



CEPIL ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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FORWARD FROM BOARD CHAIR.

The year 2021 continued to be a challenge as result of the outbreak of the Covid-19 variants in Uganda. This had an equal effect on our organization and the whole sector of civil society. After a promising start with positive performance in the first weeks and months of the year, our full attention turned to the persistent spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the second wave in Uganda. The Board of Directors worked closely with the team at the CEPIL secretariate to define and implement measures to continue protecting the Rule of Law and strengthening its protection by all stakeholders.

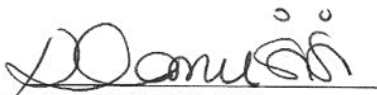
We are proud that team at the secretariate, the research assistants and the judgment review team remained focused on the Judiciary Performance Scorecard throughout the year, embracing the new normal and opportunities to work together towards its launch and award ceremony. We entered an exciting partnership with Freedom of Expression Hub (FOE-Hub) and Wananchi Initiative to promote and protect the rights and freedoms of journalists in Uganda. We were thrilled so many volunteer interns in the year to help, so many in fact, we had wait lists for others.

During the year under review, public interest litigation has continued to be a focus in 2021 and we made considerable progress on a number of cases and with a few judgments in our favor under our sleeves. Above all, we have revised our litigation strategy by defining key focus areas, which reflect our vision, mission, and clearly define where we can make positive contributions to nurture the practice and protection of the Rule of Law in Uganda.

This year, a very special "Thank You" is due to all our interns, employees and management team of CEPIL, as the work, dedication and support given to the organization has been immense and exceptional in so many ways. We are equally grateful for the ongoing trust received from our development and implementation partners, and shareholders, thereby invigorating our long-standing relationships and allowing us to continuously foster our vision to further cause social change in the political, and economic spheres through research, advocacy, public interest litigation, technology, and legal aid.

The year 2020 may not be reminisced as one of good tidings but it was a year in which so many people continued to pull together as a community to fight back on the spread of Covid-19 in Uganda. That co-operation was a positive story in 2021, and I am confident it will continue to be in the year ahead.

Robina Namusisi,
Board Chair



MESSAGE FROM AG. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

As we enter the 2022, it is a suitable time to take stock of the year that was, 2021. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your commitment to national human rights and social justice.

2021 remained particularly challenging due to the protracted negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the team at CEPIL demonstrated laudable resilience and it yielded very tangible results on various fronts. We managed to continue, complete, and launch the Judiciary Performance Scorecard 2020, have the second cohort of the Rule of Law Champion Initiation program, litigate on issues touched human rights and the Rule of Law in Uganda and above all we managed to nurture Rule of Law in our country through our programmatic areas of reach.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to thank everyone involved the fight to bring social change in Uganda and the team at CEPIL for your steadfast efforts and contributions towards our achievements. Alone we will have little ability to make change, but by being connected, we will have more leverage to achieve sustainable social change, change that can benefit all and not just a handful. With this, we look forward to redoubling our efforts this year; together with you.

I wish you all together with your families and significant others a fruitful 2022.

Francis Obonyo Alphonse,
Ag. Executive Director



List of Acronyms

CEPIL	-	Centre for Public Interest Law
CSOs	-	Civil Society Organizations
EACJ	-	East African Court of Justice
ISER	-	Institute for Social and Economic Rights
MOU	-	Memorandum of Understanding
NETPIL	-	Network for Public Interest Lawyers
PIL	-	Public Interest Law
PILAC	-	Continuing Legal Education at Public Interest Law Clinic
ULS	-	Uganda Law Society
URSB	-	Uganda Registration of Services Bureau



About CEPIL.

Established and registered in September 2009, Centre For Public Interest Law (CEPIL) is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-religious organization that aims at upholding the principles of good governance and democracy and human rights by using law to ensure that every citizen in Uganda has equal access to social, economic; and political opportunities without discrimination on the basis of their social standing, religion, political opinion or membership of a political party or organization; and ethnicity. CEPIL is also a legal aid service provider for large groups and marginalized communities. In order to ensure effective promotion and advocacy for good governance, rule of law, independence of the Judiciary and a strong Parliament, CEPIL has positioned itself to strategically leverage local, national, and international

partnerships. This intended to expand CEPIL's reach in tracking, monitoring, and reporting the executive, the legislature, and the Judiciary while at the same time making CEPIL a great place to work by building the capacity of its staff in line with its values.

