

# Daniel R. Mekonnen, LL.D.

Senior Legal Advisor / Research Professor

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## PROFILE

Daniel R. Mekonnen is a Senior Legal Advisor / Research Professor at ILPI, having joined ILPI in August 2013 after working as a research fellow at the School of Law in Queen's University Belfast. Between 2010 and 2012, Mekonnen has provided expert legal advice to Linklaters LLP, one of the world's top ten law firms, headquartered in London. He has a proven track record of academic publishing, with a particular emphasis on human rights, international criminal law and transitional justice. His area of expertise ranges from development cooperation to North-South relations, nonviolent action, democratisation, peace & conflict studies, and international humanitarian law. He has taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses at tertiary levels of education. His primary legal education is from the University of Asmara. He earned his LLM in Human Rights and his LL.D. in Public International Law from the University of Stellenbosch and the University of the Free State, respectively.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### Senior Legal Advisor, International Law and Policy Institute, Oslo

2013  
- Present

- Involved in multi-year projects dealing with human rights, and conflict early warning and prevention in the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia & Eritrea), including on the role of diaspora actors in peacebuilding efforts
- Taught three short courses in the "Angola Human Rights Training Programme": the African Human Rights System, International Refugee Law, and Transitional Justice
- Presented the first-ever shadow report on Eritrea to the AU Committee of Experts on Child Rights
- Developing two academic articles: a) examining the growing "hostility" between Africa and the International Criminal Court; b) a comparative analysis of the use of the term "crimes against humanity" by UN human rights monitoring bodies in three different situations (North Korea, Sudan/Darfur, and Eritrea)

### Research Fellow, School of Law, Queen's University Belfast

Feb 2013  
- June 2013

- Worked in a research project aimed at developing a comparative sociology of lawyering in societies either enduring or emerging from violent conflict in Israel/Palestine, Cambodia, Chile, South Africa and Tunisia.

### Post-Doctoral Fellow, Alexander von Humboldt Foundation & Felsberg Institute for Education and Academic Research, Germany

2012 - 2013

- Worked in a research project examining the failure of the UN peacekeeping mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia; on the African Union and the European Union as comparable models of transnational constitutionalism; and on state and religion relations in Eritrea.

<p><b>Research Fellow, Irish Centre for Human Rights, National University of Ireland, Galway</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worked in a research project dealing with the role of UN Security Council Resolution 1907 in the maintenance of regional peace and security in the Horn of Africa; completed other projects dealing with the role of women in post-conflict transformation in the Horn of Africa; taught a postgraduate course on International Security Law</li> </ul>	2010 - 2012
<p><b>Senior Visiting Researcher, International Victimology Institute, Tilburg University, the Netherlands</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed a research project focusing on pre- and post-migration patterns of victimisation among Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers in the Netherlands (in the context of gross of human rights violations in Eritrea).</li> </ul>	2010 - 2010
<p><b>Post-Doctoral Researcher, Ghent University Human Rights Centre, Belgium</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worked in a research project dealing with the role of indigenous legal tradition in African transitional justice initiatives</li> </ul>	2009 - 2009
<p><b>Visiting Lecturer of International Human Rights Law, An-Najah National University, Israel/Palestine</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lectured an undergraduate course in International Human Rights Law</li> </ul>	2009 - 2009
<p><b>Programme Coordinator of the LLM Programme in Reproductive and Sexual Rights, University of the Free State, South Africa</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administered and managed the academic programme; conducted academic research and published articles on reproductive and sexual rights</li> </ul>	2005 - 2008
<p><b>Judge, Eritrean Ministry of Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Severed as a court clerk, trainee public prosecutor, magistrate and provincial court judge, including Judge of the Zoba Maekel Provincial Court in Asmara. Most important decided case: <i>Ruth Simon v Bana Share Company</i>, Civil Case No. 1564/2001, Zoba Maekel Provincial Court, Judgment of 2 July 2001 (unreported)</li> </ul>	1998 - 2003
<p><b>Adult Education Teacher, Eritrean Ministry of Education, Eritrea</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participated in adult education teaching of Eritrea's ex-freedom fighters who were soon to be demobilised (to civilian life).</li> </ul>	1991 - 1992

## KEY CONSULTANCIES (SELECTED)

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|---|-----------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Expert Legal Opinion on the Validity of a Certain Eritrean 'Marriage,'" Independent Report as a Joint Single Expert of Messrs Alaga &amp; Co Solicitors, and Wedlake Bell LLP</li> </ul>  | 2013      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seven separate and independent legal opinions and a number of explanatory notes written to Linklaters LLP in relation to an international arbitral award involving the Independent Petroleum Group of Kuwait and the Government</li> </ul> | 2010-2012 |

