



ICRC

# IHL Competitions in Africa, 2000 – 2020: English-speaking National Competitions and the All-Africa IHL Competition, Arusha, Tanzania Alumni Survey

Results

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## 1. BACKGROUND

The All Africa IHL Competition is an undergraduate university level international humanitarian law (IHL) competition organized and run by the ICRC Nairobi Delegation. It has been run 19 times, on an annual basis since the year 2000. It was cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19. The 20<sup>th</sup> edition will take place in November 2021.

The All Africa IHL Competition is usually hosted in Arusha, Tanzania and is supported by regional and national interlocutors on IHL and international human rights law (IHRL) who serve as judges and trainers. This includes the United Nations Residual Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals – Arusha Branch; the African Court of Human Rights; the High Court of Tanzania and the East Africa Court of Justice. In 2021, due to COVID-19 for the first time it will be hosted for the first time in Naivasha, Kenya.

The All Africa IHL Competition is conducted in English and attracts teams from across Africa. Most of the participating teams are sponsored to participate in the competition after winning national IHL competitions. Participating countries include Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. The pedagogical approach of competition is modelled on the “Jean Pictet competition” whereby students participate in interactive scenarios that are designed for the students to use international humanitarian law in a variety of different situations. In addition, students benefit from specific training and lectures on each day of the competition.

In addition, the ICRC hosts many IHL competitions at national and sub-regional levels across Africa including national IHL mooting competitions and essay competitions.



1: 2010 Edition

## 2. METHODOLOGY

In 2020, past participants of both national IHL competitions and the All Africa moot were invited to participate in the ICRC’s *IHL Competitions in Africa, 2000 – 2020: English-speaking National Competitions and the All-Africa IHL Competition, Arusha, Tanzania Alumni Survey*. The survey was prepared and distributed using Survey Monkey. Invitations were sent to surveyed participants via contact lists maintained by ICRC delegations and the survey was also promoted on social media. 217 surveyed participants of ICRC IHL competitions completed the surveys. From those participants, 109 participated in the All Africa IHL Competition.

Some respondents skipped certain questions. As such, the data below reflects the answers received for each question.

## 3. KEY FINDINGS

### Background of surveyed participants

#### 3.1 Sex

- Male: 102
- Female: 79

### 3.2 Age

18-25 years old: 88  
26-35 years old: 92  
36-45 years old: 1  
46 years old and above: 0

### 3.3 Nationality:

Ethiopia: 10  
Kenya: 71  
Malawi: 1  
Nigeria: 14  
Rwanda: 5  
South Africa: 2  
South Sudan: 2  
Sudan: 1  
Tanzania: 47  
Uganda: 14  
Zambia: 1  
Zimbabwe: 12

### 3.4 Major field of study of surveyed participants:

International relations: 2  
Political science: 0  
International law: 40  
International Humanitarian Law: 106  
International Human Rights Law: 7  
International Criminal Law: 6  
Security / military studies: 1  
Other: 45

## Activities of surveyed participants

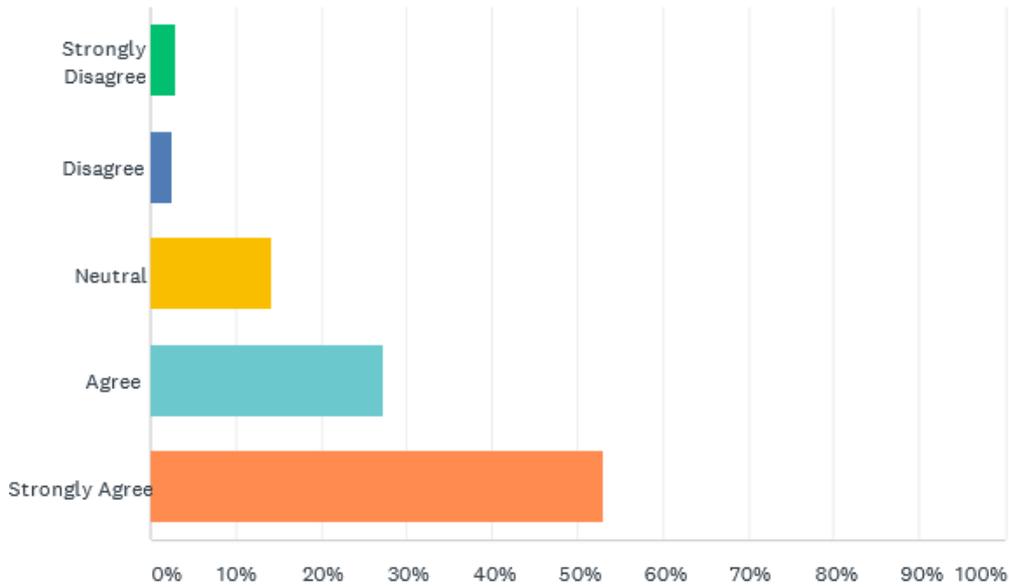
### 3.5 Did surveyed participants consider their participation in the ICRC's IHL Competitions influenced their studies thereafter:

