024	Free of Charge
Young Lawyers Mentorship Series		10th February 2024	(Online) Free of Charge
Sports Law Practice and Disputes Adjudication	2	14th February 2024	(Online) Ugx 70,000 (Young Lawyers) Ugx 100,000 (Other Lawyers)
Professional Ethics for a Modern Advocate	2	21st February 2024	(Online) Ugx 70,000 (Young Lawyers) Ugx 100,000 (Other Lawyers)
Rule of Law Series Webinar	2	27th February 2024	(Online) 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

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS DECEMBER 2023

### OIL AND GAS EXCURSION IN BULIISA DISTRICT

**T**he Uganda Law Society in conjunction with the Petroleum Authority of Uganda organized a 3-day site visit for advocates interested in Oil & Gas law to understand more about the on-going Oil and Gas exploration in Uganda under the Kingfisher and Tilenga project in Kikuube district and Buliisa district respectively. The visit aimed at showing the advocates the progress made in the Oil drilling process, issues of environmental and social impact assessment, compensation of Persons Affected by the Project (PAPs) etc.

### Kabaale Industrial Park

the Kabaale industrial park is 29.7 sq meters in Kikuube district with the Kabalega International Airport at the centre surrounded by oil drilling works. This crude oil is to be sent to Tanga, Tanzania for refinery.

The airport was constructed for transportation of cargo to aid the oil exploration.

### Kingfisher Project

The Kingfisher project is on-going with one onshore oil field located at the shores of Lake Albert in Kikuube district. The project is being operated by China National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC). The development of the Kingfisher field is planned to be undertaken through onshore drilling of 31 Development Wells from four well-pads. The drilling is currently on-going and it can take about 3 months to drill one well. The project engineers noted that the oil drilling process is estimated to go on for a period of five years, using one drilling rig. This drilling rig can drill up to 8km below the ground, and the deepest well

will be 7.4km the largest and deepest drilling well in Africa.

The project was approved by NEMA and a certificate was issued in 2020. This was following the Environment and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) which was focused on aspects like air quality, noise, vibration, hydrology, biodiversity, surface water, and waste, among others. They were however given conditions to abide by including compliance with relevant government agencies for example attaining of permits from the Directorate of Water Resources Management, and permits for fuel storage facilities.

On hazards and affluents, the project engineers explained that the camps have treatment plants for sewage and these plants were approved by NEMA. Monitoring is conducted quarterly and annual audits are made to ensure continuous improvement in complying with the environmental and social requirements.

Under the livelihood restoration process, the project is undertaking resettlement action plans for the PAPs who were affected by the land acquisition process. All displaced persons are given a 3- bedroom house, with an outside kitchen and toilet, and solar power. An agricultural scheme has also been conducted through teaching the locals better farming methods, skilling the youth, providing improved breeds of cattle.

CNOOC has also constructed a water supply system which provides clean water through over 70 tanks in the village. An escarpment road has also been constructed easing transport and movement of vehicles along the hilly terrain.





*Inset: Drilling rig at the Kingfisher project*



*Inset: One of the CNOOC staff explains the water supply system they have set up to provide clean water to the locals*



## The Tilenga Project

The Tilenga Project is running in Buliisa district. Under the compensation of PAPs. The project has so far constructed 235 houses to resettle PAPs in Buliisa. The newly constructed houses vary from 2 bed-room, 3 bedroom and 4 bedrooms with an outside kitchen, toilet and solar power. The variance in number of rooms is dependent on the size of house the PAP had before the project interference to ensure equitable compensation.

The project has provided job opportunities to the nation with 70% of the workers being Ugandan including engineers, drillers, drivers, semi- and unskilled labor etc.



*Inset: Team from Uganda Law Society and Petroleum Authority of Uganda pose in front of the drilling rig at Tilenga*



*Inset: Team of Uganda Law Society members visiting the Petroleum Authority of Uganda offices in Hoima*

## CONSTRUCTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE SYMPOSIUM

From 7th to 8th December 2023, Uganda Law Society held the Construction and Infrastructure Symposium at Fairway Hotel bringing together experts in the field.

Mr. David Kaggwa, a Partner at Kaggwa Advocates provided a detailed analysis on computation of construction costs, encompassing financial, contractual, and operational facets, including plant & equipment and standing time considerations. In his discussion, he addressed common challenges prevalent in construction projects, such as claims, variations, payments, and time management.

Mr. Milton Ocen, Managing Partner -Milton Advocates, delved into the core players of a construction project – Employer, Engineer, Contractor, and Sub-Contractor. In his discussion, he outlined the diverse risks inherent in construction endeavors and offers strategic insights on effectively navigating and mitigating these challenges. He also stated the need for tailored legal frameworks for construction disputes to ensure a nuanced approach, addressing complexities unique to the industry and fostering fair resolutions for all parties involved.

Ms. Esther Kusiima, the Head Contracts & Claims at UNRA delved into the crucial phase of project commencement, focusing on aspects such as site access, program development, and setting out procedures. She stressed the significance of a logically flowing program and also underscored the importance of timely communication. She further emphasized that the Engineer should submit notices to the contractor within a specified timeframe, but in their absence, the contractor is empowered to proceed with the program.

Mr. Isaac Ssekabanja, of Kalenge, Bwanika, Kisubi& Co. Advocates, discussed arbitration in construction law. He also discussed the significance of privacy, linking it to a market analysis of the project, where all parties have their reputation at stake. Importantly, he highlighted the cost factor, emphasizing that arbitration is not a pursuit for the financially constrained.



*Left: David Kaggwa of Kaggwa & Kaggwa Advocates. Right: Albert Mukasa, Partner at M&K Advocates*





*Inset: Group photo of participants*

## SPORTS LAW TRAINING

**U**ganda Law Society held the Sports Law Training on 1st December 2023 with experts from the Federation of Uganda Football Association (FUFA), National Sports Council, Uganda Olympic Committee, Federation of Basketball and legal practitioners specializing in sports law.

Mr. Denis Lukambi- Head Legal at FUFA discussed the Sports Act of 2023, focusing on the client, business interests, and advisory roles across 52 federations. Within the Act, lawyers can find guidance through elements that detail legal frameworks, dispute resolution mechanisms, contractual obligations, and compliance standards. Ms. Shadia Nakamanya, Senior Legal/ Compliance at the National Council of Sports also shed more light into the Act highlighting its impact on governance and the registration process. She noted that the legislation, marked by its timeliness, addresses longstanding conflicts of the mandate within sports federations by clearly outlining their roles and responsibilities. This strategic clarification aims to streamline operations, promoting smoother collaboration and reducing potential disputes. Notably, the act goes beyond mere governance, extending its reach to the regulation and licensing of sports academics, providing a comprehensive framework for the entire sports ecosystem.

Nasser Serunjongi, the President of the Uganda Basketball Association discussed and assessed the Sports Federations' preparedness for the implications of the new Sports Act. He noted that the Act emphasizes financial transparency, and mandates all federations to report and account for all finances received.