- of Eritrea
- “The Legitimacy of the Government and the de facto State of Emergency in Eritrea” (briefing paper prepared on a pro bono basis to supplement the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea) 2013
  - Provided consultancy work as Country Expert for Eritrea in the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) research project (a collaborative project of the Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg, and the Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame) 2012-2013
  - “The Draft Council Decision on the Establishment of the European External Action Service and its Compliance with the Lisbon Treaty” (legal opinion written for European Solidarity Towards Equal Participation of People (Eurostep)) 2010
  - “Constitutional Regulation of Group Participation, Public Hearing, Public Budgeting and Participation in the Jury System” (a research paper prepared for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) 2009
  - “Transitional Justice and Constitutions” (a research paper prepared for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) 2009
  - “A Review of National Laws and Jurisprudence Related to Sexuality and Sexual Health in Eritrea” (a report compiled for the WHO Project on Sexual Health and Human Rights: Legal and Jurisprudential Research) 2009

## EDUCATION

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- University of the Free State, South Africa** 2008
- LL.D. in Public International Law; title of doctoral thesis “Transitional Justice: Framing a Model for Eritrea”
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- University of Stellenbosch, South Africa** 2003
- LL.M. in Human Rights; title of thesis: “The Right to Administrative Redress in Eritrea”
- 
- University of Asmara, Eritrea** 1998
- LL.B.
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- University of Asmara, Eritrea** 1995
- Diploma in Law

## LANGUAGES

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- **Tigrinya** — Fluent (mother tongue)
  - **English, Amharic** — Fluent

## PUBLICATIONS (SELECTED)

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- Tronvoll, K & **Mekonnen, D** 2014, The African Garrison State: Human Rights and Political Development in Eritrea, James Currey (forthcoming).
- **Mekonnen, D** & Tesfagiorgis, M (eds) 2014, The Horn of Africa at the Brink of the Twenty-First Century: Coping with Fragmentation, Isolation and Marginalization in a Globalizing Environment, FIBW, Felsberg, Germany.
- Mekonnen, D 2009, Transitional Justice: Framing a Model for Eritrea, VDM Publishing, Saarbrücken.
- Reisen MV & **Mekonnen, D** 2014, “EU Development Cooperation: The Contours of Global and National Engagement” in *Human Rights and Development in the new Millennium: Towards a Theory of Change*, eds P Gready & W Vandenhole, Routledge, New York & London, pp. 131-148.
- Hellestveit, C & **Mekonnen, D** 2014, “Nuclear Weapon Free Zones” in *Nuclear Weapons under International Law*, eds G Nystuen, S Casey-Maslen, & AG Bersagel, Cambridge University Press (forthcoming).
- Mekonnen, D 2013, “Contested Versions of Collective Memory in Post-Independence Eritrea”, *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp.151-170.
- **Mekonnen, D** & Reisen, MV 2012, “The EU Lisbon Treaty and EU Development Cooperation: Considerations for a Revised EU Strategy on Development Cooperation in Eritrea”, *Law and Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, vol. 45, no. 3, pp. 324–344.
- Weldehaimanot, SM & **Mekonnen, D** 2012, “Favourable Awards to Trans-Boundary Indigenous Peoples”, *Australian Indigenous Law Review*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 60-76.
- Mekonnen, D 2011, “Mandatory Premarital HIV-Testing as a Challenge to Human Rights: A Case Study of Eritrea”, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Rights Law*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 1–23.
- Mekonnen, D 2010, “Indigenous Legal Tradition as a Supplement to African Transitional Justice Initiatives”, *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 101–123.
- **Mekonnen, D** & Pretorius, L 2008, “Prosecuting the Main Perpetrators of International Crimes in Eritrea: Possibilities under International Law”, *Journal for Juridical Science*, vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 76–108.
- Mekonnen, D 2007, “The Abolition of Female Circumcision in Eritrea: Inadequacies of New Legislation”, *African Human Rights Law Journal*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 389–411.
- Mekonnen, D 2006, “The Reply of the Eritrean Government to ACHPR’s Landmark Ruling on Eritrea: A Critical Appraisal”, *Journal for Juridical Science*, vol. 31, no. 2 pp. 26–56.
- Mekonnen, D 2006, *Bideho Antsar Atehasasebana (Challenging Our Perceptions)*, co-editor of a Tigrinya Educational Manual on Nonviolent Struggle, EMDHR, Pretoria.
- Mekonnen, Daniel 2006, A Tigrinya translation of Gene Sharp’s From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation, Albert Einstein Institution, Boston.

## ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE OF RELEVANCE

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- Member of the International Editorial Board of Africa Conflict and Peacebuilding Review (ACPR) (2009 - Present)
- Assistant Editor of the Journal for Juridical Science, South Africa (2006 - 2008)
- Assistant Editor (on consultancy) of the International Journal of Transitional Justice, South Africa (2006 - 2008)
- Membership in professional associations: International Criminal Bar (ICB); International Society of Criminal Law (ISCL); International Association of Constitutional Law (IACL); African Network of Constitutional Lawyers (ANCL); Eritrean Law Society (ELS)