Vision: A Uganda where the rule of law is practiced and nurtured in public interest

Mission: To be the leading catalyst for social change in the political and economic sphere through research, advocacy, public interest litigation, technology, and legal aid for vulnerable groups in Uganda.

Values: Excellence, Accountability, Teamwork, and Integrity.



Judiciary Scorecard Research Initiative 2020.

The Judiciary Scorecard Research Initiative 2020 was continued, launched, and published.

A team of five that is; Mr. Solomon Rukundo, Ms. Suki Lucy, Ms. Judith Abbot, Mr. Turyafuna Derrick and Ms. Doreen Kansiime comprising the judgment review team reviewed decided cases from the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, and the High Court Divisions. A report was compiled and incorporated into the Judiciary Scorecard Report 2020


Upon completion of the first draft of the Judiciary Scorecard Report, the results were subjected to technical review by the programs team at CEPIL and the feedback was incorporated in the Scorecard Report and finally launched on 25th of November 2020 at Mestil Hotel.

The launch was graced by different dignitaries from

the Judiciary, Civil society among others and the Guest of honor was by the Her Worship Rose Mary Bareebe Deputy Registrar in place of the Chief Justice Hon Justice Alphonse Owiny-Dollo.

The Judicial Officers who exhibited outstanding performance in the year 2020 were recognized and these were; Hon. Lady Justice Lillian Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza; Hon. Justice Paul Mugamba, Hon. Lady Justice Stella Arach Amoko, Hon. Justice Fredrick Egonda-Ntende, Hon. Geoffrey Kiryabwire, Hon. Justice Kenneth Kakuru, Hon. Justice Musa Ssekaana, Hon Justice Lydia Mugambe, Hon Justice Olive Kazaarwe, Hon Justice Alexandra Nkonge, His Worship Paul Kedi, His Worship Susan Adong, and His Worship George Watyekere.





Rule of Law Champions Initiative 2021.

Following the call for young lawyers to participate in the Rule of Law Champion's Initiative 2021, the program was held between 7th and 11th June via Zoom due to the outbreak of the second wave of Covid-19. The selected participants were five and these were trained by Rule of Law Champions of 2019; Ms. Akullu Esther, Ms. Aber Ruth, Mr. Kisaalu Gad Arthur, Ms. Marunga Brenda, and Ms. Atukunda Rita.

The Champions were assigned to produce articles for a rule of law journal, a position paper and policy paper as

part of their assignments as a requirement to graduate.

On 25th November, the program to an end with the launch of the Rule of Law Journal 2021. The champions were also awarded certificates of completion of the Rule of Law training that had commenced in July 2021. This was also crowned by a presentation of their articles to members present during the Rule of Law forum.

CEPIL – EACJ

Positioning the Bar and Bench in East Africa to be the pillar of Rule of Law in East Africa.

CEPIL together with the Registrar's Office East African Court of Justice with support from Ford Foundation conceptualized trainings to enhance the ability of the Bench & the Bar in East Africa by promoting & expanding the East Africa Civic Space through the EACJ Court Legal Architecture.

The training took place in Nairobi in Kenya, Kampala in Uganda, Bujumbura in Burundi, and Kigali in Rwanda. Board member of CEPIL SC. Mr. Francis Gimara was in attendance representative capacity of the governing board of CEPIL and the Secretariat.



World Justice Honourable Mention.

We were thrilled to be among the 10 projects chosen for the World Justice Challenge 2021 Honourable Mention for our demonstrated impact in advancing the Rule of Law through the Judiciary Scorecard Report Initiative.



Media Guidelines – CEPIL efforts towards the protection of the media freedoms in Uganda.



As we are geared towards the launch of the guidelines to the media and police while covering demonstrations, the programs team met with the Police; CPC Asan Kasingye and Mr. Fred Enanga to discuss the guidelines in detail. The meeting

was held at the police headquarters on Tuesday 30th March 2021, and we look forward to further discussions.

