



**6 November 2007**

**Reed Smith Richards Butler advises Tanzanian charity on action to guarantee street children's rights**

International law firm, Reed Smith Richards Butler is supporting the Arusha Caucus for Children's Rights, a consortium of local organisations committed to the protection of the youth in Tanzania, in their action to try and guarantee children's rights especially for vulnerable children and youth. The matter was referred via Advocates for International Development (A4ID), a charity that works with development organisations and developing countries to facilitate the provision of pro bono legal advice and assistance from leading lawyers worldwide.

Currently, the Tanzanian Government's vagrancy laws, a relic of the Colonial era, allow them to 'round up' anyone, including children, who they think are unemployed, loitering or being a vagrant. This often results in the arrest and imprisonment of street children, who are then transported to other places for release and can suffer abuse during their detainment.

The three petitioners for this case (Mkombozi, the Legal Human Rights Centre (LHRC) and the East Africa Law Society) have sought a court order that the Township (Removal of Undesirable Persons) Ordinance of 1944, updated in 1958, fails to treat children differently to adults and so breaches many international conventions signed by the Tanzanian Government.

The outcome of this case, a landmark in Tanzanian legal history, will be decided late next year. If successful it will signify a fundamental change in the law, which will remove the local commissioner's power to 'round up' the street children.

The Reed Smith Richards Butler team includes partner Marcus Rutherford and associates Julia Dodds and Alex Moorehead, who worked closely with Victoria Wakefield, Barrister of Brick Court Chambers, and Francis Kiwanga, a Tanzanian lawyer at the LHRC. Donald Deya from East Africa Law Society and Amani Mustapha, lawyers in Tanzania have also been providing advice on the case.

**Chris Marshall, chairman of A4ID, commented:** *"We are grateful to the Reed Smith Richards Butler team for their commitment throughout this case. They're a great example of*

*the difference lawyers can make to people's lives, with the skills and experience that to them is second nature".*

**Marcus Rutherford, partner at Reed Smith Richards Butler added:** *"We were delighted to work on such an important case, through A4ID. Our firm's dedication to making legal advice accessible to all is illustrated through our pro bono and community initiatives and our strong relationship with A4ID, who are headquartered at our London office."*

**Mkombozi commented:** *"This case opens up much needed dialogue and helps to improve juvenile justice in Tanzania. The repeal of the laws will start the process whereby Tanzania's vulnerable children are protected by the law rather than treated as criminals."*

## **ENDS**

For further information please contact

<b>Jeyda Star, Reed Smith Richards Butler</b>	<b>020 7772 5949</b>
<b>Beth Farrer, Spada</b>	<b>020 7269 1430</b>

## **Notes to Editor**

### **About Reed Smith Richards Butler**

Reed Smith Richards Butler is one of the 15 largest law firms in the world, with more than 1,300 lawyers in 20 offices throughout the United States, Europe, the Middle East and (as of January 2008) Asia. Founded in 1877, the firm represents leading international businesses from Fortune 100 corporations to mid-market and emerging enterprises. Its lawyers provide litigation services in multi-jurisdictional matters and other high stake disputes, deliver regulatory counsel, and execute the full range of strategic domestic and cross-border transactions. Reed Smith is a preeminent advisor to industries including financial services, life sciences, health care, advertising and media, shipping, international trade and commodities and real estate.

Reed Smith prides itself as a workplace where diversity and pro bono are embraced as core values. The firm is ranked in the top 50 firms on the Minority Law Journal's Diversity Scorecard, representing an overall jump of 109 places since 2003. Diversity-minded client Sara Lee Corporation elevated Reed Smith to Preferred Partner status, whilst the Hispanic National Bar Association selected the firm as its "Law Firm of the Year" in 2006. It operates an extensive pro bono programme across its offices partnering with charities, community groups and social enterprises on global and local initiatives.

**US:** New York, Los Angeles, Washington, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Oakland, Princeton, Falls Church, Wilmington, Century City, Richmond, Leesburg and Chicago.

**UK and Europe:** London, Paris, Munich, Birmingham, Piraeus

**Middle East:** Abu Dhabi, Dubai

**For further information visit: [www.reedsmith.com](http://www.reedsmith.com)**

**About Advocates for International Development (A4ID):**

A4ID is the UK's leading international pro bono organisation. It works with a broad range of developing countries and development NGOs to promote the UN Millennium Development Goals and take action against global poverty.

A4ID in its first year of operation has involved lawyers from a range of countries in over 90 projects. These range from desk based studies through to capacity building initiatives in Africa and Asia.

A4ID has access to over 15,000 lawyers. It is cross profession operating with legal academics, members of the Bar and solicitors. Its work is conducted subject to the Pro Bono Protocol and A4ID's own code of conduct. This ensures that all programmes are carried out to a high standard and utilise lawyers equipped and able to assist.

A4ID won The Lawyer Pro Bono Team of the Year Award 2007.

**About Mkombozi:**

Mkombozi (meaning "liberator" or "emancipator" in Swahili) is the leading child-focused agency in Tanzania's Kilimanjaro and Arusha regions, using education, research, advocacy, and outreach to help vulnerable children and youth.

**About Legal Human Rights Centre (LHRC)**

The Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) is registered in Tanzania as a private, non-governmental, non-partisan and non-profit making organization. It has been an autonomous and independent entity since its registration in September 1995.

**About East Africa law Society**

The East Africa Law Society is the premier regional Bar Association in East Africa. It is a dual membership organization, bringing together over seven thousand individual lawyer-members from the region as well as six national Bar associations: Burundi Bar Association, Kigali Bar Association (Rwanda), Law Society of Kenya, Tanganyika Law Society, Uganda Law Society

and Zanzibar Law Society. It is the largest organized Professional/ Civil Society membership organization in the region with a strong mandate and interest in the professional development and practice of law as well as constitutionalism, democracy and good governance, the just rule of law and the advancement, promotion and protection of all human rights of all people in East Africa and beyond.