

From the Centre to the Bench

Aisha Ally Sinda's

journey from LL.M. graduate to High Court Judge

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

40 1986 2026 Centre for Human Rights
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

"The Centre gave me an LL.M., but more importantly, it gave me a perspective, a way of thinking about law, Africa and service that has remained with me for more than fifteen years."

In 2010, Aisha Ally Sinda left the Centre for Human Rights with an LL.M. in International Trade and Investment Law in Africa. She had earned a postgraduate qualification, but she was leaving with something else: a new way of seeing the law and the role it could play in shaping society.

More than fifteen years later, that perspective continues to guide her.

Today, Aisha serves as a Judge of the High Court of Tanzania, bringing to the Bench a career shaped by private legal practice, international and regional institutions, professional leadership and a deep commitment to legal education and public service.

Her journey is, in many ways, a reflection of the kind of impact that cannot always be measured by a qualification or a graduation ceremony. It is the impact of ideas, relationships and ways of thinking that stay with people long after they leave the Centre.

Learning to see the bigger picture

At the Centre, Aisha was encouraged to look beyond the technical application of law. She learned to examine legal questions through African and international perspectives and to engage critically with different ideas and experiences.

The Centre exposed her to the connections between law and some of the continent's most pressing challenges development, governance, justice and the public interest.

That experience helped shape the lawyer she would become.

Her professional journey took her through private practice and leading international and regional institutions, while also giving her opportunities to contribute to the legal profession through leadership. Among these was her service as Vice President of the Tanganyika Law Society.

Each experience added another dimension to her understanding of law and leadership. Eventually, that journey led her to the judiciary. A career built on continuous learning for Aisha.

A career built on continuous learning

For Aisha, however, reaching the Bench did not mark the end of her learning journey. If anything, it reinforced the importance of continuing to learn, question and grow.

Her commitment to lifelong learning has remained evident through her involvement in research, writing, teaching, mentoring and professional leadership. She has also continued to seek opportunities to learn from legal and judicial experiences beyond Tanzania.

In 2025, she participated in the Judicial Fellowship Programme in the United States, further strengthening her belief that legal education does not end when a degree is awarded.

This commitment also extends to the next generation of lawyers, particularly women entering the profession. For Aisha, mentorship, legal education and creating opportunities for women are important parts of strengthening the legal profession and the institutions it serves.

From the classroom to the Bench

Looking back, Aisha does not describe her time at the Centre simply as a period in which she earned an LL.M. Instead, she remembers it as a formative experience that gave her a framework for understanding her profession and her responsibilities.

It taught her to value intellectual independence, collaboration and the rule of law, but also to see law as a form of service.

Those lessons have travelled with her from the classroom to the courtroom.

Today, as a Judge of the High Court of Tanzania, Aisha carries with her the knowledge and experiences gathered throughout her career. But alongside them is the perspective she developed at the Centre: a belief that the law is not isolated from society, and that those who practise it have a responsibility to strengthen institutions and contribute to the public good.

Her story begins with an LL.M. in 2010. However, it does not end with the degree.

It is a story of learning, leadership and service and of how an education at the Centre for Human Rights can continue to shape a person's contribution to justice long after they have left its halls.

From the Centre to the Bench, Aisha's journey is a reminder that the most lasting impact of education may not be found on a certificate, but in the way its lessons continue to influence the lives and work of those who receive it.

#Centre@40