

THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL



THE AFRICAN OMBUDSMAN RESEARCH CENTRE
(AORC), A RESEARCH AND TRAINING ARM OF
THE AFRICAN OMBUDSMAN AND MEDIATORS'
ASSOCIATION (AOMA) IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE INTERNATIONAL OMBUDSMAN INSTITUTE (IOI)

- Cordially invite you to a webinar -

Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment: The Ombudsman's Role in Ensuring Women's Safety and Empowerment

Celebrating Women's Month in South Africa provides a significant platform to address critical issues surrounding women's rights and empowerment. Despite progress, gender-based violence and harassment remain persistent challenges in both public and private domains. To effectively combat these issues, the African Ombudsman Research Centre (AORC) and the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) are collaborating to organize an impactful webinar.

This webinar explores Ombudsman institutions' vital role in preventing and addressing gender-based violence and harassment. It will delve into existing initiatives, policies, and legal frameworks to safeguard women and foster a secure environment. Coinciding with Women's Month, the event serves as a timely commemoration and a call to action.

Distinguished speakers will analyse the multi-faceted approach required to effectively combat these challenges, focusing on legal frameworks, Ombudsman institutions' significance, and innovative prevention efforts. The webinar's main objective is to raise awareness and understanding of legal mechanisms, Ombudsman's roles, and prevention strategies against gender-based violence and harassment.

By bringing together experts and stakeholders, the webinar aims to encourage insightful conversations, share best practices, and promote collaboration to enhance existing policies. Through these combined efforts, a safer and more inclusive society can be fostered, reducing gender-based violence and harassment, improving support for survivors, and the prevalence of equality and respect. Let us collectively stride towards a future where women are empowered, protected, and esteemed.

Please click on the [RSVP link](#) below should you wish to participate.

DATE

Tuesday, 29 August 2023

TIME

10h00 – 11h30 SA (GMT +2)

SPEAKERS

Speaker 1:

Dr. Janine Hicks, Senior Lecturer, School of Law, University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), will discuss Legal Frameworks and Policies to Combat Gender-Based Violence and Harassment.

Speaker 2:

Hon. Maria Stylianou-Lottides, Ombudsman Cyprus, will discuss The Ombudsman's Role in Investigating and Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment.

Speaker 3:

Hon. Grace Tikambenji Malera, Ombudsman Malawi, will guide Ombudsman offices on Prevention and Awareness Initiatives for Gender-Based Violence and Harassment.

FACILITATOR

Hon. Nichole Tirant-Ghérardi, Ombudsman Seychelles

RSVP HERE

Due to time constraints, please note that there will be no live questions and answers. Participants may, however, submit relevant questions to Franky Lwelela (Lwelela@ukzn.ac.za) or Marion Adonis (adonism@ukzn.ac.za) by **10:00 on Monday, 28 August 2023**, or use the Q & A function during the webinar. Time has been allocated to respond to questions raised before and during the session. If there is insufficient time to respond to all, the questions and answers will be available on the AOMA/AORC website: <http://aoma.ukzn.ac.za/about-us/Home.aspx>

ENQUIRIES ONLY

Franky Lwelela

Email : Lwelela@ukzn.ac.za



Marion Adonis

Email : adonism@ukzn.ac.za

SPEAKER & FACILITATOR

PROFILES



Dr Janine Hicks is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Law, where she serves as convenor for the Navi Pillay Research Interest Group and Chairperson of UKZN's Gender-based Violence Committee. She is the Coordinator for Street Law and lectures on Master of Laws (LLM) offerings on Constitutional Litigation and Employment Discrimination Legislation. Hicks holds a PhD and an LL B from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and a Master of Arts (MA) in Development Studies from the University of Sussex, United Kingdom. Hicks is the Project Leader for the South African Law Reform Commission's Project 143 on Maternity and Paternity Benefits for Self-Employed Workers and a Council member of the state's Human Resource Development Council. Her research interests are in transformative constitutionalism, access to justice, and equality jurisprudence. Before joining the School of Law in 2017, Hicks worked from the early 1990s in the non-governmental organisation human rights sector, thereafter serving two terms as Commissioner with the Commission for Gender Equality, one of South Africa's constitutional institutions supporting democracy.

