

Professor Ghai is a Kenyan academic and constitutional lawyer. He has made considerable contributions to legal scholarship in Africa, especially in the development of constitutions and constitutional law on the continent.

Born on 20 October 1938, Professor Ghai studied in Kenya and the UK, and he holds an LLM from Harvard University and a Doctorate from Oxford University. Professor Ghai has had a long and illustrious career, covering academia, civic engagement, independent commissions and international diplomacy. The academic positions he has held include that of lecturer, senior lecturer, Professor and Dean at the School of Law, University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania and positions at Yale University, Warwick University and the University of Hong Kong.

Professor Ghai has a proud record of intellectual contributions of high academic-scientific merit, making him an acclaimed champion of scholarship on constitutionalism, the rule of law, and the respect for human rights, with particular relevance to Africa. His contributions traverse the academic, civic and diplomatic spheres as illustrated in his distinguished career, making him an outstanding African public intellectual. His defence of the ideals of democracy, constitutionalism and the rule of law has sometimes been at the risk of his own life and freedom, as he has had threats on his life and was exiled from Kenya due to his justification of a credible and democratic constitution-making process.

While his legacy lies in his instrumental role as chair of the Constitution Review Commission in the drafting of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya and as co-founder in 2011 of the Katiba Institute, in consolidating social transformation in Kenya through civic engagement, his influence on constitutional thinking and practice has extended far beyond one country. His broader influence is exemplified in his appointment as Special Representative on human rights of the UN Secretary-General in Cambodia, his chairpersonship of Fiji's Constitutional Committee in 1993 to 1994, and his drafting of the Asian Human Rights Charter.

The honorary degree award recognises Professor Ghai's vast contribution to constitutional dialogue, particularly in the African region. While his scholarship and contributions have previously been honoured on several occasions, too little of this recognition has come from the African continent, despite him being African. Honouring Prof Ghai with this award is closely aligned with the University of Pretoria's vision to be a leading globally relevant university in Africa.