

Kenya, Uganda law firms shine at Africa Legal Awards

By JAMES KAHONGEH
Special Correspondent

Law firms from East African Community shone in this year's Africa Legal Awards, winning in four out of the 26 categories up for grabs.

Two teams from Kenya and two from Uganda saw off stiff competition from other contestants to bag the coveted prizes in a grand awards gala held on September 6 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The African Legal awards seeks to recognise and honour outstanding players within Africa's legal fraternity who have made exceptional contributions to the industry.

Individual legal practitioners and firms offering legal services in all the 54 countries on the continent are eligible to take part in the contest, provided they meet the participation criteria set out by the organisers.

KTA Advocates of Uganda won the IP team of the year, edging out such legal giants as Bowmans, which has a continental presence, and Webber Wentzel, South Africa's associate of the largest African association of law firms.

Started only 10 years ago, the Kampala-based law firm is known primarily for expertise in intellectual property, media, telecommunications, broadcasting and IT. Its senior partner Justus Karuhaga has previously served as an advisor to President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda.

MCM Africa Law of Kenya clinched the Litigation and Dispute Resolution team of the year.



Keneth Muhangi (left), a partner at KTA Advocates and Ronald Murungi of ENCOT Micro-finance receive their awards during the 2019 Africa Legal Awards at Wonders Club in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Other legal firms in this category included South Africa's Werksmans Attorneys and global firms Clyde and Co. and DLA Piper.

MCM Africa Law was established in Kenya in 1995, with offices in Nairobi and Mombasa.

A member of the ALFA International, this law firm has been recognised by leading legal directories, among them Chambers and Partners, Legal 500 and IFLR1000.



Private equity, dispute resolution, governance and capital markets are some of their areas of specialisation.

Juliet Mazera, an associate partner at MCM Africa Law, was awarded the Private Practising Rising Star.

Ms Mazera's specialties are IP and commercial transactions such as mergers and acquisitions (M&A) project finance, energy and infrastructure projects.

Acting as the legal advisor to Ukwala Supermarket in its business's acquisition

by Choppies was the highlight of her career.

Mazera has also been ranked by IFLR1000 as a "rising star" in the domains of banking and Islamic Finance.

Ronald Murungi of ENCOT Micro-finance Limited in Uganda took home the In-house Rising Star Award.

Murungi is the Head of Legal and Group Company Secretary at ENCOT Foundation Limited and ENCOT Micro-finance Limited.

The Makerere University graduate holds a postgraduate diploma in legal practice from Law Development Centre in Kampala and another diploma in Tax and Revenue Administration the East Africa School of Taxation, Kampala.

These recognitions underscored the strides made by regional law firms in an effort to offer quality and competitive legal services to their clients in various dimensions.

Hosted by Legal Week and Corporate Counsel Association of South Africa (CCASA), the awards brought together the continent's legal community.

The awards feature 26 categories for both private practice law firms and even in-house legal departments.

More than 100 legal entities operating in Africa had been shortlisted for the awards.