Holding the state accountable through Public Interest Litigation.

One of CEPIL's mandates is to use the public interest litigation as tool to promote accountability of the state, and the rule of law. In 2021, CEPIL through its legal consultants had five cases before the Court of Law: all in respect of the rule of law.

In March, CEPIL and others managed to reinstate and get a date for hearing a Constitutional Petition vide No. 009 of 2014; a petition against the government challenging provisions of the Journalist Act, Cap 105 establishing two government controlled regulatory bodies with wide and significant discretionary powers over the media; restricting the practice of journalism by requiring compulsory

licensing and registration of journalists; provisions authorizing significant penalties and sanctions on journalists, including disqualification and suspension from practicing journalism; provisions authorizing the Media Council to censor films and plays.

In August, we initiated a withdrawal of a petition vide Constitutional Petition No. 26 of 2019. This was as a result of that fact that the merits of petition had been substantively resolved by Constitutional Petition No. 009 of 2014 which was still a petition by CEPIL.

Also in August, PIL case vide Constitutional Petition No 40 of 2015 and Constitutional Petition No. 25 of 2018 were submitted and the merits of the cases were still relevant, and court issued dates to file further pleadings before the cases were re-scheduled for hearing by a full bench

In September, a PIL case vide Constitutional Petition No.20 of 2016. We submitted that the merits of the case were still relevant, and court issued dated to file written submission.



The Annual Human Rights Law Review 2021.

On 25th November 2020, CEPIL convened the annual Human Rights Law Review. The dialogue was conducted both physically at Mestil Hotel and via Zoom between 10:00am and 12:00pm. The theme for the Human Rights Law Review 2021 was "examining the Enforceability of the Human Rights (Enforcement) Act, 2019 pre, during and post the 2021 General Elections and COVID 19 in Uganda."

The panelists were Ms. Patricia Atim a lawyer from Public Interest Law Clinic (PILAC) at Makerere University, Ms.

Gorreth Ayebale a Manager at Justice Centers Uganda, and Allana Kembabazi, a lawyer working with Institute for Social Economic Rights (ISER).

The dialogue attracted a number of participants from different civil society organizations and recommendations about the Human Rights Act. Civil society was urged to hold the different implementing institutions accountable to ensure that human rights in Uganda are upheld.



Creating safe spaces for dialogue in issues of public interest using online platforms.

CEPIL in conjunction with NETPIL organized a webinar on the issue of Election Petitions regarding lessons learnt from Kenya and Malawi that had successful Election Petitions. The panelists for this webinar included Mr. Wafula Wakoko, a jurist and Nairobi based lawyer, Professor Danwoon Chirwa, the Dean of law University of Cape Town and Dr. Busingye Kabumba, a law don at Makerere University. The moderator for the event was Miss. Akiteng Isabella. The panelists highlighted the role of the judiciary in election petitions

and what lessons we could learn from the petitions in the neighbouring countries. On 25th March 2021, the online conversation #HaveYourSayUg on twitter was on the Kenyan Ban of Maize from Uganda and the quality of food on the Ugandan market. This conversation was moderated by CEPIL and spearheaded by panelists; Mr. Obbo Geoffrey, Programs Manager Centre for Food and Adequate Living Rights Uganda, Mr. Siya Balaam, Food Expert and Mr. Brighten Ababo

In a bid to advocate about occurring issues

that affect the rule of law and democracy in Uganda, CEPIL organized a webinar on the role of legal knowledge in fostering innovation and economic empowerment among the youth. The panelists for this webinar included Hon. Jonathan Odur, a member of Parliament; Erute County, Mr. Solomon Rukundo, tax expert, Mr. Daniel Nasasira, Registrar URSB Mbale Regional Office and Mr. Peter Classic Nvigi, a lawyer.



Strengthening Partnerships and collaborations with Key stakeholders.