The President of the Uganda Olympic Committee and Vice President-Elect, of the Commonwealth Games Association, Dr. Donald Rukare, expounded on sports conflict resolutions and management, highlighting what sports lawyers should look out for during the upcoming Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) games organized by the Confederation of African Football (CAF). He emphasized that the sports law scope includes employment contracts, sports disputes – governance, team



selection, partnerships, intellectual property, image rights, commercial transactions, anti-doping, human rights, Media /broadcast rights, illegal betting and sports manipulation, and CAS adhoc division at games.



*Left: Dr. Donald Rukare, President of Uganda Olympics Council and Vice President, of the Commonwealth Games Association. Right: Ms. Shadia Nakamanya, Senior Legal/Compliance at the National Council for Sports.*



*Inset: Group photo of panelists at the Sports Law Training*

## CRIMINAL LAW PRACTICE TRAINING

Close to 300 members including various stakeholders in the criminal justice system attended the criminal practice training on 19th December 2023. It was held under the theme: **Exploring best practices in criminal trials and challenges faced in criminal litigation.** All attendees of the training earned themselves five (5) CLE points.



*Photos of some of the panelists with staff of ULS*

Ms. Samali Wakooli, the Assistant DPP, while addressing the investigation and prosecution of SGBV crimes, emphasized the multifaceted nature of violence-emotional, physical, psychological, and sexual shed light on the victimization of survivors in courts and advocates for gender-sensitive laws in handling such cases and called upon lawyers and other stakeholders to perform their obligations and ensure that justice always prevails.



*Ms. Samali Wakooli, the Assistant DPP addressing the participants*



Hon. Lady Justice Suzan Okalany exposed the dire reality of global human trafficking, affecting a staggering 40 million people globally with children comprising 50%, women 20%, girls 20%, and men 10%. Fueled by the demand for cheap labour and services amid conflict and corruption, Uganda faces a substantial challenge and, serves both as a transit and destination of human trafficking. She stated that Uganda sadly is dealing with around 3,000 children on its streets, with young rural girls enduring abuse as domestic workers.



*Hon. Lady Justice Suzan Okalany delivering her presentation during the training*

## TAX TRAINING

The Uganda Law Society, in collaboration with the Uganda Revenue Authority, organized a half day training session on tax awareness for lawyers in Uganda. The training took place at the URA offices in Nakawa on December 18, 2023. The primary aim of the training was to enhance the understanding of tax laws and regulations among legal professionals in the country.



*A group photo of the participants with the ULS President, Bernard Oundo, after the training*



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## ENROLMENT OF NEW ADVOCATES JANUARY 2024

On Tuesday, 25th January 2024, the inaugural enrolment of the year took place at the Judiciary Headquarters in Kampala, welcoming over 129 new advocates. During this significant event, Counsel Peace Athocon, representing the Secretary of the Law Council, extended heartfelt congratulations to the newly enrolled advocates, marking this occasion as the initiation of their professional journey.

She encouraged the new advocates to provide service that transcends self-interest and subscribing to the Uganda Law Society was emphasized as a crucial step in their professional engagement.

While acknowledging the vast opportunities in legal practice and its reputation for being intellectually stimulating, Counsel Athocon highlighted the profession's stringent regulations. She emphasized the vital role played by legal professionals in resolving corporate social problems globally.

She highlighted Law Council's mandate to ensure good professional conduct within the legal system of Uganda. Advocates were urged to internalize the professional standards for their professional growth. The advocates were also advised to remain teachable, demonstrating humility in their pursuit of excellence. The importance of attentiveness to instructions and seemingly small details, such as punctuality, was stressed as factors that could open doors of opportunity.

Regardless of their location, advocates were reminded of the perpetual scrutiny they would face. Maintaining exemplary conduct and upholding the guiding principles of the legal profession were highlighted as essential for success. Counsel Athocon also emphasized the advocates' responsibility for the legal profession, stressing that their rewards would be commensurate with how they carry themselves and fulfill this responsibility. In her final note, she cautioned the new advocates against involvement in financial fraud matters. Emphasis was placed on appreciating the process of earning honestly.

Representing the President of the Uganda Law Society, Counsel Isaac Atukunda commended Chief Registrar HW Sarah Langa Siu for streamlining the monthly enrolment process, a crucial step that ensures advocates can promptly commence their legal practice. He highlighted the importance of timely enrolment in securing advocates' livelihoods, cautioning against delays that could hinder their professional progress. Counsel Atukunda acknowledged that despite these streamlined processes, there are still practitioners choosing not to enroll, affecting their ability to practice effectively.



*Counsel Isaac Atukunda delivering his remarks.*

In his address, he advised the new advocates to maintain professionalism, focus, and intentionality in their legal practice. Counsel Atukunda drew attention to the rising instances of unprofessional conduct in the legal field, urging the advocates to uphold the highest standards throughout their careers.

Highlighting Uganda Law Society's role, he emphasized its establishment by an act of Parliament with objectives such as elevating the standards of the legal profession. Counsel Atukunda encouraged advocates to participate in Continuing Legal Education (CLE) training offered by ULS for their professional growth. He stressed the need to accumulate specific points through these trainings to attain their Practicing Certificates (PCs). Additionally, he advised advocates to advance in their careers, exposing themselves to cross-border legal practices and technological advancements in the evolving legal landscape.

Counsel Atukunda outlined the various support mechanisms provided by ULS to its members, including welfare and Benevolent fund for families of deceased members. He announced future educational scholarships for advocates' children and informed the advocates about the ULS SACCO, which will offer members favourable loan rates. Emphasizing ULS's collaboration with the government and courts on legal matters, he clarified that ULS's role is to advocate, not fight, as some members might expect.

Concluding his address, Counsel Atukunda reminded advocates of their responsibility to promote the Rule of Law, emphasizing the importance of knowledge and professionalism in their interactions with the public. He reaffirmed that in this new chapter, ethical behaviour is essential, comparing a lawyer without ethics to a ship without a compass—reaching the destination but lacking direction and purpose.

His Worship Timothy Lumunye, the event's moderator, advised advocates to cultivate the will to say no to wrongdoing. Using an example of a financially secure young man who plans for the future despite having the means to spend recklessly, Lumunye highlighted the importance of making responsible choices and thinking about the long-term impact of their actions.

The Chief Registrar, HW Sarah Langa Siu, presiding over the event, expressed gratitude to the representative of the Secretary of the Law Council, Counsel Peace Athocon, and the representative of the President of the Uganda Law Society, Counsel Isaac Atukunda, for their presence at

the occasion. She extended her appreciation to the parents and guardians in attendance, acknowledging their crucial support for the advocates throughout their empowering educational journey. The Chief Registrar congratulated the newly enrolled advocates for their perseverance and urged them to attribute their success to God for his grace, advising them to maintain humility as they start this nation building experience.

Addressing the advocates, she emphasized the importance of integrity and professionalism in all their endeavors. The Chief Registrar called upon them to play a role in educating the public about the law, particularly focusing on inspiring and empowering grassroots communities.

The Chief Registrar encouraged the advocates to be consistently prepared, demonstrate courtesy, and have the courage to handle losses gracefully and avoid public confrontations. She urged them to explore opportunities in upcountry regions, emphasizing the value of building positive personal brands by contributing positively wherever they go.

In a heartfelt appeal, the Chief Registrar listed key principles for the advocates to uphold throughout their careers, including justice, humility, mercy, integrity, honesty, diligence, professionalism, competency, transparency, confidence, and the importance of maintaining client confidentiality. These principles, she assured, would serve as a guiding light throughout their professional journey.