Strongly Disagree: 6  
Disagree: 5  
Neutral: 29  
Agree: 55  
Strongly Agree: 108



2: 2013 Edition

Answered: 203 Skipped: 14



### 3.6 Surveyed participants' current field of action:

- Humanitarian action: 7
- International law: 25
- Domestic law: 27
- Training / Education / Academia: 46
- Military / Security sector: 4
- Government sector: 9
- NGOs / International organizations: 30
- Private sector: 40
- Other: 17

### 3.7 Surveyed participants current employment:

- Lecturer / Professor: 13
- Legal Practitioner: 73
- Humanitarian Practitioner: 5
- Government Employee: 5
- Armed Forces or Police: 1
- Private Employee: 14
- Adviser / Consultant: 8
- Project Manager: 2
- Manager: 3
- Other\*: 69



3: 2014 Edition

\*Of those who marked “other” and provided supplementary information, 42 indicated they are students and 13 that they are interns or conducting pupillage at a law firm.

3.8 Number of surveyed participants who consider their current work involves IHL or a related field (such as Human Rights Law, International Criminal Law, etc: 110 (56%).

3.9 Number of surveyed participants who consider that in past positions they have worked on IHL or similar topics: 92 (48%).

3.10 The frequency of surveyed participants involvement (past or present) in activities or dealt with issues related to the promotion, implementation and integration of IHL and / or related fields:

Never: 20  
Rarely: 48  
Sometimes: 75  
Usually: 32  
Frequently: 19

3.11 The context of past involvement in IHL activities:

Government: 14  
Armed Forces / Police Forces: 3  
National / International Courts: 11  
National IHL Committees: 2  
ICRC, IFRC or Red Cross / Crescent Societies: 21  
International Organisations / NGOs: 37  
Academic Institutions: 110  
Other: 17

3.12 The types of past activities of surveyed participants in IHL:

Disseminating the law (e.g. teaching): 103  
Proposing / Supporting ratification or accession to treaties: 11  
Proposing / Supporting the drafting / adoption of relevant legislation: 15  
Prosecuting / Defending / Judging violations of the law (e.g. war crimes): 14  
Monitoring compliance with the law: 20  
Analyzing and interpreting the law (e.g. articles, blogs, etc): 62  
Other (please specify): 26

3.13 The frequency of surveyed participants' reaching out to decision-makers (community leaders, governments, military, etc) about IHL, its implementation and / or humanitarian issues:

Never: 74  
Rarely: 52  
Sometimes: 35  
Usually: 15  
Frequently: 9

3.14 The frequency of surveyed participants' providing support to activities of the ICRC, the IFRC and / or Red Cross / Crescent Societies?

Never: 77  
 Rarely: 52  
 Sometimes: 35  
 Usually: 15  
 Frequently: 9

## Surveyed participants appreciation of the moot/s

3.15 Number of surveyed participants who contributed to subsequent IHL Competitions (e.g. as a participant, coach or a jury member): 84 (41%).

3.16 Surveyed participants' likeliness to recommend participation in the ICRC's IHL Competitions to eligible students?

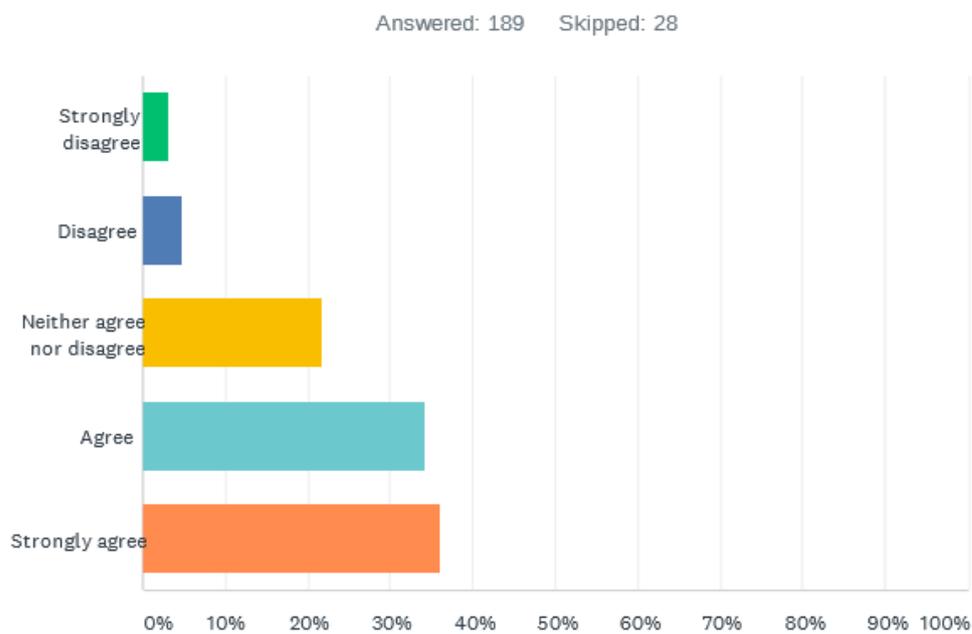
Very likely: 173  
 Likely: 26  
 Unlikely: 1  
 Very unlikely: 9

