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ABA RULE OF LAW INITIATIVE

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Update

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Liberia's New Magistrates Are Committed to Increasing Public Confidence in the Judiciary



Public confidence in Liberia's courts is about to experience a boost, as more than 60 new magistrates—all trained with the help of the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI)—are slated to take up their posts in the coming months. Most of the new magistrates are appointed to the country's outlying regions where citizen interaction with the judicial system can be limited. Despite public perception, the new magistrates are optimistic in the face of the challenges ahead of them.

"I want to make [local citizens] believe that they can trust the court again," says Associate magistrate Jawollay Reed, who will serve in Bomi County, "I know that all of us ... are ready to be a driving force for change in Liberia."

Most of Liberia's current magistrates have neither formal legal education nor training in how to execute their magisterial duties. This limits public confidence in the courts, and as a result, many citizens prefer to settle disputes through traditional means that are not legally binding. With many sitting magistrates scheduled to retire in the coming years, the Liberian judiciary and other stakeholders saw an opportunity to engage in a long-term overhaul of the magistracy. [Click to read more »](#)

Mentoring Program to Help Young Female Judges Hone Their Skills

On September 28, the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) and the Arab Women's Legal Network (AWLN) launched a mentoring program for newly appointed women judges in Jordan. The program will help enhance the judges' human rights-related knowledge and judicial skills.

ABA ROLI has implemented similar mentoring programs for female law students. The recently launched program builds on previous efforts and [Read more](#)

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Exchange Program Helps Strengthen Ties Between Vietnamese and American Lawyers

From May 22–31, the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) brought four U.S. delegates to participate in a nine-day study tour in Vietnam. A second phase of an exchange program supported by the U.S. Department of State's [Read more](#)

[»»](#)

In The News: Mobile Courts in Congo

ABA ROLI's mobile court program in the Democratic Republic of Congo was covered in several media outlets in November. In "[On Rape's Front Line](#)," the *Times Live* (South Africa) discusses our Open Society Institute for Southern Africa-funded access to justice program and how it combats impunity for rape crimes and offers counseling to rape

STAY CONNECTED



Asset Forfeiture Forum Bares Gaps on Anti-Corruption Enforcement in the Philippines, Inspires Support from Stakeholders

On September 30, the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), the agency charged with recovering former President Ferdinand Marcos's ill-gotten assets, held a forum on good governance and asset forfeiture in the Philippines, marking the culmination of the technical assistance from the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to the commission. [Read more](#) [»»](#)



Morocco Approves Landmark Witness and Whistleblower Protection Law

In early October, the Moroccan parliament passed a landmark law to protect trial witnesses and experts, as well as whistleblowers who report corruption. Working with Morocco's Anti-Corruption Commission, *l'Instance Centrale de Prévention de la Corruption* (ICPC), the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) provided research assistance for this legislation, providing analogous legal codes from other countries in the region, and drafting and amending the initial text to produce the final law. [Read more](#) [»»](#)

Case Monitoring System Strengthens Local Courts' Transparency and Accountability

The Philippine judiciary is beset with major constraints in resources from dispersed and fragmented court facilities, inadequate staff and supplies, and archaic rules and laws that weaken the capacity of local courts to respond to increasing public needs. As a direct



survivors. *The Economist* cites that our mobile gender courts are both effective and a good value for the money in its November 26 piece, "[Cosy club or sword of righteousness?](#)"

consequence, courts are challenged by large case backlogs and caseloads. Putting performance management at the forefront of judicial reform measures, the Supreme Court, in partnership with the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), spearheaded the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system for all first level trial courts in the country. [Read more >>>](#)

Anti-Human Trafficking Training Prepares Activists for the Challenges Ahead

Travelers to Ganja—Azerbaijan's second-largest city and the economic center of the country's rural west—find an ancient cultural center that has grown into a bustling commercial marketplace. Yet, they are rarely aware that Ganja is also a major hub for Azerbaijan's human trafficking networks.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and committed local activists, many of whom are lawyers, are often the only forces fighting the problem.

The ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) trains those activists, advocates, lawyers and NGO representatives who are striving to curb human trafficking. [Read more >>>](#)

Video: Good Morning America Anchor Takes Part in our Tajikistan Program



During a November 7 *Good Morning America* broadcast, ABC News anchor Ron Claiborne shared some highlights from his recent trip to Tajikistan, where he served as an expert for an ABA Rule of Law Initiative program teaching journalism techniques to students in Tajikistan. [Watch video >>>](#)

ABA ROLI Launches a Program in Papua New Guinea

On October 1, the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) launched a new program in Papua New Guinea that will work to prevent violence against women and human rights abuses associated with extractive industries. The human rights-focused program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, will train judges and lawyers and build awareness within local communities of legal services, remedies and resources. [Read more >>>](#)

Central Asian Lawyers Trained in International Human Rights Law

The ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) and the International Commission of Jurists co-sponsored an October 18–23 conference on international human rights law in Geneva. A total of 20 lawyers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan attended the conference, which provided participants with practical training on international human rights instruments and enforcement mechanisms. [Read more >>>](#)



Media Rights Institute of Azerbaijan Publishes a Media Law Manual



On September 24, the Media Rights Institute (MRI) of Azerbaijan published its *Media Rights Manual* in Baku. More than 130 journalists, lawyers—including those representing journalists prosecuted in relation to their participation in the 2011 opposition protests—and representatives of various news agencies, and local and international non-governmental organizations attended the event. [Read more »»](#)

Exchange Program to Allow American and Pacific Women's Rights Advocates to Exchange Experiences, Forge Links

The ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) will partner with the University of the South Pacific (USP) to host an exchange program in 2012 for 24 young legal professionals. Employing a legal empowerment approach, the program will focus on enhancing participants' skills to advocate for and provide legal services to women. While governments in the Pacific recognize the challenges of addressing violence against women, lack of exposure to best practices, a small pool of women's rights advocates and limited understanding of international legal standards among the advocates has hindered progress in protecting and advancing women's rights in the region. With support from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Professional Fellows Program, the program will work with young lawyers from selected Pacific Island nations to create a stronger, better-educated group of advocates empowered to advance the rights of women, particularly those who have experienced violence. [Read more »»](#)

Capacity-Building Program for Bahraini Judges, Lawyers and Prosecutors Launched

In 2011, the ABA Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI) launched a program that continues previous work to build practical and professional skills among Bahraini judges, lawyers and prosecutors. The new program is funded by the U.S. Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative. [Read more »»](#)



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