

Rhodes University will proudly award Professor Sylvia Tamale the honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD) for her dedicated human rights activism and advocacy for marginalised groups, including women, sex workers and the LGBTQIA+ community. Prof Tamale, a scholar-activist, has made impactful contributions to tackling issues of sexuality, gender discrimination through the combined feminist, decolonial, afro-centric lenses. Her work merges political activism with academic rigour, challenging discrimination and injustices in law and society.

Prof Tamale is a beacon of hope and a pivotal figure in the fight for equality and human rights in Uganda and beyond. Born and raised in Uganda, Tamale embarked on her academic journey at Makerere University, where she obtained her Bachelor of Laws with honours. Her passion for justice led her to further her studies at Harvard Law School for her Master of Laws and at the University of Minnesota, where she earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology and Feminist Studies in 1997.

She has served as a visiting professor at the African Gender Institute of the University of Cape Town, University of Zimbabwe, Oxford University, and a visiting scholar at the University of Wisconsin. In 2004, Prof Tamale made history as the first woman Dean of the Faculty of Law at Makerere University, a role she held with distinction until 2008. Her tenure as Dean was marked by fearless advocacy, including her proposal in 2003 to include gay men and lesbians in the definition of "minority", a stance that drew condemnation from Ugandan conservatives. As dean, she also established the Law, Gender and Sexuality Research Centre at the Faculty of Law.

Her contributions to academia and human rights have not gone unnoticed. Prof Tamale's accolades include a Fulbright-MacArthur Scholarship from 1993 to 1997 and the University of Minnesota Award for International Distinguished Leadership in 2003. In 2004, she received the Akina Mama wa Afrika Award and was celebrated by several women's organizations in Uganda for her unwavering commitment to human rights activism.

In 2018, she chaired a committee at Makerere University to investigate the pervasive culture of sexual harassment, leading to a comprehensive report that culminated in the amendment of the University Policy against Sexual Harassment. She has also been a vocal advocate for the traditional practice

of labia stretching, challenging comparisons to female genital mutilation and emphasizing cultural understanding.

A global feminist, Prof Tamale's research spans gender and sexuality, women in politics, and feminist jurisprudence. She believes in the power of transdisciplinary education to dismantle patriarchal structures and advocates for inclusivity within feminism, emphasizing that patriarchy harms everyone and recognising the diversity of women's experiences. Despite facing personal attacks, including being named the "Worst Woman of the Year" by a conservative bloc in Uganda, Tamale wears these criticisms as a badge of honour, demonstrating her resilience and commitment to speaking out against injustice.

In 2022 Prof Tamale's book, *Decolonization and Afro-Feminism* (2020) won the Feminist Theory and Gender Section (FTGS) Book Prize. Her other publications include, *When Hens Begin To Crow: Gender and Parliamentary Politics in Uganda*, *African Sexualities: A Reader* (ed.) – all of which reflect her deep engagement with issues of gender, sexuality, and human rights. Tamale's work in the African Feminist Forum and as an Advisory Board Member for the Open Society Foundations further illustrates her commitment to advancing women's rights and fostering inclusive democracies globally.

Married to Joe Oloka-Onyango, a professor of law at Makerere University, Tamale's personal life is intertwined with her professional pursuits, both committed to the cause of justice and equality. As she approaches retirement, her legacy as a scholar, activist, and advocate for the marginalised remains a towering inspiration for future generations committed to making the world a more equitable and just place.

Professor Tamale will receive her honorary doctorate on 03 April 2024 during the 14:30 Rhodes University graduation ceremony.