CEPIL has continued to harness partnership with both national and international actors to enhance the rule of law. Strategic partnerships are key for effective advocacy, promotion, and protection of the rule of law, good governance, judicial

independence, and human rights. This is critical towards the realization of equality, freedom, and dignity for all in Uganda. In 2020, CEPIL signed partnership MOUs with Freedom of Expression Hub and Wanainchi Initiative



Staff capacity strengthening.

CEPIL is enthusiastic about keeping its staff well equipped with knowledge and ensuring continuous improvement in the quality of work delivered. It is upon this basis that the team engaged in a couple of trainings and courses as indicated below.

Our Programme Officer Litigation & Advocates, Gad Arthur Kisaalu attended a fellowship at the Centre for Strategic Litigation under the East Africa Emerging Public Interest Advocates Program where he attended a residential training in Arusha on public interest litigation and human

rights advocacy and completed a 4.5 months practicum which was crowned with the PIL case against the state on independence of the Judiciary under the Administration of Judiciary Act, 2019

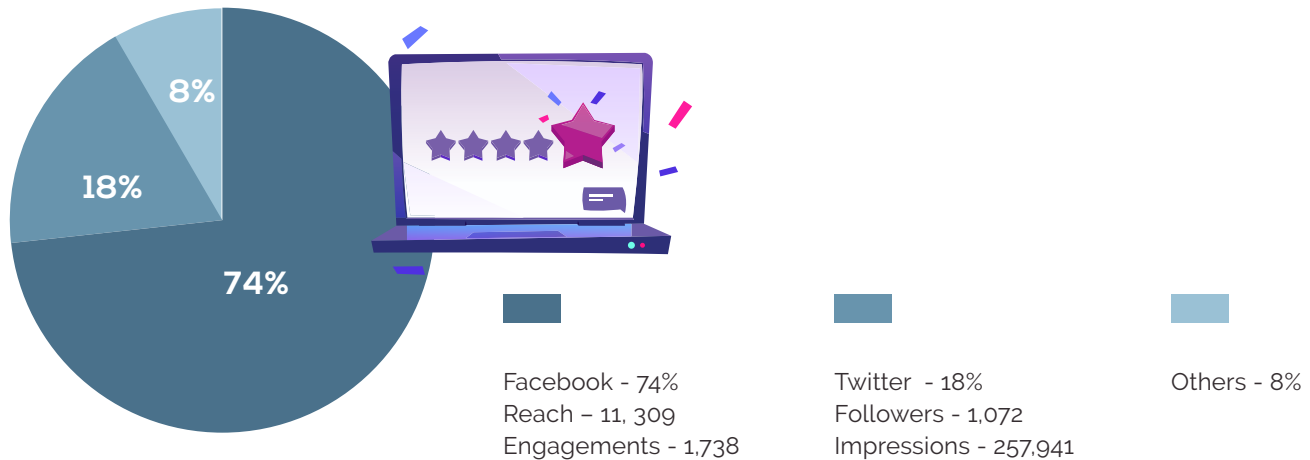
Gad also attended 3-day training from 26-28th May 2021 on strategic litigation before Regional Courts to enhance freedom of expression in East Africa. This initiative was by Pan African Lawyers Union, American Bar Association and NETPIL. Our Programme Officer Research, Rita Atukunda and Gad Arthur attended

a security training for human rights defenders and rapid response advocates organised by NETPIL at Hilton Inn Hotel on 4th June 2021.

On the 23rd of July, the Programmes Officer – Litigation & Advocacy, Mr. Gad Arthur Kisaalu conducted an in-house training on public interest litigation; the development, law, and practice of it in Uganda. All members of the secretariat were present and answered a few questions at the end about their understanding of PIL in Uganda and its practice.



CEPIL 2021 Social media statistics.



Covid-19 pandemic and how it impacted on CEPIL.

CEPIL, just like the rest of the world, was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. With the outbreak of the second wave Covid-19, the government of Uganda through the President declared a lockdown in June

and August, and this affected the working pattern at CEPIL. We, however, did not cease to work but instead embraced the work flex policy that allowed us to continue working remotely.



CEPIL in pictures.



Conclusion

CEPIL extends deep appreciation to her partners that are supporting and working with us in pursuing realization of a Uganda where the rule of law is practiced and nurtured in public interest.

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