The Chief Registrar concluded by expressing gratitude to everyone in attendance and conveyed her best wishes for a successful and blessed career to the newly enrolled advocates.



*Caption: New Advocates posing for a group photo with the Registrar High Court, and Counsel Isaac Atukunda from Uganda Law Society and Law Council*



## ENROLMENT OF NEW ADVOCATES DECEMBER 2023

On December 14, 2023, an enrolment ceremony for new advocates was held at the High Court. The event was graced by distinguished figures including the Registrar of the High Court of Uganda, Her Worship Rosemary Bareebe, Mr. Turyasingura Gaudius representing the ULS President, and Peace Anthocon representing the Law Council.

Her Worship, Rosemary Bareebe, extended a warm welcome to the new advocates, congratulating them on reaching this significant milestone. She encouraged them to consider practicing alternative dispute resolution as they embarked on their legal careers.



*Her Worship, Rosemary Bareebe delivering her remarks during the event*

Representing the Law Council, Peace Anthocon advised the new advocates to cultivate patience in their pursuit of success and emphasized the importance of embracing continuous legal education.

Turyasingura Gaudius, as the representative of the ULS President, underscored the pivotal role of new advocates in defending the rights of their clients. He emphasized that as legal professionals, they are not mere observers but custodians of the law. Gaudius stressed their duty to uphold the law, seek justice, and fervently defend the rights of their clients.



*New Advocates posing for a group photo with the Registrar High Court, and Representatives from Uganda Law Society and Law Council/Photo by New Vision*

## LEGAL AID AND PRO BONO PROJECT

In 2023, the Legal Aid department served the indigent, vulnerable and marginalized persons through 23 Legal Aid and Satellite clinics across the country. 12 are full legal aid clinics located in; Kampala, Mbarara, Kabale, Kabarole, Masindi, Arua, Gulu, Soroti, Jinja, Luzira, Luweero & Moroto. While 11 are satellite clinics located in; Abim, Amuria, Kaberamaido, Nakapiripit, Pader, Amudat, Kitgum, Nabilatuk, Moyo and Kotido.

A total of **52,835(M, F)** individuals benefited from the services offered by the department during the year. **40,941(M, F)** individuals directly benefited from the services of; free legal representation, legal advice, mediations. **11,894(M, F)** indirectly benefited through legal and human rights awareness.

Project	Total	Representation in court	ADR	Legal advice	Supported with drafting of legal documents	Legal & human rights awareness	Support by Community based volunteers
IDLO	6531	1840	419	2189	–	2083	–
Netherlands Embassy	10,259	2250	284	5867	–	1486	372
UN-Women	7207	295	791	2775	–	1523	1823
Ireland Embassy	1006	302	79	145	–	480	–
IRC-UNHCR	249	103	2	161	10	–	–
DRC-IMVE-PI	3007	160	–	442	217	2188	–
NRC	1118	16052	–	360	44	662	–
IRC-BPRM	1974	266	58	505	145	937	–
IRC-APEAL (Kyaka & Imvepi)	2389	417	53	894	48	1030	–

## Best Performing Pro-Bono Advocates for the Year 2023

The Pro-Bono Project of the Uganda Law Society aims at providing free quality legal and advisory support services to the indigent, vulnerable and marginalized men, women and children in Uganda. The scheme has been in existence for the last fourteen years where a number of advocates participate in providing efficient professional services to the vulnerable, indigent and marginalized people in the Districts of Kampala, Mbarara, Soroti, Arua, Gulu, Masindi, Kabale, Kabarole and Jinja as a way of giving back to the community.

In that regard, the Uganda Law Society rewarded the best performing advocates who have diligently provided legal services in line with the objectives of pro-Bono scheme and duty counsel scheme and offered the required service of giving legal advice, providing representation to indigent persons as well as their involvement in free community legal education.

The awarded advocates were selected from each of the pro-bono coordination centers of Kampala, Mbarara, Fort Portal, Kabale, Masindi, Gulu, Soroti, Jinja, Arua including duty counsel which is run in Kampala.

The awarded advocates were those who in their various regions have recorded the highest number of completed files both in court and through Alternative Dispute Resolution, have handled the most number of pro-bono files, given timely feedback to both the clients and pro-bono office regarding pro-bono files allocated to them and the duty counsel scheme, and have willingly and diligently participated in other pro-bono scheme activities throughout the year.

Based on the above criteria below are some of the highlighted outstanding advocates from the various regions;

Legal Clinic	Name of Advocate	Name of Law Firm
Gulu	Odyek Douglas	Kunihira & Co. Advocates
	Layoo Paul	Kunihira & Co. Advocates
Kabale	Patience Nasiima	Nasiima Patience & Co. Advocates
	Rogers Nabasa	Pearl Advocates & Solicitors (Kisoro)
Masindi	Susan Zemei	Zemei Aber Law Chambers
	Tugume Moses (Hoima)	Tugume Byensi & Co. Advocates
Soroti	Obore David	M/S Obore & Co. Advocates
	Engwau George	Engwau & Co. Advocates



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Legal Clinic	Name of Advocate	Name of Law Firm
Kabarole /Kasese	Kasigazi Francis (Fort Portal)	Acellam Collins & Co. Advocates
	Luleti Robert (Fort Portal)	Mugabe Luleti& Co Advocates
	Kironde Emmanuel(Kasese)	Borris Advocates
Mbarara/Bushenyi	Suwaya Matovu	Matovu Suwaya& Co Advocates
	Arinda Dickson(Bushenyi)	Tumwesigye& Co Advocates
Jinja/Iganga	Naita Julius(Iganga)	Naita & Co. Advocates
	Ouma Francis	Ouma& Co. Advocates
	Amujong Kevin	Okalang Law Chambers
Kampala	Golooba Abbey	Naikoba & Ggolooba Advocates
	Judith Nabukeera	Lule Godfrey & Mulumba Co. Advocates
	Owakubaruho Oscar Borban	Oscar Associated Advocates
Best Probono Law Firm	Best Pro Bono Law Firm	Nakagga & Co. Advocates
Duty Counsel Advovates	Ruth Nampijja	Ruth Nampijja Advocates & Solicitors
	Najjemba Agnes	Osilo & Co. Advocates

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## JANUARY 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

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### UPHOLDING THE RULE OF LAW: THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY

*“The independence of the judiciary is not negotiable. It is an imperative and an essential attribute of the rule of law.” - Aung San Suu Kyi.*

**T**he Rule of Law signifies a society where laws are applied consistently, equally, and fairly, without bias or discrimination. It ensures that individuals, irrespective of their status, are accountable for their actions under a set of clear and predictable laws. At the heart of this principle lies the independence of the judiciary, a critical component that safeguards the integrity of legal processes and upholds the rights and liberties of individuals.

In Uganda, domestic and international laws are clear in emphasizing the need for an impartial and independent judicial system. The Constitution of Uganda, 1995 (as amended) under Article 128(1) provides that in the exercise of judicial power, the courts shall be independent and shall not be subject to the control or direction of any person or authority. Article 14(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) also provides that everyone shall be entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal.

