

**Seattle University School of Law**  
**International Commission of Jurists**  
**SU Law Intern Report - 2018**

**TO:** Junsen Ohno, International Programs Administrator

**FROM:** Nassor Salum, Legal Research Intern

**RE:** Summer 2018 – International Commission of Jurists Internship

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**Location & Dates of Internship**

Location: Nairobi, Kenya

Start: June 4th, 2018

End: July 13th, 2018

**Supervisor:**

Elsy Sainna, Deputy Executive Director - ICJ Kenya

Email: elsy.sainna@icj-kenya.org

**About ICJ Kenya**

The International Commission of Jurists is an international non-profit non-governmental organization based in Geneva, Switzerland. It works to promote the rule of law, democracy, and human rights protection in different countries around the world. Founded in 1959, ICJ Kenya is the oldest human rights organization in Kenya, and the only ICJ chapter on the African continent. Although it is affiliated with its parent organization, ICJ Kenya operates autonomously. In addition to support programs such as Communications and Logistics, the organization has four main programs: Access to Justice; International Justice; Human Rights Protection; and Governance. Because of the interconnected nature of the work, it is common for staff from different ICJ Kenya programs to collaborate and support each other.

**ICJ Kenya Office Information**

Although the summer schedule is flexible and internship durations vary, 8 to 10 weeks is the average internship duration. The office staff is composed of the executive director, deputy executive director, program officers, research associates, interns, and administrative staff. Consistent with the diversity principles integrated within the Kenyan Constitution of 2010, the office staff is a diverse mix of men and women from various backgrounds.

Work attire is business professional. This typically means suits, for both men and women, but can also include collared shirts underneath sweaters for both genders. Ties are required for men, except on Fridays. Friday's attire is business casual. I would highly recommend bringing enough sweaters that are professional looking enough to be worn in an office, as the internship will most likely be during the fall/winter time in Kenya, and some sections of the office are colder than others.

The work day starts between 8 to 8:30 am and ends at 5 pm. Tea is available at 10 am and 3 pm. Lunch is served from 1 pm to 2 pm. For around 1100 Kenya Shillings per month, interns can eat Kenyan dishes the

office cook makes for office members. I chose to enroll in the office meal plan as it was affordable, there are only a few restaurants that are close to the office, and the food tastes good. Although I would recommend it, of course whether you choose to enroll in the meal plan depends on your particular situation and taste.

In regard to transportation to work, be prepared to take sole responsibility for this. However, when appropriate you will be provided transportation and food on work trips.

Although business is conducted in a similar manner to that in the US, there are a few notable differences that interns should be aware of. The first is timekeeping. Timekeeping in Kenya is different from that in the US; therefore, interns would be advised to refrain from making assumptions and judgments of the timekeeping. The second is the importance of greetings. Interns would be advised to respect this practice, while at the same time striking a balance with their comfort level.

## **Substantive Work**

### **A. Overview**

In the preparation phase before their internship, it is advisable for interns to have a clear picture of the type of work they would like to do at ICJ Kenya, and to select an ICJ Kenya program to work for based on those interests. For this purpose, it is helpful to browse through the different programs and their corresponding materials on the organization's website. While interns do have a choice on what programs they work with, depending on the nature of the work, office logistics, and personnel dynamics, interns might also be asked to help programs other than those they chose to work in.

### **B. Access to Justice Program Work**

#### **I. Judicial Performance Evaluation Tool**

- In partnership with other civil society organizations in Kenya, ICJ Kenya was working on developing and implementing a formal program for the evaluation of judicial performance. The goal of program was to provide a basis for judges and other judicial officers to maximize their potential for excellence through self-improvement, without jeopardizing judicial integrity and independence. As an intern, I compiled quantitative and qualitative data from questionnaires completed by judges and other judicial officers, strategized the best method of presenting the data, and presented the data to my supervisor in the Access to Justice program.

#### **II. Maputo Protocol Policy Brief**

- ICJ was working on analyzing and strengthening the impact of the Maputo Protocol on the promotion of women's rights in Kenya and around Africa. The Maputo Protocol is an international human rights instrument that binds ratifying states to protecting and upholding women's rights within their borders. I drafted a policy brief discussing the impact judicial policies had on the adjudication of cases for the promotion of women's rights in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. The brief included research on the judiciary's human resources policies, analysis of international human rights instruments and legal decisions, and it proposed courses of action for

ICJ Kenya and the Kenyan judiciary to engage in. The brief will be used to inform ICJ Kenya's decision-making process in their work on strengthening the judiciary's use of the Maputo Protocol to promote women's rights.

