



THE INSTITUTE FOR AFRICAN TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE “Where Law Meets Reality”



Members of the public, course participants, and presenters during the launch of the IATJ, Imperial Royale hotel, Kampala, Uganda.

The inaugural Institute for African Transitional Justice (IATJ), an initiative of the Refugee Law Project (RLP), the African Transitional Justice Research Network (ATJRN), and the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) was successfully launched in the form of a week-long residential course held in Kampala, Uganda, from 22-26 November 2010.

The course involved a series of interactive lectures, workshops, and round table discussions on the theme, “*Addressing Transitional Justice in the context of African Challenges*”. Over forty academics, researchers, humanitarian aid workers, and transitional justice practitioners from Uganda, South Africa, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Zambia, Sierra Leone, Botswana, Kenya, Ireland, and the USA attended the course.

Presentations were contributed and discussions led by experts from the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Governance section, Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), Justice Law and Order Sector-Uganda (JLOS), International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRR), African Forum for Catholic Social Teaching, Refugee Law Project (RLP), Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), and the African Transitional Justice Research Network (ATJRN).

Participants actively debated issues central to Transitional Justice in Africa. Some of the questions participants grappled with ranged from the question of African identity – who is an African? to whether Africa presents unique contextual challenges or seeks to assert African exceptionalism; the nexus between context and concept in Africa; moving beyond a “binary” approach to the teaching, learning and practice of Transitional Justice; the interface between traditional and formal justice mechanisms

and the assumption that the restorative and retributive underpinnings are mutually exclusive; the question of whether the International Criminal Court (ICC) is in fact imposing justice in Africa and the moral problematic of the double-standard inherent in global politics; the place of sexual norms in transitional justice and whether there is a need to challenge the African notions of sexuality, gender, masculinity and sexual minorities; the sequencing of peace and justice; transitional justice responses to issues of forced migration; and the question of widening the debate on transitional justice to take account of socio-economic and developmental imperatives – all of which are vital questions given the governance deficits facing many African states.

For further information regarding the IATJ Course, please email Mr. Levis Onegi, the ATJRN Regional Coordinator for the Great Lakes at l.onegoi@refugeelawproject.org

Details of the 2011 course will be announced in early 2011, on the following websites, www.refugeelawproject.org, www.beyondjuba.org, www.csvr.org.za, www.transitionaljustice.org.za, www.slccg.org.