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**2024 JURIST OF THE YEAR AWARD (JOYA)**

**CITATION**

The Kenyan Section of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ Kenya) has over the last thirty years conferred this annual award to an outstanding and distinguished Jurist.

The award was introduced in 1993, principally to commemorate International Human Rights Day**.** The award is intended to acknowledge and honor the contributions of an exceptional Jurist who has worked selflessly and courageously towards the promotion and protection of human rights, justice, rule of law and good governance in Kenya.

The 2024 Jurist of the Year has received recognition from her peers, colleagues, partners, and the ICJ Kenya community, as well as at local, regional, and international levels, for her steadfast commitment to justice, the rule of law, and the safeguarding of human rights.

**Our Jurist** is a human rights advocate, and community supporter, and has embodied the essence of justice advocacy across various sectors of society. Born in Mombasa, our Jurist’s dedication to human rights and advocacy was apparent from an early age. Her evolution from a passionate student to a transformative jurist illustrates her resilience, vision, and unwavering dedication to the rule of law.

Our jurist possesses an LLB (Hons) from the **Catholic University of Eastern Africa** and a **Diploma in Law from the Kenya School of Law.** She advanced her studies by obtaining an **LLM (Hons) in International Commercial Law with European Law from the University of Kent in the United Kingdom.** Additionally, she is a member of the **Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (MCIArb) in the UK**, highlighting her proficiency in alternative dispute resolution.

Our Jurist began her career as a pupil at **Odera Obar & Company Advocates** and later served as a management trainee at the **Competition Authority of Kenya**. She has held various leadership roles, in her career with her capabilities extending beyond academia into her professional endeavors. She has held the position of board secretary for the **Federation of Women Lawyers-Kenya (FIDA-Kenya)**, where she has championed women's legal rights. Furthermore, she was a consulting partner at **MMA** **Advocates** before transitioning to **Ombok and Owuor Advocates** **LLP** where she is currently a Senior Partner, applying her legal expertise across various domains, including commercial and competition law. Notable Achievements and Recognition Throughout her career, she has made significant contributions to legal practice and the promotion of human rights.

Beyond her legal qualifications, our Jurist is a Certified Public Secretary (CPS) and is currently engaged in **doctoral studies at the University of Nairobi.** Her research is centered on competition law, consumer protection, telecommunications, banking law, financial services, arbitration, and alternative dispute resolution. She also addresses critical societal issues, including women's and children's rights, climate change, human rights, intellectual property rights, and economic law.

As a lecturer at the **University of Nairobi's School of Law,** she incorporates her research interests into her educational approach. She is dedicated to nurturing the next generation of legal professionals, particularly in the areas of competition law, human rights, and alternative dispute resolution.

**Leadership in the Gen Z Protests**

Recently, our jurist played a crucial role during youth-led demonstrations against the Finance Bill 2024. The Law Society actively defended the rights of protestors and worked to secure their release after arrests, reinforcing her dedication to upholding constitutional rights and freedoms. She offered pro bono legal assistance to hundreds of youth who were detained during peaceful demonstrations, safeguarding their constitutional rights to assemble and express themselves freely. Furthermore, she was instrumental in the establishment and advocacy of the **Youth Legal Defense Fund,** which was created to provide legal support and resources for young advocates in Kenya. As a leader within the Law Society of Kenya (LSK), she has emphasized the importance of empowering young lawyers and ensuring their access to legal representation and resources, including successfully reviewing and reducing Practicing Certificate fees for new entrants into the profession.

**Landmark Legal Victory Against Impunity**

Our Jurist has been formidable in the defense of the rule of law and led the prosecution of the Acting Inspector General of Police for contempt of court orders directing the release of the Kitengela 3. Her efforts led to a precedent-setting conviction against the Acting IG which provides an instructive remedy against police malpractice. Before that, her persistent efforts in highlighting outrageous conduct by police led to the resignation of the immediate formed Inspector General of Police.

**International Representation**

Our Jurist has actively represented Kenya on various international stages. She participated in the presentation of a Shadow Report on the Human Rights status in Kenya for the URP Report. Furthermore, she attended the **African Union’s Conference on Youth and Governance** as a member of NIYOA, where she played a significant role in dialogues concerning youth empowerment and governance reforms. She has also earned acclaim for her research on restorative justice, with her findings being recognized as exemplary practices in legal systems around the globe, thereby solidifying her status as a leading voice in global justice matters.

### **Recognition and Awards**

Our Jurist’s contributions to law and human rights have been widely recognized. She received the **Law Society of Kenya Distinguished Service Award in 2021** and was named among the **top 50 Women Lawyers in Kenya in 2023**. She has been acknowledged as the **most impactful woman in Kenya in 2024** and is the **2024 CB Madan Laureate** for her distinguished legal work. Her work continues to inspire both local and international audiences, establishing her as a transformative figure in the legal profession.

Our Jurist’s impact transcends her contributions to the legal field. She serves as a mentor for emerging lawyers, an educator in civic rights initiatives, and a champion for underrepresented communities. Her courageous leadership, commitment to social justice, and steadfast dedication to protecting the rights of those in need embody the highest principles of the legal profession. Her significant contributions have not only influenced Kenya’s legal landscape but have also sparked a worldwide movement for social justice.

Our Jurist’s unique ability to integrate legal knowledge with advocacy for marginalized groups establishes her as a symbol of justice both within Kenya and on the global stage. Her accomplishments and influence highlight the crucial role that legal professionals play in shaping society and promoting human rights.

We are honored to present the 2024 Jurist of the Year Award to **Faith Odhiambo**! a distinguished Kenyan lawyer and the 51st President of the Law Society of Kenya (LSK), having made history as the second woman to hold this prestigious position. Your work has not only advanced the rule of law but has inspired a new generation of legal minds committed to justice and democracy. On behalf of ICJ Kenya, we extend our heartfelt congratulations and celebrate your remarkable achievements.

**Read by:**

**A member of Joya Committee**