

1-1-2008

Suny Distinguished Professor Makau W.Mutua Named Interim Dean of the Law School

UB Law Forum

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Recommended Citation

UB Law Forum (2008) "Suny Distinguished Professor Makau W.Mutua Named Interim Dean of the Law School," *UB Law Forum*: Vol. 20 : No. 1 , Article 45.

Available at: https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/ub_law_forum/vol20/iss1/45

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establish itself as an independent voice (and frequent critic of the administration), and while Mutua was in Nairobi in August, a new executive director and deputy were named. As other NGOs regroup, Mutua says, the hope is that their leaders will form the nucleus of a new political generation, ready to govern with integrity and energy.

“We want to create a state that is sensitive to differences, a state that is open and transparent, a state that takes into consideration the advantages and disadvantages that different groups enjoy and sees the disadvantages reduced, a state that is fair to everyone,” Mutua says. “And we hope that whoever runs the state helps to form a Kenyan national identity that transcends ethnic and regional identities. The purpose of civil society is to be the guardian of the national identity” — a purpose it fulfilled before 1992 but now has ceded to the political class.

After spending time in Tanzania, where the Kenya Human Rights Commission held a staff retreat, Mutua crossed into Kenya with no small degree of tension. He had put out feelers to some government officials he knew, asking them whether he might risk being arrested for his vigorous criticism of the Kibaki administration if he entered Kenya. They had assured him that if he lay low, he should be safe — the presidential campaign was claiming most of the spotlight. Nevertheless, he said, the 10 days he spent in Nairobi were an anxious time.

Mutua, a prolific academic writer and director of the Buffalo Human Rights Center, continues to write a column for a major newspaper in Nairobi. He also is publishing a book on the Kenyan constitutional review process, as well as the proceedings of a 2004 conference on NGOs operating in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

And he continues to monitor the progress of civil society in his beloved homeland, knowing that helping its key players to develop leadership skills may be the key to Kenya’s future.

“This is a very, very tall order,” the professor concedes. “But no country can rise to prosperity without a visionary political class. Our sense is that the current political class is myopic, visionless and very self-interested.” He points out that, in a country where half the citizens live on less than a dollar a day, the 224 members of the Kenyan National Assembly are the highest-paid in the world — better-paid even than members of the U.S. Congress.

“Kenyan,” Mutua says, “are hungry for non-traditional politicians. In 2012 there has to be a clear reformist candidate.”

SUNY Distinguished Professor Makau W. Mutua named interim dean of the Law School

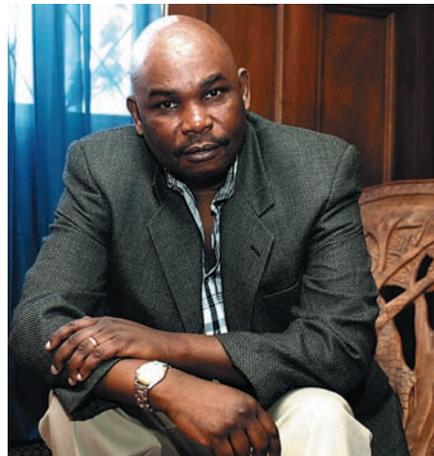
Makau W. Mutua, SUNY Distinguished Professor in the University at Buffalo Law School, has been named interim dean of the Law School, effective Dec. 17. Mutua replaces Nils Olsen, who announced last spring that he would step down in December as dean to attend to personal and family health issues.

Mutua, who also is Floyd H. and Hilda L. Hurst Faculty Scholar in the UB Law School, directs the Human Rights Center in the Law School. He joined the UB faculty in 1996 after serving as associate director of the Human Rights Program at Harvard Law School. In addition, he was director of the Africa Project at the Lawyers

Committee for Human Rights.

One of the world’s foremost authorities in the area of human rights law, he has conducted numerous human rights, diplomatic and rule-of-law missions to countries in Africa, Latin America and Europe, and has spoken at public forums in many parts of the world, including Japan, Brazil, France and Ethiopia. He is a member of the Executive Council and the Executive Committee of the American Society of International Law (ASIL), the most prestigious and largest organization of international lawyers in the world.

Mutua is the author of *Human Rights: A Political and Cultural Critique* (2002), and his most recent books, *Kenya’s Quest for Democracy:*



Taming Leviathan and Human Rights NGOs in East Africa: Political and Normative Tensions, will be published this spring. He has written numerous scholarly articles on topics that include international law, human rights and religion. He also has written human rights reports for the United Nations and leading nongovernmental organizations, as well as dozens of articles for such popular publications as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

Mutua has been a visiting professor at Harvard Law School, the University of Iowa College of Law, the University of Puerto Rico School of Law and the United Nations University for Peace in Costa Rica. In addition, he served as chair of the Task Force for the Establishment of a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission appointed under the authority of President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya in 2003.

He was educated at the University of Nairobi, Kenya; the University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania; and at Harvard Law School, where he obtained a doctor of juridical science degree in 1987.