The rationale for the independence of the judiciary lies in its indispensable role as a guardian of justice and a bulwark against the arbitrary exercise of power. One of the primary functions of an independent judiciary is through checks and balances; the judiciary has a role to serve as a check on the power of the executive and legislative branches. By maintaining a separation of powers, the judiciary acts as a safeguard against potential abuse of authority. This separation is crucial in preventing the concentration of power in any single branch of government and promoting accountability.

Independence further ensures that judicial officers are free from undue influence or interference when interpreting and applying the law. This impartiality is vital for guaranteeing fair trials and equitable resolution of disputes. An independent judiciary fosters public confidence in the legal system, reinforcing the belief that justice will be served without prejudice.

Despite its critical role, the independence of the judiciary worldwide faces various challenges. Political interference, external pressure, and inadequate resources can undermine the autonomy of the judiciary, jeopardizing its ability to function effectively.

One of the foremost challenges to judicial independence is the risk of political interference.

Political pressures can emanate from various sources, including government officials, legislators, or powerful interest groups. When the judiciary succumbs to external influence, the impartiality of the legal system is compromised, eroding public trust and confidence.

The manner in which judges are appointed and their terms of office can also impact their independence. In some cases, political considerations may influence judicial appointments, undermining the merit-based selection process. Additionally, the lack of secure tenure for judges can expose them to the risk of removal based on political whims, hindering their ability to make impartial decisions without fear of reprisal.

In other instances, judicial officers may face personal and professional threats, harassment, or intimidation in the course of their duties. This can come from various quarters, including criminal elements, political figures, or those dissatisfied with a particular legal outcome. Ensuring the safety and security of judges is paramount to protecting their independence and guaranteeing that they can discharge their duties without fear.

In the digital age, the judiciary faces new challenges related to technology. Cyber security threats, potential manipulation of electronic records, and the need for technological upgrades may pose risks to the confidentiality and integrity of judicial processes. Addressing these challenges requires ongoing investment in technology and training to ensure the judiciary remains resilient and secure.

Interference with the independence of the judiciary poses grave threats to the core principles of a just and democratic society. When external pressures compromise the autonomy of the judiciary, the very foundation of the Rule of Law is undermined. This erosion of judicial independence not only diminishes public trust in the legal system but also compromises the fairness and impartiality of legal decisions. The potential violation of human rights becomes a real concern, as judges may feel constrained in upholding the law without external influence. This interference creates a chilling effect on judges, fostering self-censorship and hindering their ability to act as impartial arbiters of justice. The political instrumentalization of the judiciary risks turning it into a tool for political manipulation, threatening the delicate balance of power among the branches of government.

In conclusion, it is the purpose of judicial independence is the complete liberty of the judicial officer to impartially and independently decide cases that come before the court and no outsider be it government, individual or other judicial officer should interfere with the manner in which an officer makes a decision. It is, therefore, more than crucial for every arm of government, to respect the doctrine of separation of powers. Every arm should operate without interference with the other so as to achieve a just and transparent system of good governance.


Equally crucial is the role of the general public in upholding the sanctity of the judiciary. Respecting court orders and allowing judicial officers to execute their duties without external pressures, threats, manipulation, or bribes is not just a legal imperative but a moral one. By fostering an environment where the judiciary operates independently and free from undue influence, we lay the foundation for a society governed by principles of justice, accountability, and transparency. Let us strive for a nation where the Rule of Law is not just an ideal but a lived reality, where the judiciary can carry out its mandate without fear or favor, ultimately contributing to the greater cause of good governance and the well-being of our citizens.



### OPEN LETTER CALLING FOR RESPECT OF INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY

On 9th December 2023, the Uganda Law Society (ULS) issued an open letter emphasizing the critical importance of respecting the independence of the judiciary. The contents of the letter underlined the paramount significance of upholding the judiciary's autonomy as a fundamental pillar of a fair and just society. This stance served as a resounding call to all stakeholders to honor and safeguard the judiciary's independence, ensuring its ability to dispense justice impartially and without external influence. The ULS's statement resonated widely within legal circles and beyond, highlighting the vital role of an independent judiciary in upholding the rule of law and fostering trust in the justice system.

Below is a copy of the letter ;



ULS/904/23

December 9, 2023

The Honourable Principal Judge,  
High Court of Uganda,  
KAMPALA

Your Lordship,

**RE: OPEN LETTER IN RESPONSE TO YOUR DIRECTIVE TO HON. JUSTICE STEPHEN MUBIRU**

Greetings from the Uganda Law Society (ULS).

Our attention has been drawn to your letter dated December 1, 2023, addressed to Hon. Justice Stephen Mubiru of the High Court Commercial Division.

In that letter, you criticize Hon. Justice Mubiru for a backlog of 170 pending decisions and then purport to direct him to refrain from hearing any other matters in the next 60 days until a satisfactory report has been made on the delivery of all the pending decisions.

While your concerns on the case backlog are generally appreciated and shared by the Bar and the public, your direction is illegal and has grave implications on fundamental tenets of the administration of justice starting with the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary.

Each judge takes a solemn oath to administer justice independently without fear or favour, and once assigned a matter, a judge is duty-bound to hear it and render a decision.

The Judicature Act (Cap. 13), does not in any way empower your office to constrain any judge from hearing cases. Section 20 you have cited, only empowers your office on distribution of business in the High Court. It does not empower your office to direct how a judge handles his docket, and in particular to refrain from hearing cases already assigned to a judge.

Secondly, it is particularly troubling that your directive appears to come in the wake of a landmark ruling by Hon. Justice Mubiru on the independence of the Judiciary in which he criticized your interference with a decision of a Registrar.


The timing of your directive makes it appear retaliatory and an attack on Hon. Justice Mubiru for his judicial decision. This does not bode well for public confidence and trust in the judiciary, and can only have a dampening effect on the confidence of the members of the Judiciary.

As an individual, the performance of Hon. Justice Mubiru has been exemplary for the number of decisions he has delivered and also the quality, depth and reasoning displayed in the decisions.

We, therefore, seek your audience to deliberate on the subject matter and other related aspects concerning the administration of justice, request for all relevant information concerning the case backlog at the High Court, and disclosure of the caseload handled by each Justice of the High Court.

The Uganda Law Society remains committed to upholding the principles of justice, and the rule of law, and safeguarding the independence of the judiciary in Uganda.

Yours faithfully,

  
**BERNARD OUNDO**  
President

Copy to:

- The Hon. Chief Justice
- The Hon. Deputy Chief Justice
- The Chairperson, Judicial Service Commission
- The Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Judiciary
- The Chief Registrar
- The Deputy Registrar, High Court Commercial Division
- The Hon. Justice Stephen Mubiru, Commercial Court

Be a Proficient Bar Association in Fostering Access to Justice, the Rule of Law and Good Governance in Uganda.  
18 Plot 814 Buge, Ninda CRT Ninda - Kiwazi Road P.O. Box 420 Kampala, Uganda Tel: +256 414 342 434, +256 414 341 881  
TOLL FREE LINES: 0800100100 and 0800100101 Email: info@uls.org Website: www.uls.org

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## ENGAGEMENT WITH THE EVIDENCE AND METHODS LAB

**T**he Uganda Law Society Rule of Law Department team had an engagement with the Evidence and Methods Lab (EML) a Ugandan civic technology initiative working in the areas of access to information, accountability, and innovation.

