

Celebrating, Reflecting, Connecting

A Conference in honour of the 20th Anniversary of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights,
co-hosted by DISSECT: Evidence in International Human Rights Adjudication (ERC, Ghent University)
and the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria

Evidence Matters Before Regional Human Rights Courts The African Court in Critical and Comparative Perspective

Pretoria, 11 – 13 May 2026

Conference Programme

Keynote Speakers

Marie-Bénédicte Dembour, Ghent University
Justice Ben Kioko, African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
Christopher Roberts, Chinese University of Hong Kong

Organising Committee

Marie-Bénédicte Dembour, Cornelia Klocker, Isabella Leroy, Fatima Mukaddam and Vera Wriedt
(at Ghent University)
Frans Viljoen and Mumbi Gichuhi (at the University of Pretoria)



EVIDENCE IN
INTERNATIONAL
HUMAN RIGHTS
ADJUDICATION
ERC - UGENT



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA



Day 1: Monday, 11 May

9:00 – 9:30

Welcome and Coffee

9:30 – 9:45

Welcome by Marie-Bénédicte Dembour and Frans Viljoen

9:45 – 10:30

Keynote by Marie-Bénédicte Dembour

The Evidentiary Regimes of the Three Regional Human Rights Courts: An Attempt at Critical Comparison

Chair: Nkatha Murungi

10:45 – 12:15

Session 1: Setting the Scene

Chair: Vera Wriedt

- Fact-finding as a catalyst for enhancing complementarity between the African Court and the African Commission, *Edward Murimi*
- A critical review of the propriety of the evidential standards that the African Court is applying in its case law on reparations, *Mwiza Jo Nkhata*
- From Ambiguity to Certainty: Operationalizing the Balance of Probabilities Standard in the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights, *Trecia Ndelema*

Lunch Break

2:00 – 4:00

Session 2: Bridging Domestic and International Adjudication

Chair: Isabella Leroy

- Redressing Evidentiary Imbalance: Practical and Jurisprudential Approaches from Tanzania and Their Relevance to the African Court, *Raymond Kaswaga*
- Feminist, Survivor-Centred Approaches to Strengthen the African Court's Response to Gender-Based Violence, *Laura Nfomi*
- Judicial Dialogue on Evidence: The African Court and Domestic Courts in Conversation, *Henrietta Ekefre*

4:00 – 4:30

Coffee Break

4:30 – 5:15 (Auditorium)

Keynote by Justice Ben Kioko

Reflections from the Court

Chair: Frans Viljoen

5:15

Cocktail Reception at Future Africa

Day 2: Tuesday, 12 May

8:30 – 9:00

Welcome and Coffee

9:00 – 10:30

Session 3: Fact-Finding and Evidence

Chair: Cornelia Klocker

- Evidence, fact-finding and the non-fourth instace doctrine before the African Court: Navigating the line between human rights protection and judicial overreach, *Victor Lowilla*
- From Unequal Arms to Mutuality: Intermediary Evidence and Proof Before the African, Inter-American and European Human Rights Courts, *Raphael Oidtmann*
- Evidence and Fact-Finding in the Inter-State Context: Comparing the Evidentiary Approaches of the ACtHPR and the ECtHR, *Joseph Finnerty*

10:45 – 12:15

Session 4: Unequal Arms Across Specific Human Rights Violations

Chair: Mumbi Gichuhi

- Confronting the Evidence Conundrum in Enforced Disappearance Cases before the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights: How the AU human rights system can learn from the Inter American human rights system to leave no victim behind, *Eva Nudd and Ismene Zarifis*
- Unequal Arms in African Human Rights Adjudication: Evidentiary Challenges and the Struggle for Truth in Socio-Economic Rights Cases, *Margaret Mwape*
- Evidence and new technologies: Thinking through the current and future caseload of regional human rights courts and bodies, *Mando Rachovitsa*

Lunch break

2:00 – 3:30

Session 5: Unequal Arms Across Systems

Chair: Fatima Mukaddam

- Rebalancing the Scales: Addressing Inequality of Arms in African Human Rights Adjudication, *Nicholas Cheruiyot*
- Comparative Evidentiary Practices in Refugee Protection: African, Inter-American, and European Courts, *Sara Osman*
- Investigating Evidence: Contesting Denials of Access to Justice for Border Violence, *Vera Wriedt, Hanaa Hakiki, Delphine Rodrick*

3:30 – 4:00

Coffee Break

4:00 – 4:45

Keynote by Christopher Roberts

On the Allocation and Potential Reversal of the Burden of Proof in the Criminal and Human Rights Contexts

Chair: Marie-Bénédicte Dembour

7:00

Conference Dinner in Town at Stephnie's (Shop 7, Lynnwood Bridge, 4 Daventry St, Lynnwood Manor, Pretoria, 0081, <https://www.stephnies.com/>).

Day 3: Wednesday, 13 May

8:30 – 9:00

Welcome and Coffee

9:00 – 10:30

Session 6: What Does the Future Hold?

Chair: Marie-Bénédicte Dembour

- Epistemic Justice Beyond a Shadow of Doubt: Dismantling Evidentiary Barriers to Corporate Justice in Africa, *Siyabonga Hadebe*
- Flexibility, Restraint, and Truth: Comparative Reflections on Evidence at the ICC and the European Court of Human Rights for the African Court, *Demetra Sorvatzioti*
- Rebalancing evidentiary inequalities: A comparative analysis of the African Court of Human and People's Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, *Jean d'Amour Bizimana*
- Speaking Truth to Power – An evaluation of the human dimension of victims' experiences in the jurisprudence of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, *Gina Bekker*

10:45 – 12:15

Roundtable for concluding remarks with Marie-Bénédicte Dembour, Frans Viljoen, Justice Ben Kioko, Nkatha Murungi, Christopher Roberts and Mwiza Jo Nkhata

Chair: Vera Wriedt

Lunch Break

2:00 – 4:00

Optional Joint Activity: We would like to invite participants to join us for an excursion to Freedom Park. More information on this heritage site can be found here: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/>

Useful Information

Conference Housekeeping

Each presenter will be able to present for between 12 to a maximum of 15 minutes before a Q&A is opened. Please note that time limits are strictly enforced in order to ensure a fair distribution of time between all presenters. Please let us know in advance if you need any specific presentation equipment. If you have a presentation with slides, please share it with us by sending it to both dissect.erc@ugent.be and mumbigichuhi44@gmail.com by Sunday, 10 May.

Conference Logistics

- Location: Future Africa Campus, University of Pretoria, South St, Koedoespoort 456-Jr, Pretoria, 0186, South Africa. Unless otherwise noted, the sessions will be held at Conference Room 2.
- For directions see: <https://www.futureafrica.science/contact-us/>. We recommend taking an Uber taxi directly from the airport which will cost between \$30 and \$40, depending on traffic.

Contact Details

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