

CALL FOR PAPERS

1. Conceptual framing

The conference invites scholarly interrogation of gender-based violence as a constitutional, socio-legal, institutional, developmental, and human rights concern.

Contributions are encouraged from doctrinal, comparative, empirical, interdisciplinary, and practice-based perspectives that critically examine the effectiveness of legal systems, institutional responses, and public policy interventions aimed at addressing GBV.

Particular attention will be given to contributions that

- interrogate the relationship between law, justice, and social transformation;
- examine the implementation gap between policy commitments and lived outcomes;
- advance theoretical and evidence-based models for systemic reform;
- explore judicial, prosecutorial, and institutional accountability mechanisms;
- consider intersectional experiences of violence and exclusion; and
- contribute to practical and sustainable interventions for prevention and protection.

The conference is anchored in

- South Africa's constitutional framework, particularly the rights to equality, dignity, freedom, and security of the person;
- the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSP-GBVF);
- regional and international human rights instruments, including the Maputo Protocol and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- transformative constitutionalism and access to justice frameworks; and
- African and Global South perspectives on justice, institutional reform, and social accountability.

2. Conference sub-themes and priority research tracks

Submissions may address, but are not limited to, the following thematic areas:

A. Constitutionalism, Rights, and State Obligations

- Positive obligations of the state in GBV prevention and response
- Horizontal application of rights in private violence contexts
- Structural remedies and supervisory jurisdiction

B. Criminal Justice and Evidentiary Theory

- Trauma-informed adjudication and evidentiary standards
- Credibility assessment and epistemic injustice
- Sentencing theory: deterrence versus proportionality in GBV



SOUTH AFRICAN CHAPTER OF
International Association of Women Judges
advancing human rights and equal justice for all



UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA

C. Law, Society, and Structural Inequality

- Socio-economic drivers of GBV
- Intersectionality (race, class, rurality¹, disability)
- Masculinity, power, and legal regulation

D. Customary Law and Legal Pluralism

- Harmonisation with constitutional rights
- Gendered impacts of customary practices
- Comparative African jurisprudence

E. Civil Liability and Strategic Litigation

- Expansion of delictual liability
- Institutional accountability and systemic harm
- Public interest litigation and class actions

F. Law, Technology, and Data Governance

- Digital violence and cyber jurisprudence
- AI in justice systems: risk, bias, and governance
- Data as a tool for accountability

3. Methodological scope

The conference welcomes submissions employing a range of methodologies, including

- doctrinal legal analysis;
- empirical qualitative and quantitative research;
- comparative and transnational studies;
- socio-legal and interdisciplinary approaches; and
- policy analysis and governance studies.

Interdisciplinary submissions drawing from fields such as law, sociology, psychology, criminology, economics, political science, public health, social work, data science, and gender studies are strongly encouraged.

4. Who should submit

The conference welcomes submissions from

- academics and researchers;
- members of the judiciary;

¹ Rurality is not just a geographic designation; it is a complex intersection of isolation, distinct socio-cultural norms, economic limitations, and systemic institutional neglect.

- legal practitioners and advocates;
- policymakers and government officials;
- civil society organisations and activists;
- postgraduate students and emerging scholars; and
- practitioners working in the GBV response sector.

5. Submission requirements

Interested participants are invited to submit:

Abstracts

- 300–500 words
- Must clearly indicate the following:
 - title of paper
 - research question or focus
 - methodology
 - theoretical or conceptual framework
 - key argument or anticipated findings
 - relevant conference sub-theme.

Full papers (preferred)

- 5 000 words
- Properly referenced in a recognised academic citation style
- Original and unpublished work.

Submissions should be accompanied by the following:

- author name(s)
- institutional affiliation(s)
- short biography (100–150 words)
- contact details.

6. Evaluation criteria

Submissions will be evaluated based on the following:

- originality and scholarly contribution
- methodological rigour
- engagement with relevant literature and theory



SOUTH AFRICAN CHAPTER OF
International Association of Women Judges
advancing human rights and equal justice for all



UNIVERSITY OF THE
 FREE STATE
 UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
 VRYSTAAT
 YUNIVESITHI YA
 FREISTATA

- relevance to the conference theme
- contribution to African and Global South scholarship
- practical or policy relevance
- potential contribution to legal and institutional reform.

7. Publication opportunities

Selected papers may be considered for

- inclusion in a peer-reviewed special journal issue;
- publication in a conference proceedings volume or research compendium;
- integration into judicial education and professional development materials; and
- policy and advocacy outputs arising from the conference.

8. Strategic objectives of the conference

The academic stream of the conference seeks to

- deepen jurisprudential and theoretical engagement with GBV law and policy;
- strengthen interdisciplinary and evidence-based approaches to reform;
- bridge the gap between academic scholarship and judicial practice; and
- contribute to sustainable strategies for ending GBV in South Africa and beyond.

9. Presentation format

Accepted presenters may be accommodated through

- individual paper presentations; and
- thematic panels.

Presentation guidelines, time allocations, and participation modalities will be communicated to accepted participants.

10. Important dates

- Abstract submission deadline: 26 June 2026
- Notification of acceptance: 7 July 2026
- Full paper submission deadline: 21 July 2026
- Final revised paper submission: 4 August 2026

11. Submission process

Submissions should be sent to:

Judge MMD Lenyai

MLenyai@judiciary.org.za

Please indicate 'IAWJ Conference 2026 Submission' in the subject line.



SOUTH AFRICAN CHAPTER OF
International Association of Women Judges
advancing human rights and equal justice for all



UNIVERSITY OF THE
 FREE STATE
 UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
 VRYSTAAT
 YUNIVESITHI YA
 FREISTATA

Accepted file formats:

- Microsoft Word
- PDF

Further submission guidelines and registration information will be communicated in due course.

12. Registration and participation

All presenters whose abstracts are accepted will be required to register for the conference.

13. Contact information

For conference participation and submission enquiries, please contact:

Conference Organising Committee

South African Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ)
in collaboration with the University of the Free State

Magistrate Mikateko Mabobo

Email: MMabobo@lcjudiciary.org.za



SOUTH AFRICAN CHAPTER OF
International Association of Women Judges
advancing human rights and equal justice for all



UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA