IKENNA CHARLES OKPALAEZE

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**EDUCATION**

* **BL**, [Nigerian Law School,](https://www.nigerianlawschool.edu.ng/) Bwari, Garki, Abuja, Nigeria January 2023 – November 2023 Top 5% of 5308 Bar aspirants **First Class Honours**
* **LLB** [Nnamdi Azikiwe University,](https://unizik.edu.ng/) Awka, Nigeria November 2016 – December 2021 Thesis: *“Protecting the Rights of Migrants in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospect”*

Major GPA: 5.0/5.0 Final Cumulative GPA: 4.64/5.0 (93%) **First Class Honours** Top 1% of 268 students

# FURTHER EDUCATION

* University Catholique de Louvain, **edX** 2022

International Law [[view]](https://courses.edx.org/certificates/73d0f6d69ce146bc8742a9560092d2c0)

# HONORS AND AWARDS

* Nigerian Law School Director-General’s Prize for First Class Student 2024
* 3rd Best Graduating Student in Law, Nnamdi Azikiwe University 2022
* Best Graduating Student, Department of International Law and Jurisprudence 2022
* Best Graduating Student, Department of Public and Private Law 2022
* 2nd Best Graduating Student, Department of Commercial and Property Law 2022
* Excellent Tutor Award: Issued by CLASFON, Faculty of Law, Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU) 2022
* Excellent Leadership Award: Issued by Holy Family Youth Village 2022
* Meritorious Service Award: Issued by the Students’ Union Government, NAU 2021
* Best graduating Student in Arts Class, Tansi International College 2015
* Top Speaker Award: Issued by the Debating Society, Tansi International College 2014

# PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP & AFFILIATIONS

* Sports and Entertainment Lawyers Association of Nigeria 2024
* Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) 2024
* Campaign Against Crime Initiative (CACI) 2021

# LEGAL WORK EXPERIENCE

* **OLANIWUN AJAYI LP – LAGOS, NIGERIA** March 2024 – Present

A Tier 1 & Leading Commercial Law Firm in Nigeria (Award-winning African Law Firm & West African Law Firm of the Year 2025). Offices in Nigeria, London and OHADA region).

**Project Finance, Oil and Gas.**

* Advised Nigeria National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) in relation to the divestment of its 30% participating interest in Oil Mining Lease (OML) 18 together with associated infrastructure.
* Advised NNPCL on the $3.3 billion crude oil pre-payment loan from the African Export-Import (AFREXIM) Bank.
* Advised ANOH Gas Processing Company Ltd in relation to the accordion of the USD650 million debt and equity financing of the construction of the Assa/Ohaji South 300mmscf gas processing plant.
* Advised Seplat energies on obtaining a secured revolving credit facility of up to $300,000,000.
* Advised R28 Limited on securing up to N82,000,000,000 equity finance term loan to part-finance its share purchase transaction.
* Advised Eroton on the legal implications of terminating its offtake agreement with Shell.
* Reviewed the prospectus of Seplat Energy Plc from a Nigerian law perspective, for re-admission of the shares to the international commercial companies secondary listing segment of the official list and to trading on the main market of the London Stock Exchange.

**Technology, Innovation and Fintech**

* Advised and supported Flutterwave with respect to its operations, strategic partnerships, and launch of several payment services products.
* Advised and supported Redtech on its partnership with its service provider, and the purchase and licensing of software.
* Advised TFH on the laws and regulations applicable to the proposed deployment of airdrops to non-custodial wallets in Nigeria.
* Advised WEMA bank on the deployment of two digital solutions through an SPV under its HoldCo structure.
* Advised Assistivteq on standard corporate governance practice, shareholding structure and compensation package for the company promoters.

**Legal Research & Drafting**

* Prepared the condition precedent documents of the NNPCL $3.3 billion crude oil pre-payment loan from the African Export-Import (AFREXIM) Bank through Project Gazelle SPV.
* Drafted a demand letter to 3T Macsotech Nigeria limited for the removal of crane from Anoh Gas Processing Company Limited’s project site.
* Drafted Service Level Agreement, Merchant Service Agreement, Software Development Agreement for Flutterwave, Strata, Redtech Limited, etc.
* Prepared thought leadership pieces on data protection, e-mobility, Nigerian cybersecurity regulations, Payment Solutions Service Providers, International Money Transfer Operators, Payment Terminal Service Providers, security regulation of fintechs in Nigeria.
* Conducted a comprehensive review of the Nigeria Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) and Petroleum Industry Act.
* Developed fee quotes, engagement letters, proposals and reports for clients and for publication on the Firm’s media accounts.

**Regulatory Interface**

* Facilitated the filing of Annual Returns and amendment of the memorandum and articles of association of OneKard Limited with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC).
* Facilitated the stamping of transaction documents of the R28 Limited equity finance term loan at the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS).
* Assisted OneKard Limited in obtaining a Payment Service Solution Providers (PSSP) License from the Central Bank of Nigeria.

**Dispute Resolution & Maritime**

* Represented Chappal Energies Mauritius in an arbitration proceeding against Chappal Pet. Dev. Co. ltd and others
* Prepared court processes in relation to the arrest of a vessel for debt recovery.
* Drafted a mutual settlement agreement for amicable employee lay-off following an acquisition of the employer company.

# SPORTS WORK EXPERIENCE

* **GODSWILL AKPABIO INTERNATIONAL STADIUM – UYO, NIGERIA** June 2022 – August 2022

**Facilities & Events Assistant**

* Assisted in daily operations of the stadium including monitoring access control, equipment inventory checks, setting up group training equipment and managing participant attendance.
* Contributed to the organization and logistics of local and regional football matches, athletics competitions, and community events hosted in the stadium (supported operations such as ticketing, seating arrangements, and crowd management, etc.).
* Supported warm-up sessions for athletes during community sports days and fitness programs hosted at the stadium.
* Engaged with visitors and VIPs, provided event information, resolved on-the-spot queries and assisted with registration and accreditation of athletes, officials, and media representatives.
* **NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL CLUB (UNIZIK FC) – ANAMBRA, NIGERIA** April 2018 – June 2021

**Team Operations & Events Assistant**

* Assisted in coordinating the use of university training grounds and matchday facilities.
* Participated in organizing inter-university and league fixtures, and assisted with scheduling, matchday logistics, and liaison with referees and officials.
* Supported warm-up drills, conditioning sessions, and recovery routines under the guidance of coaching staff.
* Acted as a liaison between coaching staff and student-athletes to address welfare needs and provide general support.
* **BETACURE GYM AND FITNESS LIMITED – LAGOS, NIGERIA** June 2017 – August 2017

**Fitness & Member Services Assistant**

* Handled member check-ins, conducted orientation sessions for new members, and explained membership benefits and class schedules.
* Provided basic support such as spotting, hydration, and documenting session outcomes.
* Handled inquiries, resolved complaints, and improved overall customer satisfaction experience.

# VOLUNTEERING

* **YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS INITIATIVES, YALI NETWORK**  January 2024 – Present

**Member**

* Mobilized volunteers for environmental projects like stadium clean-up drives, recycling initiatives, and green energy advocacy in sports facilities.
* Coordinated awareness campaigns on mental health, drug abuse prevention, or healthy living through fitness activities.
* Organized community football tournaments and fitness programs that promote teamwork, leadership, and peacebuilding.
* Advocated for stronger youth involvement in governance by contributing to YALI policy dialogues.
* **YOUTH ADVOCATES FOR PEACE JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT NETWORK***(Not-for-profit)*April 2019 – Present

**Public Relations Officer**

* Headed campaigns on the decongestion of prisons in Nigeria.
* Advocated for fast-tracking of awaiting trials.
* Participated in several human rights interventions and movements.
* Attracted scholarships for indigent students in universities as part of the organization’s empowerment goal.
* Ran a sensitization campaign against suicide and illicit drug abuse.
* Organized workshops and programs on voter education and advocated for participatory and inclusive democracy.
* Campaigned against electoral violence during the 2023 Nigerian general elections.
* **SUPPORT TEACHER, COMMUNITY SECONDARY SCHOOL UMUAWULU** April 2015 – March 2016

**N-Power Volunteer (**The Federal Government of Nigeria Education Volunteer Program)

* Worked as a part-time high school teacher in a marginalized community to improve primary education delivery in Nigeria.
* Taught, facilitated, counseled, and implemented curriculum of art education studies.

# RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

* **Okpalaeze, I.C.,** (2024), **“Evaluating the Bankability of Infrastructure Projects in Nigeria: Implications for Access to Project Finance,”** *Academia* (Link)
* **Okpalaeze, I.C.,** (2024), **“Case Review of the Data Protection Right to Be Forgotten,”** *Academia* (Link)
* **Okpalaeze, I.C.,** (2024), **“The Role of International Agreements and Cooperation in Establishing an Effective Legal Framework for Carbon Capture and Trading in Africa,”** *Academia* ([Link](https://www.academia.edu/117114945/THE_ROLE_OF_INTERNATIONAL_AGREEMENTS_AND_COOPERATION_IN_ESTABLISHIN%20G_AN_EFFECTIVE_LEGAL_FRAMEWORK_FOR_CARBON_CAPTURE_AND_TRADING_IN_AFRICA?source=swp_share))
* **Okpalaeze, I.C.,** & Nwotite, A., (2022), **“Protecting the Rights of Migrants in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospect,”** *African Journal of Law and Human Rights (AJLHR)*, 6(1), pp. 141-151 ([Link](https://heinonline.org/hol-cgi-%20bin/get_pdf.cgi?handle=hein.journals/anjllwa6&section=24))
* **Okpalaeze, I.C.** & Nwotite, A., (2022), **“Challenges to Sustainable Development in Africa: Humanitarian Law Dimension,”** *International Review of Law and Jurisprudence (IRLJ),* 4(1), pp. 107-118 ([Link](https://www.nigerianjournalsonline.com/index.php/IRLJ/article/view/2513))

**PERSONAL SKILLS**

Excellent in event coordination, facility operations support, member engagement, multitasking, emotional intelligence, teamwork, research, writing, and communication.

# ICT SKILLS

Microsoft 365 apps; Software Development (Amateur) – HTML, CSS, JavaScript, [Python:](https://www.coursera.org/account/accomplishments/specialization/PKL959LGYZCG?utm_source%3Dandroid%26utm_medium%3Dcertificate%26utm_content%3Dcert_image%26utm_campaign%3Dsharing_cta%26utm_product%3Ds12n) University of Michigan, Coursera

# LANGUAGE(S) SPOKEN

Fluent in English: My home country’s official language and academic institution’s medium of instruction.

# INTERESTS/HOBBIES

Sports, Research, Teaching, Travelling.