



**Background on
HON. NJOKI NDUNGU
2006 United Nations in Kenya
Person of the Year**



Hon. Njoki Ndungu is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya. She holds a post graduate law degree, (LL.M), in Human Rights and Civil Liberties. She has worked as State Counsel in the office of the Attorney-General, where she gained considerable knowledge of the system of government and civil service in Kenya. From Government Service, Ms. Ndungu moved to the Public Law Institute where she headed the Public Interest Litigation section before moving to the UNHCR Kenya Office as the National Protection Officer and the Gender Focal Point.

Currently, Hon. Njoki Ndungu is a nominated Member of the 9th Parliament in the National Assembly of Kenya. She is also a member of the Pan-African Parliament. She sits on several Parliamentary Committees including the Standing Committee on Defence and Foreign Affairs, the Standing Committee on Administration of Justice and Legal Affairs and the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Constitution.

Hon. Ndungu's contributions

Since 1995, Hon. Ndungu has fought for the rights of women and girls. She has found cases of violence, particularly gender violence, are neither supported nor well understood generally but especially by policy makers and therefore has consistently tried to make them understood. She has worked with the civil society in Gender concerns and has sensitized judicial officers, civil society, and religious leaders on new approaches towards reducing incidences of sexual violence.

Before being nominated as a member of parliament in 2003, Hon. Ndungu worked as a political analyst on human rights and governance for the OAU. Her responsibilities included the development of project priorities for human rights and strategies for engagement with civil society based on rights based approach to programming. It also included development of advocacy and lobbying tools for the draft of Additional Protocol on Women's Rights to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights.

Due to the urgent need to have a law on sexual violence and being a lawyer of no mean repute, she drafted the Sexual Offences Bill, which she presented to parliament as a private members bill. The main reason for pushing for this bill was because of the increasing cases of sexual violence in Kenya. According to Hon. Ndungu, "*Sexual violence is on the rise in Kenya due to the rapid moral degeneration of society and there is an urgent need to address it*". She is the chief architect of the Sexual Offences Act 2006.

In spite of opposition by male parliamentarians and others outside parliament, she was able to move the Sexual Offences Bill, which was passed into law. Her determination to

make sure the bill was passed saw her persuade individuals, the religious leaders, her fellow women and male parliamentarians and the general public to support the bill.

During the debate on the sexual offences bill in parliament, Hon. Ndungu brought the sexual violence issues to the attention of Kenyans and internationally. Without giving up, she revised the bill according to the wishes of many Kenyans including parliamentarians and that is why the Sexual Offences Act, although far from perfect, at least is in the statute books.

Hon. Ndungu's greatest contribution to Kenya is to highlight the issues surrounding sexual violence. One of the saddest recent cases is the incident at Kangubiri Girls in Nyeri where at least 10 girls were raped. Hon. Ndungu has on several occasions mobilized fellow women parliamentarians and the civil society to demand protection against sexual violence for girls, boys and women. Sexual violence is also of great concern not only to the UN, but also nationally.

Hon. Ndungu is being nominated for the following reasons:

- Her determination to ensure gender equity in Kenya
- Her single handedness in drafting the sexual offences bill
- Her role in persuading parliamentarians especially male parliamentarians to pass the bill
- Her advocacy activities together with the civil society in Kenya in addressing gender concerns

Hon Ndungu is arguably the single most important mover of the Sexual Offences Bill which will have far reaching consequences on gender relations in Kenya for a long time. In selecting Hon: Ndungu as the UN Person of the Year, the UN will recognize her consistent and fruitful endeavors to end sexual violence.