### III. Article on Proposed Amendment to Labour Relations Act and Government Corruption

- While I was in Nairobi, there were multiple labor strikes by different sectors of the labor force. In addition to researching the reasons behind the strikes, I researched and explained the possible implications of the proposed amendment to the Labour Relations Act of 2007, and how it would affect human rights in Kenya. In the same article, I argued that high taxes, inadequate services for the Kenyan people, and government corruption were the underlying causes of the current labor unrest in Nairobi.

## **C. International Justice Program Work**

### I. Statement for the UN International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict

- The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in 2015 marking June 19th of every year as the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. I attended an event commemorating the 10th birthday of children born of post-election sexual violence in Kenya following the 2007 Presidential Election. The event featured talks from UN members, civil society organization members, and survivors of sexual violence during the 2007-2008 post-election period sharing their stories. After the event, I drafted a statement for my International Justice program superior describing the event, its significance, and takeaways.

### II. Research on Specialized Gender-Based Violence Courts

- My supervisor wanted to know about countries in the world that had specialized gender-based violence courts, how those courts were structured, and how similar courts and their features could be implemented in Kenya. Therefore, I conducted research on specialized gender-based violence courts that exist or are being created in countries around the world. I researched how these courts adjudicated GBV cases and unique features of each court. Afterwards, I hypothesized how elements of specific GBV courts could be implemented in Kenya. I presented the research to my supervisor who wanted to use it for informational purposes in their discussions with other civil society organizations about the possibility of establishing specialized GBV courts in Kenya.

## **Kenya: Information to Know**

### **I. Internship Preparation**

Although it is neither necessary nor required, familiarity with the Kenyan Constitution and basic principles of international law is very helpful for the work that you will be doing. Most of your time will be spent researching; however, you may be asked to help with other tasks such as attending meetings, analyzing data, and drafting documents as needed. Additionally, it is beneficial to take initiative in regard to your learning experience by identifying work that interests you and asking ICJ Kenya colleagues if they need help with it, even if the work does not directly relate to the program that you are assigned to.

## **II. Language, Safety, Transportation, and Housing**

Most people in Nairobi, especially professionals, speak English fluently. At street markets, it is common practice to bargain for the price of goods, so don't be afraid to bargain if you want to. Safety is a very real concern in Nairobi. Therefore, it is highly recommended that you travel in groups, and are always aware of your surroundings and belongings. In addition to the areas of the city the State Department warns U.S travelers not to visit, I would not recommend being outside in the Central Business District at night.

Traffic in Nairobi is comparable to Seattle's: it is not good to say the least. However, there are many transportation options to get around the city. Frequently, the locals ride in matatus - minivans that have been converted into small buses. While these are one of the cheapest ways to get around town, I would not recommend traveling in these as they can be unreliable, and dangerous to ride in. In Nairobi, there are many ride-hailing apps that you can use, the most popular ones being Uber and Taxify. Trip prices are typically less expensive than prices for trips in Seattle.

Your housing situation will vary based on the neighborhood in Nairobi that you live in. To reduce travel time, it is advisable to find housing in a neighborhood that is close to the office. Currently, the office is in the Kilileshwa neighborhood. Many foreign nationals in Nairobi live in the Kilimani, Lavington, Westlands, Parklands, and Valle Arcade neighborhoods. Additionally, it is highly recommended to live in an area that has a fence, gate, and 24-hour security. Airbnbs that fit these specifications are also available to rent throughout the city. Rent prices typically range from \$500 to \$900 USD per month.

## **III. Pre-Internship Checklist**

In addition to other personal preparations, interns should do the following:

- Purchase a plane ticket
- Obtain and complete paperwork from Junsen
- Complete Seattle University's paperwork for study abroad students – Ask Junsen for more information
- Establish communications with the ICJ Kenya office administrator prior to the start of your internship to decide on the start and end dates of your internship
- Secure housing for the duration of your internship in Nairobi
- Purchase travel insurance
- Obtain medications and immunizations
- Issue travel notifications to your bank
- Register your trip with the State Department
- Bring a new \$50 USD bill with you to purchase a visa at the Nairobi airport
- Make copies of your passport and bring copies with you

Please feel free to contact me prior to your departure if you have any further questions. Enjoy your trip.