



ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE STRATHMORE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES IN INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE (SIASIC)

THEME: GENDER AND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE IN EAST AFRICA: EXCHANGING
EXPERIENCES AND EXPERTISE

VENUE: STRATHMORE LAW SCHOOL, NAIROBI- KENYA

DATES: 6TH JULY- 7TH JULY, 2017

SUMMARY REPORT



Strathmore Institute for Advanced Studies in International Criminal Justice (SIASIC) of the Strathmore University in partnership with the Prosecuting Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (PSV) Network, the International Nuremberg Principles Academy and in the support and collaboration of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung under the auspices of its Rule of Law Program for Sub-Saharan Africa held a one-and-a half day conference at Strathmore Law School, Nairobi-Kenya on 6th and 7th July 2017.

The Conference was titled “Gender and Transitional Justice in East Africa: Exchanging Experiences and Expertise”. It aimed at bringing regional and international actors together to explore ways forward to ensure women’s full participation in gender perspectives throughout transitional justice processes in East Africa thereby contributing to the successful implementation of the UN Framework on women, Peace and Security.

Participants of the Conference came from diverse professional backgrounds such as members of international tribunals, academia, the African Union, members of Civil Society engaged in women’s participation in transitional justice processes and the support of SGBV victims and members of government and judiciary from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, DRC and Rwanda.

The five different sessions enabled the participants to exchange their experiences, opinions and ideas with respect to the role of gender in transitional justice mechanisms and engage in a lively discussion on the matter. The individual presentations by the panelists offered insights into the situation of women in East Africa covering aspects like women’s participation in transitional justice mechanisms and in decision-making processes, the role of international principles and tribunals for dealing with sexual violence and the strengthening of justice for SGBV victims in East Africa through the means of enhanced prosecutions. The sessions illustrated both the achievements for women’s equality in the region as well as the remaining challenges, especially with respect to the practical implications for the work with SGBV victims on the ground.

The core findings of the Conference can be summarized as the following:

- Since there is lack of political will on issues regarding gender and transitional justice especially in addressing Sexually Gender Based Violence (SGBV), there is a need to strengthen accountability systems and hold leaders and institutions accountable for failure to comply with International Law through empowering citizens as they are the only ones, who can effectively call leaders to account.
- The traditional structures of patriarchic societies need to be constructively addressed and social change towards a stronger stance of women needs to be promoted.
- In order to develop successful solutions, it is recommendable to look out for best practice examples from other societies, i.e. Rwanda, which was able to gradually increase the number of female MPs in their National Assembly in the last legislative periods to an unprecedented 64 Percent in the current Parliament.
- There should be more education and information for scholars and policy makers about the importance of effective transitional justice processes for societies, including not only societies recovering from a recent conflict, but also generally societies that experienced crisis and trauma in the past.

- Therefore, the understanding of “transitional justice” needs more clarification among actors in this legal field, in order to enable a broader application of its methods and ideas, as it should not only apply to societies in direct transition from a conflict to peace in the original interpretation.
- In order to enable effective prosecutions of SGBV crimes, it is necessary to promote stronger evidence based research. The Strathmore Institute for Advanced Studies in International Criminal Justice (SIASIC) can play a major role in this research as well as raise awareness at the policy making level.
- Special focus should also be placed on the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation systems.
- All citizens, men and women, should aim to collectively unravel and deconstruct the obstacles and challenges women face in transitional justice as they are all vital for social change to occur.
- The question of gender in transitional justice processes should not be reduced to the role of women only, but include gender sensitive issues in a much broader understanding, encompassing female, male as well as transgender perspectives.