

Invitation

Contemporary challenges to the African Union human rights system

Prof Frans Viljoen

Director, Centre for Human Rights
University of Pretoria
27 August 2019



The Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria in collaboration with
the School of Law, University of Kigali
invite you to a lecture on

Contemporary challenges to the African Union human rights system

delivered by

Prof Frans Viljoen

Date: Tuesday 27 August 2019
Time: 11:30 to 12:30
Venue: Karisimbi, University of Kigali, Kigali,
Rwanda
Enquiry: thuto.maqutu@up.ac.za
RSVP: [Please click here to RSVP before
23 August 2019](#)



Independent oversight over the domestic human rights record of member states is a core principle of the African Union. This oversight is mainly the responsibility of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, which has been in existence for more than 30 years, and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, which has been adjudicating cases for a decade now. Similar systems of oversight have also developed at the sub-regional level in Africa, particularly in West, East and Southern Africa.

In an age in which human rights and multilateralism are increasingly viewed with suspicion, the notion of "independent international human rights scrutiny" is being challenged more and more. In Africa, these challenges have manifested themselves in "pushback"

and "backlash" against judicial and quasi-judicial institutions of the East African Community, the Southern African Development Community, and the African Union. Pertinent examples are: the demise of the SADC Tribunal; reforms in respect of the EAC Court of Justice; the withdrawal by the African Commission of the observer status granted to the Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL); and the withdrawal by Rwanda of its declaration under article 34(6) of the Protocol to the African Charter establishment of an African Court.

Do these developments signify a serious threat of the African regional human rights system? What can be done to reverse the trend towards the erosion of human rights-based oversight in Africa?

