



CITATION FOR 2021 JURIST OF THE YEAR (JOYA) AWARD

MR. NOORDIN HAJI, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS, KENYA, CBS, OGW

Since 1993, the Kenyan Section of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ Kenya) has recognized the achievements of one outstanding Jurist who has dedicated their career towards promoting the rule of law, justice, and protecting human rights. The award was introduced to commemorate International Human Rights Day and recognize and also honor an exceptional Jurist's contributions to advancing the mission and vision of ICJ Kenya. This year, our distinguished Jurist has been recognized nationally, celebrated regionally, and internationally for his tenacity amid great adversity.

Our Jurist was born on the 3 July 1973 in Malindi. During formative years, our Jurist attended several primary schools across the country. Our Jurist attended Kabarak High School and Greenstead High School before completing A' levels at the Bronte College, Canada. Concerning primary and secondary education, our Jurist has been heard to joke often about his background and school life; it was nothing short of an adventure; our Jurist changed schools numerous times, living up to and confirming to (no pun intended) to a pastoralist background.

Our Jurist was admitted to the University of Wales Cardiff from 1993 to 1997 and obtained Bachelor of Laws and Master of Laws degrees in the same institution. In 1999, our Jurist was admitted to the Bar in Kenya. In 2001, our Jurist enrolled at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights (University of Lund). From December 2006 to April 2007, our Jurist attended the University of Birmingham as part of the Chevening program on Administration of Justice and Rule of Law. From 2013 to 2014, our Jurist studied at the Australian National University, where he obtained a Masters of National Security Policy (with Merit).

Armed with a checkered academic track record, our Jurist began a career in the legal profession in 1998 at Seth and Wathigo Advocates, briefly lectured at the Moi University Department of Law in 1999 before becoming a State Counsel at the Attorney General's Office in 2000. In December 2000, our Jurist joined the National Intelligence Service (NIS) as a legal officer. While at the National Intelligence Service, our Jurist helped establish the current legal department at the NIS.

While at the NIS, our Jurist served in various capacities. For example, from 2003, our Jurist was the Head of Legal Section at the NIS. Between 2004 to 2007, served as the Deputy Head Counter Violent Extremism Department (External Division) and was promoted to head the department from 2007 to 2010. From 2010 to 2013, our Jurist was Head Stabilization of Somalia (Jubbaland External Division) and was part of the team that successfully established the Jubbaland Federal State of Somalia. In addition, our Jurist served as Deputy Director Administration Department from 2014 to 2015 and Deputy Director Counter Organized Crime Unit from 2016 to 2018; the former focusing on the efficient coordination and utilization of human, finance, and material resources, and the latter focusing on providing advisory expertise on strategic matters pertaining to Organized Crime.

In 2018, our Jurist was thrust into the public limelight when he was appointed to serve at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP). In the last four years of transformative leadership, our Jurist has left no stone unturned to ensure the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions transformed into a professional and progressive 21st-century public prosecution authority. Being a visionary leader, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution is today one of the most responsive and independent offices to the needs of the people of Kenya. Within a very short time and through his leadership and guidance, the ODPP has achieved several milestones; adopting robust policies and strategic initiatives that have enhanced prosecution services, strengthened interagency coordination, regional and international networks, and promoted access to justice, restoring confidence in the criminal justice sector.

Some of the policies and guidelines that have come to fruition under our Jurist tenure include: i) Guidelines on the Decision to Charge, 2019, ii) the Diversion Policy, 2019, iii) the Plea-Bargaining Guidelines, 2019, iv) the Excellence Charter 2020-2023, v) the Standard Operating Procedures on Investigation and Prosecution of Serious Human Rights Violations Committed by Police Officers and vi) The Prosecutor's Guide to Children in the Criminal Justice System. In December 2021, our Jurist launched the Prosecution Training Institute's Diploma in Public Prosecutions, a one-year course geared at teaching the elements of prosecution. Just last week, our Jurist launched the Standard Operating Procedure Manual and Rapid Reference Guide on Prosecution of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) cases. This timely manual contributes to the global rallying call to ending Gender-Based Violence within the 16 Days of Activism that culminates in today's international human rights day global celebrations.

The Guidelines on the Decision to Charge, 2019, is perhaps the most significant and impactful policy in the justice sector. In addition to safeguarding the ODPP's independence, powers, and functions as enshrined under the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, these Guidelines have equipped prosecutors with the requisite skills to exercise their prosecutorial powers transparently and objectively.

Our Jurist spearheaded the review of the ODPP's Organizational Structure to improve its efficiency and responsiveness to emerging trends, efficiency, and effectiveness in delivering its mandate. Consequently, the ODPP has established nine regional offices across the country and several specialized internal units such as the Proceeds of Crime Recovery Unit, the Internal Compliance Unit, and the Victim and Witness Facilitation Unit, all of which have streamlined its processes and improved efficiency and effectiveness.

