



IRISH RULE OF LAW
INTERNATIONAL

**IRLI uses the rule of law
to tackle global injustices
and provides access to
justice in order to advance
human rights**



Irish Rule of Law International (IRLI) is an initiative of the Law Society of Ireland, the Bar of Ireland, the Law Society of Northern Ireland, and the Bar of Northern Ireland, dedicated to promoting the rule of law. IRLI seeks to harness the skills of Irish and Northern Irish lawyers in using the law as a means of tackling global injustice and empowering all people to live in a society free from inequality, corruption and conflict.

Child Diversion Programme Malawi

Our Child Diversion programme in Malawi, Mwai Wosinthika (“A Chance for Change”) centres on diverting children, who come into conflict with the law, away from the formal criminal justice system. The programme is a pre-trial diversion programme, facilitated in collaboration with the Malawi Ministry of Gender and other partner agencies. 29 children, aged between 10 and 17, were placed on our programme in this past year alone.

Bail Application Programme Malawi

IRLI does a large amount of work on obtaining release on bail for large numbers of detained persons in Malawi. IRLI has helped in the cases of thousands of detainees over the last 11 years. Many accused persons have been detained without trial for periods of many years. Only a fortnight ago, IRLI had a detainee who had been held for 11 years without trial released. In the last two years, we have also been involved in having 15 women released from prison who have been accused of infanticide after having miscarriages or still-born children.

Magistrates Training Courses in Malawi

About 95% of criminal cases in Malawi are dealt with in the Magistrates’ Courts, very few criminal acts are dealt with at the High Court, such as murder, manslaughter. Otherwise, the High Court primarily operates as an appellate court. As part of our programme in Malawi, we organise training courses for magistrates, which include sentencing guidelines. We believe our efforts are indicative of our commitment to justice in the country and help address the complex issues arising from a legal system established during the colonial period.



Tanzania

In cooperation with our local partners, the Children’s Dignity Forum - CDF, our project in Tanzania centres on access to justice for gender based violence and sexual abuse survivors, through effective investigation and prosecution of child sexual abuse (CSA) cases. With more than 1 in 4 girls, and more than 1 in 7 boys experiencing some form of sexual violence before they reach the age of 18 in Tanzania, our work aims to harness the work of Irish and Northern Irish criminal justice institutions and their experience of CSA on the island of Ireland in applying them to the Tanzanian content.



Afghanistan

In a unique demonstration of solidarity with our Afghan judicial colleagues, a coalition of IRLI, the Law Society of Ireland, the Bar of Ireland, the Association of Judges of Ireland, the International Association of Women Judges and the various relevant governmental departments, have been utilising their skills, contacts and members to assist as part of a collaborative, justice sector-wide effort in supporting the safe transition and settlement in Ireland of at least 10 female Afghan judges and their families. These judges face the most severe of situations in Taliban run Afghanistan. As the international charity arm of the legal professions across the island of Ireland, IRLI has taken a key role in this ongoing project.

South Africa

IRLI started from the hard work of a number of lawyers who wished to assist the legal professions in South Africa after the fall of the racist Apartheid regime. This project is now made possible by the generous donation of Matheson and involves work by IRLI trainers from the island of Ireland, along with lawyers and trainees from Matheson and South African lawyers, together with the Law Society of South Africa. IRLI is involved in providing training and upskilling for lawyers from historically disadvantaged backgrounds in the commercial law space.

Zambia

The IRLI project in Zambia is designed to address the problems of an under-utilisation of alternatives to charge, jail and remand (together, “Discretionary Alternatives”) for children in conflict with the law in Zambia. In Zambia, many children as young as 8 are detained in adult prisons for very long periods of time. The project is being undertaken in conjunction with DLA Piper and the Undikumbukire Project Zambia.

The Past and the Future

IRLI has previously also worked in Kenya, Ethiopia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Vietnam and Myanmar. We are presently looking at potential projects in a number of other jurisdictions on issues as diverse as the legal rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in south eastern Europe to transitional justice processes in South East Asia to access to justice in sub Saharan African countries.



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