Hon. Maria Stylianou-Lottides, a prominent figure from Cyprus, currently holds the position of Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights (Ombudsman). She was initially appointed in 2017 and reappointed in 2023. She also serves on the Management Board of FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights) since July 2020. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the AOM (Association of Mediterranean Ombudsmen). She earned her Law Degree from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens in 1997. Subsequently, she succeeded in the PanCypriot Bar Association examination, establishing herself as an active member of the Cyprus Bar Association. In 2009, she obtained an LLM in European Union Law from Leicester University, focusing on "Protection of Human Rights in the European Union." Maria has held various positions, including Advocate/Barrister, Lawyer/Counselor at the Attorney General's Office, and Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights Protection. Her leadership is evident in her oversight of the Equality Body, Cyprus NHRI, and important mechanisms responsible for monitoring human rights and UN Conventions. She has also been a driving force behind significant initiatives such as the National Mechanism against Torture and Independent Mechanism for Forced Returns. Her memberships in organizations like IOI Europe, ENO, EQUINET, and ENNHRI showcase her global commitment to advancing human rights.



Hon. Grace Tikambenji Malera was appointed as Ombudsman of Malawi effective 1ST September 2021. She is a Lawyer and Human Rights Expert, with 20 years of work experience working with both state and non-state actors. She has worked across the governance sector in Malawi, on a broad range of thematic areas including: human rights broadly; gender and women's rights, children's rights and access to justice. She holds a Bachelor of Law Degree (LLB Honours), obtained from the University of Malawi, Chancellor College in 2002, and graduated from the University of the Free State, Republic of South Africa with a Masters in Law Degree (LLM) in 2007. She was called to the Malawi Bar in 2002, to practice law in both the Supreme Court and High Court of Malawi, and courts subordinate thereto. She has vast experience working with regional and international human rights mechanisms at the African Commission and United Nations levels respectively. She served as a member of the Special Law Commission on the Review of Electoral Laws (2016/2017), as well as a member of the Special Law Commission on the Development of the Trafficking in Persons Legislation. She is an exceptional human rights and gender advocate. She is an architect of some NGOs working in governance as well as in the advancement of women's rights in Malawi and serves in a number of Boards of human rights NGOs in Malawi. She is passionate about using the law as a tool for social change and attainment of social justice and gender equality and social inclusion. In 2019 Grace was the Moderator of Malawi Presidential Debate ahead of the 2019 Malawi Tripartite Elections.

Hon. Nichole Tirant-Ghérardi, the fourth Ombudsman of Seychelles, began her seven-year term on March 30, 2017. A Seychellois Barrister and Attorney-at-Law, she started her career in the Seychelles Civil Service in 1978, initially working in nature conservation, fisheries, and agriculture at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. In 1983, she shifted back to law, serving as a state counsel in the Office of the Attorney General, and later entered private practice in 1986, becoming one of the pioneering women in the field. After a period in France, she returned to Seychelles in 1994, resuming legal practice and later taking on the role of Secretary General of the Seychelles Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI). From 2004 to 2008, she played a significant part in negotiating post-Cotonou Economic Partnership Agreements between the European Union and the Eastern and Southern African region. In 2010, she co-founded "Today in Seychelles," the second privately-owned daily newspaper in the country, where she worked as the Managing Editor. As the Ombudsman, she adopts a proactive approach, carefully analyzing complaints to drive improvements in public sector service delivery and administration. Born in Kenya and raised in Seychelles, Nichole holds a Bachelor of Law Degree (LLB) from the University of Liverpool and has been a Gray's Inn of Court member since June 1983. She also pursued French Civil Law at the University of Toulon, France.