Our Jurist has championed access to justice through enhancing community forums and dialogues across the country. From Lamu to Kayole to Nyanza, our Jurist has gone far and wide to facilitate public engagement through several community outreach programmes. For example, in 2019, the *All for Justice* Initiative saw the ODPP partner with UNODC/PLEAD, the United States Department

of Justice (USDOJ), the Judiciary and Kenya Prisons to facilitate a two-phase community outreach project that saw the adoption of Plea Bargaining and Diversion in Lamu to decongest prisons and reduce case backlogs. During this initiative, a total of 135 files that were pending were handled. With the recent launch of the Kayole Community Justice Centre and the *MV ADIL* to enhance access to justice in Lamu, it cannot be gainsaid that these community outreach programmes have played a pivotal role in restoring faith in the ODPP and the criminal justice sector at large.

Our Jurist has been bold in the fight against corruption by meting out criminal charges against high-profile individuals and has been able to secure impactful rulings from the courts. In this regard, our Jurist secured a ruling requiring governors facing graft charges to step aside from Office pending determination of their matter, and the ruling against Sirisia MP John Waluke in June 2020, where Waluke was fined Ksh. 727 million shillings or, in default, face a 67-year jail term for the embezzling of Ksh. 300 million public funds. Notably, our Jurist has recorded the highest number of prosecutions against police officers involved in excesses and/or human rights violations.

Our Jurist, appreciating the need for systems and collaboration, launched the first fully automated Case Management System called *Uadilifu* which is integrated with the Judiciary's e-filing system. *Uadilifu* is intended to enhance accountability, efficiency, and transparency in prosecution services. Further, this is part of his broader initiative to digitize the ODPP's processes and procedures and strengthen its ICT infrastructure to meet current global technological developments. As part of the collaboration efforts, our Jurist has taken an active role in the leadership of the National Council on the Administration of Justice, driving the access to justice agenda for the well-being of all Kenyans particularly the vulnerable in our society.

In the spirit of promoting transparency and accountability, our Jurist has ensured the ODPP is more easily accessible to the public by facilitating access to information through various communications strategies. For example, the Office continues to roll out the ODPP Café, a weekly show live-streamed on Facebook and YouTube meant to educate and engage the public on the

mandate of the ODPP, matters such as plea-bargaining, diversion, the decision to charge, ODPP policies, human rights, and juvenile justice, among others.

In recognition of his role and achievements, our Jurist has received numerous awards, including the 2019 Leadership Integrity Award from Action for Transparency; the Kenyan subsidiary of Transparency International, the 2019 Star Person of the Year Award from the Star, and the 2019 Distinguished Taxpayers Award from H.E President Uhuru Kenyatta. On 12 December 2012, during the 49th Jamhuri Day celebration, he was awarded the Order of the Grand Warrior of Kenya (OGW) by the then President of the Republic of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki, for distinguished services to the nation. Later, on 12 December 2018, he also received the Chief of the Order of the Burning Spear (CBS) by H.E Uhuru Kenyatta, the President of the Republic of Kenya, for his outstanding efforts in the fight against graft. He was also recognized as the Public Sector Lawyer of the Year at the Nairobi Legal Awards, 2020.

Throughout our jurist life and career, his family has always been his constant source of inspiration and motivation. Our Jurist is a devoted husband, father, brother, uncle, and pillar of strength to the community. Our Jurist believes in the value of teamwork and has inspired vibrant, energetic, and passionate colleagues who have motivated him to work tirelessly and selflessly in all his endeavors.

One would imagine that our Jurist rarely finds time for himself with all his commitments, but when he does find that free time, our Jurist enjoys engaging in several sporting and recreational activities. These include scuba diving, snorkeling, football, swimming, cattle herding, and reading.

Despite several storms that have emerged during his tenure, our Jurist has remained steadfast and continued to work beyond his call of duty to protect the integrity and independence of the ODPP as prescribed in the Constitution 2010 and provide quality prosecution services to all. Our Jurist has demonstrated and exemplified commitment and ability to remain relentless with zeal and zest, thus ensuring to leave a positive and equally indelible mark in the criminal justice sector.

"The strength of a constitution lies in the will of the people to defend it"- Thomas Edison.

Therefore, it is befitting that for his transformative approach, vigilance in the protection of the Constitution, courage in defending the voiceless, and humility in his service of the people that we as ICJ Kenya fraternity confer **Mr. Noordin Haji with the Jurist of the Year Award 2021!**

Our Heartfelt Congratulations, Mr. Noordin Haji!