3.17 Surveyed participants who consider that participation in the IHL Competition(s) influenced their career path?

Strongly disagree: 6  
 Disagree: 9  
 Neither agree nor disagree: 41  
 Agree: 65  
 Strongly agree: 68



4: 2015 Edition



# Networking

3.18 Surveyed participants who consider that the ICRC’s IHL Competition alumni network is / has been useful to their work / career?

- Strongly disagree: 4
- Disagree: 16
- Neither agree nor disagree: 40
- Agree: 78
- Strongly agree: 40



5: 2017 Edition

3.19 How often are surveyed participants in contact with other participants?

- Never: 5
- Rarely: 14
- Sometimes: 57
- Usually: 58
- Frequently: 53

3.20 With whom are surveyed participants in contact?

- Alumni from the year of their participation: 177
- Alumni from other editions of the competition: 59
- Lecturers, tutors and humanitarian practitioners linked to the competition: 80

3.21 Through what means of communication are surveyed participants in contact with IHL Competition alumni?

- Various editions of the National and All-Africa IHL Competitions: 21
- Meetings and calls: 66
- Email: 58
- Facebook group: 45
- LinkedIn group: 21
- Other: 104



6: 2019 Edition

Of those who indicated “other”, 83 indicated they use Whatsapp.

3.22 What is the aim of surveyed participants’ interactions with IHL Competition alumni?

- Leisure / Friendship / Personal matters: 130
- Employment opportunities: 69
- Support to professional assignments: 74
- Legal / Humanitarian issues: 102
- Other (please specify): 16

3.23 155 surveyed participants (78% of respondents) indicated that “yes” the ICRC’s IHL Competitions alumni network should be further developed / improved.

Over 140 participants provided suggestions. Suggestions included:

- The establishment of alumni groups; youth chapters or task forces
  - Regional or country base
  - Encouragement of interaction of alumni between the different years



**It would be great if we could connect with all the alumni from the previous years across Africa and listen from them and how the competition shaped them...”**

- “The alumni team can conduct joint events which can be supported by the ICRC, where possible”
- Regular meetings of alumni groups; seminars, conferences, festivals, networking cocktail or webinars for surveyed participants
  - “organizing one-on-one networking forums for alumni”
- Provide opportunities for “alumni to promote and participate in activities geared towards the grown and promotion of IHL in their countries and beyond”
  - “utilize the soft spot they have for ICRC to engage Alumni in programs of the ICRC”
  - “opportunities for participants to speak at events, contribute to national IHL journals, and judging in competitions”
- The possibility of former participants participating as coaches or jury, or to develop the problem question
- Expanding the competition time
  - “so as to educate more on International Humanitarian Law as well as humanitarian issues”
  - “at the end of the competition there could be a talk on the different kinds of IHL related careers”
  - “During the competitions, the environment is mostly stiff with the aim to win and so participants don’t always get time to bond”
- The expansion of different social media to maintain contact. E.g. establishment of a Whatsapp group, Facebook page, LinkedIn group, Telegram group, Youtube channel
  - “This request to participate in this survey is the first communication I’ve received from the ICRC’s IHL Competitions alumni network”
  - “by providing a blog especially for regional ihl matters”

- “The ICRC can develop a magazine featuring the alumni team and what they are doing”
- Creating a special app



**Alumni could be asked to volunteer in their respective countries to complete at least one project related to implementation or dissemination of IHL every year ...”**

- Notification of opportunities such as scholarships and employment opportunities
- Offering mentorships, internships, jobs, exchange programs
  - Mentorship programmes “aimed at guiding new participants with relatively bad research skills with a sole purpose of helping such new participants improve their reading, research and writing skills”

## 4. DISCUSSION

### The contribution of the competition to academic study of IHL

In each of the participating countries of the All Africa IHL Competition, IHL is offered at an undergraduate level as part of a compulsory international law subject; as a compulsory standalone law subject; or as an elective. In addition, some universities require an undergraduate dissertation, which serves as an additional avenue for international humanitarian law study. The competition is a useful complement to this. 163 participants (80% of respondents) either agreed or strongly agreed that the competition influenced their studies thereafter. 13 of the surveyed participants are now lecturers or professors.