The deliberations rotated around developing a partnership under the ULS Rule of Law Project in developing simplified versions of the Ugandan laws especially the constitution, and human rights legislation tailored for children, youths, and non-lawyers.



*Inset: ULS Rule of Law Department staff pose for a photo with a team from Evidence Methods Lab*

### NEW SUPREME COURT, COURT OF APPEAL TWIN BUILDINGS FOR GRAND OPENING



The commissioning of the twin towers housing the appellate courts (the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal), has finally been set for February 9.

In a notice dated January 22 issued out by the Chief Registrar of Courts of Judicature, Sarah Langa Siu to all advocates and court users, the long awaited commissioning of the appellate courts will come shortly after the annual judges' conference that starts early February.

“The Judiciary will hold the annual judges conference 2024 from 5th to 8th February, 2024. This conference will be followed by the official opening of the New Law year 2024 and the commissioning of the new appellate courts building on the 9th February, 2024.”

read in part the Judiciary notice.

Adding: “This is to inform you that all the judicial officers of the superior courts , the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal and the High Court, will be away for the conference and subsequently, the New Law Year and the commissioning of the appellate courts buildings. However, the registries of the courts will remain open.”

In December last year, Mr. Pius Bigirimana, while listing the nine priorities that the Judiciary intends to focus on this year, the grand opening of the appellate court buildings, topped the list. Initially, the Judiciary had thought the contractor would be able to finish the construction of the eight-storey twin buildings by July last year but it was not possible due to unforeseen challenges.

#### **What the Judiciary will gain from commissioning the twin tower appellate courts**

The commissioning of the twin tower buildings will save the Judiciary at least Shs6 billion, which it annually pays in rent for the appellate courts.

The Judiciary spends about Shs10 billion annually on rent of its court premises countrywide. This now means that, once the biggest chunk of rent money that was going into renting the two appellate courts is no more, only about Shs4b will be spent on rent annually.

The twin towers are located just above the Constitutional Square, sharing the same location with the High Court.

The same has been constructed in a period of close to three years.

Billed at Shs63.9b, the twin towers have a basement parking big enough to accommodate 226 vehicles at a go, customized courthouses, modern courtrooms, chambers for justices, restaurant, gym, childcare centers, and a conference hall among other modern amenities.



## CONGRATULATIONS

The Uganda Law Society congratulates Hon. Justice Fredrick Egonda Ntende on the award of an Honorary Doctor of Laws(LLD) of Makerere University on January 29, 2024.



# *Congratulations*

**HON. JUSTICE FREDRICK EGONDA-NTENDE**

upon being awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD)  
Makerere University

✂ ug\_lawsociety

🌐 [www.uls.or.ug](http://www.uls.or.ug)

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**Below is his acceptance speech;**

While I was a young advocate, I appeared for a client in a matter in the High Court which my client lost. I formed the view that the court had left the words of our Constitution lifeless. A thought ran through my mind that if I ever became a judge, my duty should be to breathe life into the words of the Constitution to provide full enjoyment and protection of the law to those that sought redress in our courts.

A couple of months later, the Executive Council of the Uganda Law Society, where I was the vice president, paid a courtesy call on the Chief Justice, Wambuzi, soon after coming into office. Chief Justice SWW Wambuzi, among other things, requested that we persuade senior members of the Bar to agree to serve on the Bench as there was a severe shortage of judges. Chief Justice Owiny-Dollo, then a committee member, proposed to the Chief Justice that if senior members of the Bar were not willing to serve, he should look at the next tier, such as yours truly, the Vice president of the Uganda Law Society.

I did not give much thought to this suggestion, only to be surprised a couple of months later, with an offer to be a judge of the High Court of Uganda. Apparently, the Chief Justice accepted the suggestion made by a person who was to occupy the same office three decades later.

And so, on 19th November 1991, I took an oath to serve as a judge in this jurisdiction. Since then, I have served in a couple of other jurisdictions too. Starting to serve in the Judiciary, I thought I knew much of what needed to be tackled from the outside. Once inside, I understood that legal acumen and zeal, obviously essential attributes of any judge, were insufficient to breathe life into the otherwise lifeless words of our Constitution and other laws.

One had to double as a development practitioner, a change agent, to contribute to the transformation of the Judiciary into an effective and efficient body that renders justice to all without fear or favor, ill will or affection. I have dedicated the last 33 years to these ideals. I thank Makerere University, and the College of Law, my Alma Mater for this award, an award to me, but symbolically, to all in the Judiciary, that have been committed to the service of our people, without fanfare or acclaim, day in, day out, without being a leech on those that cross their paths or come across their bows. This award is to all those who accept to be servants of the people rather than their masters.

I thank my departed parents, Yonasani and Margaret Kiwudhu, who gave up so much that I may claim and attain the godly promises in my life. I thank those that came before us, the giants on whose shoulders we have stood, so that we are able to be seen and recognized. I thank my wife, Margaret and children, Almighty God, the enabler, who has walked this journey with us, blessing us all the way, in immeasurable ways, with his glorious riches.

*Thank you for listening to me. My God bless you all.*

# JUSTICE BAMUGEMEREIRE, MUGENYI ELEVATED TO SUPREME COURT

**P**resident Museveni in January appointed Justices Catherine Bamugemereire and Monica Mugenyi to the Supreme Court, the highest court in the land. The duo justices were prior to their appointment, attached to the Court of Appeal and Constitutional Court.

This means that the duo was elevated to a higher court, the Supreme Court.

The head of state also appointed Acting Registrars; Ms Stella Atingu and Mr John Paul Edoku.

The bringing on board of the two justices now brings the number of the justices at the Supreme Court to 11 including Chief Justice, Alfonse Owiny-Dollo.

The elevation of justices Bamugemereire and Mugenyi comes at the time when Justice Faith Mwendha will be leaving the same Supreme Court mid next month upon clocking the retirement age of 70 years.

Parliament in November 2023 passed the Judicature (Amendment) Bill, 2023, rejecting the proposal to increase the number of Supreme Court justices from 11 to 21.

In rejecting the proposal to increase the number of Supreme Court justices, the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs argued that this would not address the concerns of case backlog as fronted by the government.

“Even if the number of justices of the Supreme Court is increased, those measures will not be successful in dealing with the issue of case backlog in the Supreme Court since the cases arising from the lower court will not be abated,” the report stated.

The MPs were also concerned that the move would increase government expenditure. Every Supreme Court justice earns about Shs25 million, and other benefits, including housing and security detail.

Upon retirement, they are entitled to a monthly benefit equivalent to 80 percent of the salary for the rest of their lives.

The MPs, however, endorsed the increment of the number of Court of Appeal justices by 20, meaning the total number of the Appeal Court justices will be 35.

Government had proposed the number of Court of Appeal justices to be increased to 56, with the intent to operationalise eight regional courts of appeal and address the case backlog.

It was not clear when the appointing authority would fill the gaps left behind at the Court of Appeal and Constitutional Court where they had picked justices Bamugemereire and Mugenyi.





