

Dapo Akande
Doctor of Civil Law
Durham Cathedral, 9 July 2025

Professor Dapo Akande is an eminent scholar, practitioner, and global authority in public international law.

He was born and raised in Nigeria in a loving and accomplished family. He is supported here today by his parents, his wife, and their three children.

Professor Akande tells me that his paternal grandfather, who was a schoolteacher and headmaster in Nigeria, provided his first connection to Durham. His grandfather attended Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone at a time when all of its qualifications were awarded by Durham University.

Professor Akande's own academic path led him to Durham as Lecturer in Law from 2000 to 2004. During this time, he and his wife, then a shipping lawyer at a major law firm in Newcastle, had the first two of their three children. He tells me that his abiding memory of the Law School was of support and collegiality, with all staff meeting in the staff common room at 11am every morning, which was a great opportunity to discuss the latest case or academic piece.

Professor Akande is currently the Chichele Professor of Public International Law at the University of Oxford. He has made significant scholarly contributions across many areas, including as one of the authors of the standard-setting tome on international law, *Oppenheim's International Law: The United Nations*. But he tells me, he considers his most significant professional achievement to be starting EJIL:Talk!, the scholarly blog of the *European Journal of International Law*, which is widely read by all those engaged with international law from students and professors to lawyers and judges.

Professor Akande's legal acumen has been instrumental in cases before the UK Supreme Court and many international courts. He currently serves on the United Nations International Law Commission, having been nominated for election by no fewer than five member states of the UN. In 2024, the United Kingdom's National

Group nominated him as their candidate to become a judge of the International Court of Justice for the term 2027 to 2036. We wish Professor Akande the best of luck in the election. He would join the Court, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, at a time when international law is more critical than ever for achieving the four noble goals set out in the preamble of the UN Charter:

- to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,
- to reaffirm fundamental human rights and the dignity and worth of the human person,
- to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from international law can be maintained, and
- to promote social progress and better standards of life.

In recognition of his exceptional contributions to international law, his unwavering commitment to justice, and his enduring connection to Durham University, it is an honour to mark his continuing achievements.

Chancellor, I present Professor Dapo Akande to receive the degree of Doctor of Civil Law, *honoris causa*.

Professor Shaun Pattinson