### Participants' subsequent activities

The professional activities of the surveyed participants are diverse, with 46 indicating they are working in training /education /academia; 40 in the private sector; 30 for NGOs / international organisations; 25 in international law; 27 in domestic law; 9 in government and 4 in the military / security sector (see 3.7 above).

A high number of surveyed participants indicate that they currently or in the past have worked on IHL related files: 56% and 46% respectively. 26% of respondents indicate that they “usually” or “frequently” have engaged in activities or dealt with issues related to the promotion, implementation and integration of IHL and / or related fields.

The majority of participants who have been engaged in IHL indicated that their participation was through academic institutions (64%). Other contexts for their engagement include international

organisations /NGOs (22%), the Movement (12%), government (8%), national/international courts (6%) the armed forces (2%) and national IHL committees (1%). This breakdown is likely impacted by the fact that most respondents are under the age of 35 and therefore early/mid-career.

### Participants' appreciation of the moot/s

The appreciation of the moot/s by surveyed participants is high. 95% of surveyed participants were likely or very likely to recommend participating in the ICRC's IHL competitions to other eligible students (12% and 83% respectively). Further 41% of surveyed participants contributed to subsequent IHL Competitions (e.g. as a participant, coach or a jury member). 70% of surveyed participants indicated that they "agree" or "strongly agree" that the IHL competitions influenced their career path.

### Participants desire for greater post-competition engagement

78% of surveyed participants indicated that they wanted to see the alumni network further developed / improved, with almost 150 suggestions made on how this can be done.

There are various methods that alumni stay connected at both national and regional levels including Whatsapp groups maintained for specific editions of competitions and the [ICRC All Africa IHL Facebook page](#). Notwithstanding the existence of these, some participants indicated their desire to be connected via Facebook or Whatsapp, which suggests that some participants are not currently connected via these media.

The image shows a registration form for the ICRC Law & Policy Newsletter. At the top is the ICRC logo. The title is "Sign up for the Law & Policy NEWSLETTER". The form has several input fields: "First Name" with "Henry", "Last Name" with "Dunant", "Email Address" with "henry.dunant@email.com", and "Organization" with "My Organization". There is a "Country/region" dropdown menu with the placeholder "Enter the name of your country". Below these are radio buttons for "English" (checked) and "Français". A checkbox "I agree to receive Law & Policy emails from the ICRC" is also present. At the bottom, there is a "SUBSCRIBE" button and a small disclaimer: "ICRC needs the contact information you provide to us to contact you about our products and services. You may unsubscribe from these communications at any time. For information on how to unsubscribe, as well as our privacy practices and commitment to protecting your privacy, please review our Privacy Policy."

Greater promotion of these platforms should be undertaken to enable all those who want to connect to connect. In addition, it is recommended that a LinkedIn group be established for alumni. This is likely to be popular with past participants, as a means of promoting their participation on their professional profiles, as well as an additional means to share information and events.

Similarly, promotion can be undertaken of other opportunities to engage that already exist. For example, participants can be encouraged to subscribe to the [Law and Policy newsletter](#), which provides an excellent summary of major IHL developments.

Similarly, greater promotion among alumni should be made for other IHL discussion platforms including those hosted by other organisations, IHL clinics and universities. For example, suggestions from past alumni included the establishment of a blog or magazine. There are already existing IHL blogs in the region that could provide a useful platform for students to go further, such as the [Addis Ababa](#)

[University IHL Clinic blog](#).

Many participants also suggested the establishment of alumni groups, including for establishing meetings or seminars. This is an excellent idea and could provide an easy focal point for the ICRC and other organisations or initiatives to connect easily with alumni. Further considerations are required as to how such alumni groups are organised.

Some participants suggested inviting surveyed participants to support the competitions as judges or coaches, as is the approach of the Jean Pictet competition. The benefits of this approach are obvious, as it not only provides support for the student participants, but also encourages the maturation of our relationship with middle-level IHL practitioners, providing a further space for engagement and networking.

Unfortunately, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2021 and likely for 2022, measures have been taken to reduce the number of supporting personnel such as judges in the All Africa IHL competition. As such, this suggestion cannot be implemented in the immediate years. On the anticipation of the end or “normalising” of the pandemic, this option should be explored further.

## 5. CONCLUSION

It is encouraging to note that surveyed participants maintain an affinity for the competition and want to become further connected. The call for an improved alumni network is strong and requires attention in 2022, and beyond. Surveyed participants remain engaged in IHL issues, including professionally, and can contribute to the broader discussions on IHL implementation in their respective countries.