## SENIOR LAWYERS INTERVIEW

### SENIOR COUNSEL PETER WALUBIRI

**I**n this edition, we caught up with seasoned constitutional advocate, Peter Walubiri; who shared his thoughts about the current state of the rule of law in the country as below;

#### ***1. Who is Senior Counsel Peter Walubiri?***

Peter Mukidi Walubiri was born on 19th November, 1963 at Kidiki now Namwendwa Town Council in Kamuli District. I studied at Kidiki Boys Primary School (now mixed), Kiira College Butiki, St. Gonzaga Secondary School, Budini and Kings College Buddo before pursuing my LLB at Makerere University.

I then pursued a Diploma in Legal Practice at the Law Development Centre and LLM at University of London (UCL). I joined the bar in 1990 and have been practicing as the Managing Partner at KBW Advocates (formally Kwesigabo, Bamwine & Walubiri Advocates). I was also formally a Principal Registrar of Titles in the Ministry of Lands and Senior Law Lecturer at Makerere University.

#### ***2. What is your assessment of the current state of the rule of law in Uganda, particularly in terms of its strengths and challenges?***

The rule of law situation in Uganda is seriously wanting. At the highest level of the executive, there is a disdain for the law and disrespect for the court decisions. The President is not shy to openly abuse the Judiciary. The independence of the Judiciary is under attack and public officials routinely disregard the law and courts are too slow to sanction them.

#### ***3. How do you perceive the role of the legal profession in promoting and upholding the rule of law in Uganda?***

The legal profession has a duty to promote and uphold the rule of law. This is the only way to practice professionally and pay back to society. However, the bulk of the profession has degenerated like the rest of society and sought means of personal survival in these troubled social, economic and pitiful times.

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**4. In your opinion, what are the key legal reforms needed to strengthen the rule of law in Uganda?**

Legal reforms pursuit cannot strengthen the rule of law. We need real fundamental political and economic reforms. Uganda needs to be rewired.

**5. How can the Uganda Law Society actively contribute to fostering a culture of respect for the rule of law among legal practitioners and the broader community?**

The ULS should reorganise itself to play the leading role in galvanising society to demand for and work for the rule of law and a just society. Members should not look at rule of law issues in a partisan way. As lawyers we thrive in a society anchored on the rule of law. Working for the rule of law should be the pre occupation of the ULS.

**6. Do you believe there are systemic issues within the legal system that may impede the rule of law, and if so, how can these be addressed?**

The systemic issues impeding the rule of law are governance issues. These have to be addressed head on by a critical mass of Ugandan society, with lawyers playing leading roles.

**7. Considering the evolving nature of technology and its impact on the legal landscape, how should the legal profession adapt to ensure the rule of law remains robust in Uganda?**

The legal profession should embrace IT but there is a need for regulation and focused training.

**8. What steps can be taken to address the ever rising cases of misconduct within the legal system and foster a culture of integrity and accountability among legal professionals?**

Integrity and misconduct is rampant even outside the legal system. Deal with the culture of impunity across board and have the best leaders at the very top of the legal and other systems.

**9. Lately, universities are producing so many law graduates, yet the job market is still small, in your view, what should be done to remedy this?**

You cannot stop access to legal education. Grow the economy after sorting out governance issues and there will be opportunities for all.

**10. What is your rating of the courts in upholding the rule of law in the country as they adjudicate cases?**

The courts are struggling but not copying. We have too many inefficient judicial officers working in a corrupt environment for the few good ones to make a noticeable impact.

# THE YEAR 2023 IN REVIEW

## MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

### FEBRUARY

In February 2023, the ULS President led a delegation of the ULS Law Reform Committee to present ULS views on the Law Revision (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill, 2022. The team appeared before the Parliamentary Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs chaired by Hon. Robina Rwakoojo. This Bill was later passed as law in May 2023.



*Left: The ULS president makes a presentation before the Parliamentary Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. Right: SC John Mary Mugisha (Chairperson ULS Law Reform Committee) makes a submission before the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs*

### MARCH

**Uganda Law Society enters into a partnership with the Royal Netherlands Embassy to fund the Legal Aid Project**

The Royal Netherlands Embassy offered funding to support ULS Legal Aid Project Interventions to support the Mbarara, Soroti and Luwero legal aid clinics, as well as the Pro-bono scheme.



*Inset : President Bernard Oundo, joined by team from ULS and the Royal Netherlands Embassy*



## APRIL

### The East African Law Society Strategic Litigation Surgery

On 19th April 2023, the East Africa Law Society in partnership with the Uganda Law Society organised a one-day strategic litigation capacity building session in line with its mandate to monitor and enhance the Rule of Law within the East African region and to develop the capacities of the legal profession. This session attracted 100 Advocates interested in Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in Uganda. The purpose of the event was to create a forum for lawyers interested in the area of practice to build their capacity in the context of PIL in Uganda, the emerging trends in PIL, a reflection on both substance and strategy to grow PIL in Uganda.



*Inset: Group photo of participants*

## MAY

### Launch of the Inaugural Uganda Law Society Journal

On Thursday 18th May 2023, the President of the Uganda Law Society- Mr. Bernard Oundo officially launched the Inaugural Uganda Law Society Journal at the ULS Secretariat. In his remarks, he noted that the launch of the journal marked a significant milestone in our collective journey as legal professionals; highlighting that it symbolized the ULS's commitment to intellectual exploration, scholarly enquiry and the pursuit of excellence in the field of law.



*Inset : President Bernard Oundo launches the Uganda Law Society Journal*

## JUNE

### Young Lawyers Symposium

ULS organized a remarkable two-day Young lawyers' symposium under the theme ***“Self-leadership as a foundation for exceptional practice beyond borders.”*** The symposium successfully brought together a multitude of highly experienced and esteemed legal professionals who served as keynote speakers and panelists. With the Chief Guest as the UNDP Resident Representative for Uganda, Elsie Attafuah.



*Inset: The then UNDP Resident Representative for Uganda Elsie Attafuah*

## JULY

### Uganda Law Society launches 2nd Quarter State of the Rule of Law Report 2023

On 14th July 2023, the Uganda Law Society launched its Second Quarter Rule of Law Report for the year 2023, covering the period of April to June 2023. The report highlighted developments as well as breaches in Rule of Law in the country including; rampant gun violence, violation of the right to freedom of assembly, prison congestion, incidences of corruption and abuse of power. The event was attended by senior officials from security agencies, civil society organizations, officials from various government departments, and representatives of the Uganda Law Society Rule of Law Clubs in Universities.



*Inset: ULS President Bernard Oundo launches the State of the Rule of Law Report alongside SSP Igumira Isaiah, CID Uganda Police Force and Mrs. Margaret Sekagya, ED Human Rights Centre Uganda*

## AUGUST

### Annual Law Conference

The Uganda Law Society hosted its Annual Law Conference (ALC) on August 24th and 25th, 2023. The conference attracted both physical and online attendance of over 400 advocates under the theme **“Redefining Legal Practice in the Age of Disruption.”** Distinguished guests, included the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Hon. Norbert Mao and the Attorney General, Hon. Kiryowa Kiwanuka.



