



THE HAGUE
UNIVERSITY OF
APPLIED SCIENCES



School of Human Rights Research

The Netherlands

Call for Papers

Multi-disciplinary conference

Hosted by Netherlands Association for Africa Studies (NVAS), The Hague University of Applied Sciences and School of Human Rights Research Utrecht

23 – 24 May 2014

Venue: The Hague University of Applied Sciences

The Hague

Netherlands

Africans and Hague Justice: Realities and Perceptions of the International Criminal Court in Africa

Most African countries are signatories to the Rome Statute and therefore explicitly endorse the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. As a result one would expect them to be supportive of ICC interventions. The reality, however, shows otherwise.

Over the last few years, many African leaders have expressed their doubts about the impartiality of the Court. Some of the objections raised are that the ICC is a neo-colonial institution, a political instrument, with a judicial framework not geared to meet the needs of African societies. The African Union has challenged the jurisdiction of the Court by calling on its member states to reconsider their obligations to the Court. African States have openly refused to surrender President al-Bashir of Sudan despite the arrest warrant issued against him. Most recently, Kenyans elected Uhuru Kenyatta as their President, while at the same time indicted by the ICC for allegedly being responsible for crimes against humanity. In addition, the African Union has taken steps to confer international criminal jurisdiction on the African Court of Justice and Human Rights, without it being clear whether this 'African Court' is to complement or to replace the ICC.

Other African leaders, on the other hand, have emphasized the crucial role of the International Criminal Court in fighting impunity on the continent. The ICC also finds

many supporters in Africa's civic society, like human rights activists and victim communities who remain convinced of the importance of the ICC for international criminal justice.

In light of the simmering tensions between the ICC and some African leaders, the many protests in African countries against the Court and the objection that it has an anti-African bias, it seems timely to explore the perceptions and reality of the ICC in Africa through a multi-disciplinary lens. Thematic angles that the conference seeks to highlight include the ICC's influence on African national politics as well as on interstate relationships in Africa and beyond; the position of the African Union in the African debate on the ICC; and the role of ICC-like bodies, such as the 'African Court' in relation to the plural judicial systems of African states. Additionally, papers on the socio-cultural impact of the ICC and its compatibility with other international judicial frameworks are warmly welcomed. Contributions in this domain could relate to socio-cultural understanding of justice vis-à-vis international criminal justice, representations of the Court in media, films (*i.a.* documentaries), songs or literature, as well as the roles and positions of different languages (*e.g.* local/English/legal) in the context of African cases before the ICC.

The conference aims to reflect the complex and multi-layered perceptions of the ICC. in a bid to reach a better understanding of African sentiment and insights surrounding the Court.

Logistics and dates:

Abstracts should be written in English and will be peer-reviewed anonymously by the Conference Scientific Committee: Dr. Felix Ameka (Leiden University and Netherlands Association of African Studies), Prof. Tom Zwart (University of Utrecht and School for Human Rights Research) and Ms. Margot Leegwater (African Studies Centre and Free University of Amsterdam).

1 September 2013: deadline for submission of abstracts of individual papers (max. 400 words)

1 October 2013: selection of abstracts by the Conference Scientific Committee.

Please forward your submission to:

The Conference organising Committee: Froukje Krijtenburg (Chair); Abel Knottnerus (treasurer); Eefje de Volder (secretary); Ingrid Roestenburg-Morgan (member for SHRR); Jos Walenkamp (member for HHS)

E-mail: hagueconference2014@gmail.com

Conference fees: Students € 50; Others € 75 (presenters are exempted from paying the conference fee).