

Young law alumna helps restore justice abroad

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Kirsten Lavery, third from left, a 2013 graduate of Tulane Law School, explains South Sudan's peace agreement to village leaders during a workshop aimed at advancing the nation's recovery from civil war. More than 70 chiefs from across South Sudan attended the workshop in Entebbe, Uganda. (Photo from Kirsten Lavery)

Kirsten Lavery started [Tulane Law School](#) aiming for a public international legal career. But she didn't realize how far that path would lead her. A 2013 graduate, she's counsel for the Public International Law & Policy Group, which provides legal aid to promote peace and political development in war-torn and post-conflict countries.

Lavery manages the organization's programs that support peacemaking in the Republic of South Sudan, where a civil war ended in August 2015 with a peace agreement. She recently organized a workshop to educate village leaders on the agreement's justice and reparations provisions so they can explain the changes to their communities. More than 70 chiefs from across South Sudan attended the workshop in Entebbe, Uganda.

“The peace agreement created lots of obligations related to transitional justice, which is the way a society heals after war,” Lavery says.

She also has worked to improve South Sudan’s documentation of human rights violations, such as killings, rapes and village burnings, so the government can prosecute the right people.

Having two brothers adopted from Romania and Russia, Lavery grew up with strong awareness of global issues, so as a law student, she sought diverse opportunities to develop her expertise. She started in the class of 2012 but took a semester off to intern with the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime in Vienna. She spent another semester with the United Nations’ New York branch.

Between internships, she completed an exchange program in Amsterdam, which allowed her to live in The Hague. She worked for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon while continuing law classes.

Lavery practiced with Davis Polk & Wardwell in New York for two years, focusing on international investigations and white-collar crime, before joining her current organization.

“I’m looking forward to continuing to develop my knowledge and skills in this field,” she says.

Ali Mansfield is Tulane Law School’s communications and marketing coordinator.

“I think the work is important and hope it’s making a difference in South Sudan as well as our other locations.”

Kirsten Lavery, Tulane Law School class of 2013