*Left: ULS President Bernard Oundo addressing attendees of the ALC. Right: Hon. Kiryowa Kiwanuka*

## SEPTEMBER

### The Uganda Law Society Annual General Meeting, 2023

Uganda Law Society (ULS) convened its highly anticipated Annual General Meeting (AGM) on the 30th of September 2023. Advocates attended the AGM in thousands as Mr. Bernard Oundo, the ULS President recounted the Council's extraordinary achievements in their inaugural year of service. The President and the council were given another term in office.

In the coming year, President Oundo stated that the ULS Council will focus on the following objectives;

1. Consolidation of the gains achieved in Year One of the Members First Council.
2. Continue Advocacy for the rule of law and fair administration of justice by more stakeholder engagement with government and the different partners and raising support for ULS activities from partners, and the general public.
3. Strengthening the Capacity of ULS Secretariat to serve the members better.
4. Actualization of a member-focused Sacco and Benevolent Uganda Law Society.
5. Completion of the ULS House with the support of the membership.
6. Addressing key strategic initiatives aimed at improving our practice environment and addressing challenges relating to the future of legal practice.





*Inset: Group photo of ULS Council members at the AGM*

## Rule of Law Boot Camp, 2023

The Uganda Law Society in collaboration with the Pilgrim Centre for Reconciliation held its Inaugural Rule of Law Boot Camp at Makerere University on 4th and 5th of October 2023. The Boot camp targeted the youth with an objective of equipping them with principles and values of Rule of law, peace, justice, and reconciliation, and mentor them into future leaders. The 2-day training had eight speakers and one panel discussion.

The event had participation from students of Makerere University, Nkumba University, Victoria University, Uganda Christian University, Cavendish University, Bishop Stuart University, Kampala International University, law Development Centre, refugees, among others.

The Boot camp was opened by the Patron of the Rule of Law Club Makerere University, Dr. Busingye Kabumba, and was graced by the presence of the Hon. Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Hon. Norbert Mao, Dr. Daniel Ruhweza, Vice Chancellor Representative, the Germany Ambassador to Uganda, H.E Matthias Schauer, Hon. Joyce Nalunga, Member, Leadership Code Tribunal, Assistant Commissioner of Police-Kagarura H. Bob, Head Legal Department at CID, SSP Isaiah Igumira, the ULS Honorary Secretary, Isaac Atukunda, the Country Director Pilgrim Centre for Reconciliation, Mr. Bob Mayonza, the Emeritus Chief Executive Officer Uganda Law Society, Moses Okwalinga, among other representatives of CSOs in Uganda.



*Inset: Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Hon. Norbert Mao (left) and Ambassador of Germany to Uganda, H.E Matthias Schauer (right) making his remarks*



*Inset: ULS CEO, Moses Okwalinga (left) and Dr. Busingye Kabumba (right) making welcoming remarks*



*Inset: Assistant Commissioner of Police-Kagarura H. Bob –Kampala Metropolitan Police CID Commander (left) Ms. Joyce Nalunga, Member Leadership Code Tribunal(Right)*



*Bob Mayonza, Pilgrim Centre for Reconciliation, Country Director, Ms. Uwase Claire Kipenda and Mr. Keluel Ago from Refugee led organizations during a panel discussion on the life and rights of refugees in Uganda*



*Dr. Daniel Ruhweza giving welcome remarks on behalf of the Vice Chancellor, Makerere University; The organizers of the boot camp, ULS and PCR Staff, Dr. Busingye Kabumba and Ms. Busingye Kabumba and Ms. Busingye Kabumba pose for a photo moment with the Hon. Nobert Mao, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs*





*The Ag. Head Rule of Law, Gaudius Turyasingura giving his welcome remarks; some of the members of the Makerere University Rule of Law Club posing for a photo with the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs*



*A photo of some of the participants during the group discussion session*



*Inset: A group photo of day one participants during the Rule of Law and Reconciliation Boot Camp, 2023*



## OCTOBER

### Women in Law Conference and Awards

The Women in Law Conference and Awards Ceremony organized by the ULS Female Lawyers Committee was held on 20th October 2023 under the theme ***“Shattering glass ceilings to redefine power and inspire the future of the law”***.

The conference comprised of panel discussions with Hon. Dr. Miria Matembe as the Chief Guest, with attendance by the International Association of Women Judges- Uganda (IAWJ-U). The Conference also involved awarding women lawyers who have made significant strides and achievements in various categories.



*Inset: Photo of award winners posing with Hon. Dr. Miria Matembe*

## NOVEMBER

### Rule of Law Week & Symposium

The Rule of Law Week climaxed with the Annual Rule of Law Symposium and the launch of the Third Quarter Rule of Law report. During the symposium held as part of the week's events, pertinent sub-themes related to ***“Advancing the Fight for Human Rights; The critical Role of Security Sector Agencies,”*** and ***“Harnessing the Power of Public Interest Litigation,”*** were extensively deliberated upon. Discussions revolved around the role of the 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.



*Hon. Nobert Mao together with the ULS President and other dignitaries launches the 3rd Quarter Rule of Law Report*

## Justice Law and Order Sector Report

On December 1 2023, the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS), a government body composed of 18 institutions that are charged and mandated with upholding Rule of Law in the country, released its Annual Performance Report registering a number of successes and challenges as detailed below;

### Successes

- i. At the impact level, Public trust in the justice system remains high compared to the 4th Strategic Development Plan end term evaluation and efforts to maintain it at higher levels are under implementation including addressing lead times for delivery of services, opening up of more service points, ensuring certainty in service delivery and making use of the online services.

- ii. The sub programmes invested in the construction of justice centres increased the number of districts with one-stop front line JLOS points from 90 to 92 out of the targeted 117 districts.
- iii. The construction of the JLOS house Phase one launched on June 10th 2022 is now over 60 per cent complete and it's expected to be completed fully next year.
- iv. The sub-programme registered an increased disposal of cases from 52 per cent in 2020 to 63 percent resulting in a 10 per cent reduction in the proportion of backlog. Also, a 72 percent conviction rate was registered due to improved investigations and strong coordination while the proportion of pre-trial detainees was reduced to 48 per cent.
- v. The continued use of correctional approaches in the rehabilitation of the inmates led to a 20 per cent reduction in the rate of re-offending to 13.9 compared to a baseline of 17.2 percent in 2017/18.
- vi. Public trust in the justice system is 69 percent according to the data collected from the SEMA pilot program located at 50 frontline JLOS service points.
- vii. Pre-trial detainees reduced from 50.8 per cent at the beginning of the financial year to 48.5 per cent.

This was attributed to the increased disposal of cases by the Judiciary from 55 percent in financial year 2021 to 63 percent in financial year 2022/23. Additionally, the report shows that there was increased use of non-custodial punishment such as community service, reducing the inflow of convicted into prisons.

- viii. A cumulative 16,749,675 cards were issued to eligible citizens out of the 19,761,668 cards printed to aid in the service delivery.
- ix. With regard to immigration, 12,354 work permits, 6,888 dependent passes, and 12,786 foreign students were facilitated. In addition, 7,030 people were granted special passes, 238,986 entry visas were issued, and 8,154 sought visitor pass extensions.



