



Concept Note

Webinar: Judiciary and Civic Space in Africa: Regulation of Private Voluntary Organizations

Background

Civic space is the cornerstone of a vibrant democracy. Open and accessible civic space is a human right rooted in the freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly and the right to participate in public affairs, guaranteed in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Articles 9, 10, and 11), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Articles 19, 21, and 22).

In recent times, several governments on the African continent have enacted legislation while others are revising their laws to tighten the regulation of the activities of Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs). Some governments have claimed that these laws are necessary for purposes of combatting the abuse of PVOs for money laundering and terrorism financing. While combatting money laundering and terrorism financing are legitimate purposes in a constitutional democracy, it is critical that these laws be designed in a way that complies with the regional and international legal standards regulating restrictions on civic space, in particular the freedom of association and the right to participate in public affairs.

Webinar

In this context, Africa Judges and Jurists Forum in collaboration with the Pan African Lawyers Union (PALU), are conducting a Webinar aimed at spotlighting recent trends in the legal regulation of PVOs in Africa and the impact of these on civic space. The webinar will also feature discussions on the regional and international normative standards which legislation must comply with when regulating PVOs, and the role of the judiciary in enforcing these normative standards. Discussions at this webinar will be based on expert presentations by Human Rights Defenders, Jurists and eminent judges from Africa. The webinar will be held on *14th August 2026 at 1200hrs East Africa Time.*

Webinar Program

Time	Topic	Speaker
12:00hrs-12:05hrs	Welcome remarks	AJJF
12:05hrs-12:25hrs	Civic Space and Democratic regression in Africa	Prof Justice Key Dingake (AJJF)
12:25hrs-12:40hrs	Trends in the Regulation of PVOs in Africa	Ms. Sarah Peeters
12:45hrs-13:05hrs	Normative legal standards on the regulation of PVOs	Dr Justice Alfred Mavedzenge
13:05hrs- 13:25hrs	Plenary Discussion	Ms. Damaris Kemunto
13:25hrs-13:30hrs	Closing remarks	Ms. Sarah Peeters