- x. Anti-corruption agencies registered major progress in strengthening transparency, accountability and anti-corruption systems. This saw conviction rates of corruption cases increasing from 74 percent in 2017/18 to 82 per cent in the reporting period.
- xi. Uganda Human Rights Commission carried inspections in 163 detention facilities including, 86 police stations, 31 prisons, 41 police posts and three remand homes and two detention military centres.
- xii. CCTV surveillance project revolutionised crime response and prevention with the system being operational in 71 districts, 10 cities, 20 municipalities, 35 towns, six border points and all major highways.
- xiii. Plea bargain enabled the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to deal with case backlog, fast tracking cases resulting in reduced case disposal time. The process also improved on the conviction rate since the conviction rate is always 100 percent. -A total of 41 legal aid clinics run by Justice Centres Uganda, Uganda Law Society (ULS) and the Law Development Centre (LDC) are fully operational and supported by JLOS.
- xiv. Automation of case management systems was ongoing in many JLOS institutions including the Judiciary, Uganda Registration Services Bureau, NIRA among others.

## **Challenges**

- i. Low staffing levels
- ii. Increased prison congestion with the current population exceeding the carrying capacity more than doubled.
- iii. Inadequate facilitation of Attorneys and witnesses, which affects the ability of the government to be effectively represented in the courts of law for both local and international cases.



## NURTURING OUR MENTAL WELL-BEING

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Fortunate Ingabire aka F.I.R.M  
Advocate, Commissioner for Oaths & Notary Public  
WhatsApp Mobile: 0782055717  
Social Media: @fmrwalinda

**D**ear Members ;

Welcome back from the holiday season. It was mostly a time of joy, celebration, and reflection for many of us. However, with the demanding work schedules and high-pressure environments most of us deal with (including general “lifeing”), the season especially the Christmas holidays may have added additional stress.

As we start the new year it's crucial for us (you and I) to prioritize our mental health and for those of us who are not sure how we felt about the season for whatever reason; I hope that at the end of this article, you will have an improved sense of what to do differently this year especially holidays.

At a personal level, the festive season comes with mixed feelings, I miss being a child (the one that didn't have to plan and just live through as the adults were busy making things happen). I am now the Adult. Many of you reading this are. More so, your folks think you are rich and have a granary of money or maybe a garden you harvest from.

Oh yes, you may have a garden (Law Firm) or maybe you are a “Potter” rendering services in someone's garden. Well, my learned friend, this is to say that I understand, and you are not alone. It is time to give back to the folks that have been part of your growth journey. (Honor)  
I have gathered some experience over the years and on that premise below are some strategies you may explore to preserve your mental well-being and find balance during the new year but most specifically holidays.

**1. Set Realistic Expectations of yourself and others** - The legal profession is known for its demanding nature, so you ought to set realistic expectations for yourself during the holidays and others. Understand that it's okay to take a step back, delegate tasks, and prioritize self-care. Reflect on your achievements throughout the year, recognizing that balance is key to long-term success. Forgive and extend some grace to others while at it.

**2. Establish Boundaries** - Create a clear boundary between work and your personal life during the holidays. Inform colleagues, clients, and staff about your availability and communicate any limitations in your work hours. Setting boundaries is essential to avoid burnout and ensure that you can fully immerse yourself in the holiday spirit without the constant pull of work-related stress.

**3. Plan** - Effective time management is crucial for lawyers, especially during the holiday season. Plan your schedule in advance, allowing time for both work commitments and personal celebrations. Prioritize tasks, set deadlines, and communicate any potential challenges with your team to avoid last-minute stress.

**4. Embrace Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques**– I did mention this in the last article I shared. When we add mindfulness and relaxation techniques into our routine, it alleviates stress. Whether it's through meditation, deep breathing exercises, or yoga, taking time for yourself can have a profound impact on your mental well-being. Find moments of peace amid the holiday hustle and bustle. For the Christians read your Bibles. Winks.

**5. Stay Connected** - The holidays are an excellent opportunity to connect with loved ones and build a support system. Schedule quality time with family and friends to recharge your emotional batteries. Share your experiences and concerns. Sharing the challenges, you face can provide valuable perspective and support. For the married counsel, make intentional time for your nuclear families – Your wives/husbands and children.

**6. Engage in Meaningful Activities** - Participate in activities that bring you joy and fulfillment. Whether it's volunteering, pursuing a hobby, or spending time outdoors, engage in activities that align with your passions and values. Balancing work with meaningful personal pursuits contributes to a more fulfilling and well-rounded life.

**7. Limit Technology Use** - Constant connectivity can contribute to stress and hinder relaxation. Consider limiting your use of technology during the holidays, especially if work-related messages are causing unnecessary anxiety. Create designated times to check emails and messages, allowing you to fully detach during the rest of the day. Put your phones down. (This is a note to self too)

**8. Reflect and Set Goals for the New Year**- Since we are already in the new year I hope you set your goals. If you haven't set goals, take time to reflect on the past year and set realistic goals for this year. Consider both professional and personal aspirations and create a plan to achieve them. Setting positive intentions can provide a sense of purpose and motivation for the year ahead. Ask yourself, Where have I been, Where am I and Where do I want to go?

The holidays are a good time for you and me to recharge and return to our practices with renewed energy and focus. By setting boundaries, prioritizing self-care, setting goals, and embracing the holiday spirit, we will be more likely to find a balance that allows us to enjoy the festivities while maintaining our well-being. Try one of the eight above even in the new year and let me know what worked.

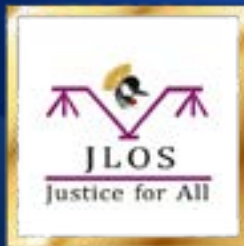
Happy New Year 2024!

*Your virtual friend in healing and wellness,*  
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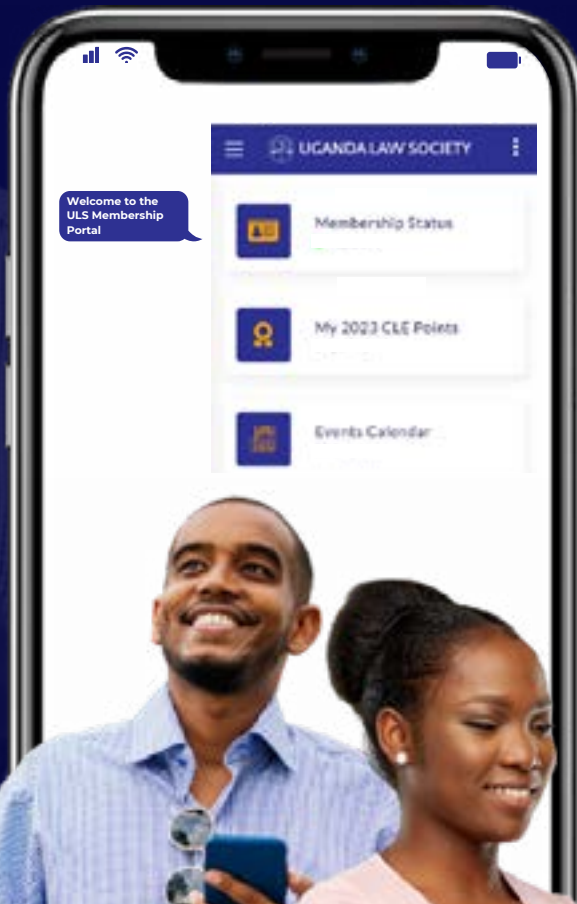
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