



THE JUDICIARY

# Commissioning of the Supreme Court & Court of Appeal Buildings

By **H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni**,  
President of the Republic of Uganda

April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024





# THE JUDICIARY

**VISION:** Justice for All

**MISSION:** To Efficiently and Effectively Administer Justice

## CORE VALUES

### INDEPENDENCE

The Judiciary will ensure that it operates freely in its own best Judgement, without taking directives from, or being controlled by, any person or authority. We will uphold and exemplify the independence of the Judiciary in its individual and institutional aspects.

### IMPARTIALITY

We uphold that justice must not merely be done but must also be seen to be done. Judicial Officers shall perform judicial duties without fear, favour, ill-will, bias, or prejudice.

### TRANSPARENCY

The Judiciary will be open at all times in dealing with all partners in the administration of justice, documenting its operations and freely disseminating information. The Judiciary will endeavour to win the confidence and trust of all Ugandans and the international community through the quality of its services.

### PROFESSIONALISM

The Judiciary will endeavour to have well-trained, professionally competent and self-confident staff that will administer justice to all.

### INTEGRITY

the Judiciary will carry out its activities in an honest and truthful manner, and will take all reasonable measures to prevent wilful wrongdoing by its officials. Our behaviour and conduct will re-affirm the people's faith in the integrity of the Judiciary.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

The Judiciary will take full responsibility for its actions, and will always be answerable to the people of Uganda and to its partners.

### EQUALITY

the Judiciary will uphold the principles of equality, equal opportunities and affirmative action in respect to gender and other disadvantaged groups. We shall accord equal treatment to all persons who appear in court, without distinction on unjust discrimination based on the grounds of sex, colour, race, ethnicity, religion, age, social or economic status, political opinion, or disability.



April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024

# Contents...

- 2 | Foreword: A Toast to the New Judiciary
- 4 | Judiciary Top Management



## 5 The Founding of the Judiciary of Uganda (1902-2024)

- 6 | The Journey from High Court to Supreme Court
- 8 | Significant years in the journey of the Supreme Court
- 10 | The Chief Justices of Uganda
- 11 | The Judiciary as an Arm of Government

## 12 The Present Day Judiciary

- 13 | Hierarchy & Structure of the Courts of Judicature
- 14 | The Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020 (AJA)
- 14 | Other Administrative Organs of the Judiciary

## 18 The Judiciary Transformation Journey



## 33 Behind the construction and supervision of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal buildings

## 38 The year 2024 will remain remarkable in the history of the Judiciary

## 42 Construction of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal Buildings: The Historical Perspective

## 52 Celebrating the achievements of the Uganda Judiciary





# Foreword

Alfonse Chigamoy Owiny - Dollo  
CHIEF JUSTICE



## A Toast to the New Judiciary

*Psalms 118:24 says; “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” It is definitely a Happy New Year that God has made for the Judiciary. The Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal have acquired their own home, for the first time in the history of the Judiciary. In the ever-evolving landscape of modern architecture, the Judiciary and the Country as a whole is set to witness the emergence of groundbreaking structures that transcend the ordinary and stand out as testament to innovation, sustainability, and aesthetic brilliance.*

It gives me great pleasure as the head of the Judiciary to announce the commissioning of these magnificent new buildings for the temple of justice. As we delve into the details of this awe-inspiring project, we can't help but be captivated by the commitment to excellence exhibited by the Judiciary Top Management and the dedicated contractors, to whom I am boundlessly beholden.

With these new temples in place, we reiterate our commitment to efficiently and effectively administer justice for all. With these spectacular structures in place, it will save the tax payers approximately UGX 6 billion that we hitherto annually spent as rent for the two courts. Functionality is another hallmark of this architectural gem. Beyond the aesthetic allure, the buildings are meticulously planned to meet the diverse needs of not only its occupants but also the court users. From state-of-the-art Chambers; to the Court Halls that foster creativity and collaboration, and then the recreational ranges that promote work-life balance – every square-inch is a testament to thoughtful designs and fitness to purpose. The project also stands as a beacon of Government commitment to ensure that

its people enjoy a conducive environment to access justice services.

I am sure any of you can imagine the pain of being homeless for well over three decades that the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal have had to endure. We are grateful that we are finally liberated from this mess. We are also grateful that the Government has always found money and that at no time were any of our Courts evicted. We now have more reason to celebrate and be glad, in our new home.

As the building is commissioned today, we take you through the journey that has brought us this far. We have an in-depth feature that will take you behind the scenes, providing insights into the creative process, the challenges faced, and the vision that has propelled this project to fruition. So many people have walked this journey with us and we are eternally grateful to them. The contribution of the Government of Uganda in fully funding this project is much appreciated. Particularly, I thank **H.E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the President of Uganda, the Parliament of Uganda, the Ministry of**



**Justice and Constitutional Affairs and the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development for unreservedly supporting this project.**

I further commend the **Chief Justices Emeritus: William Wako Wambuzi, Benjamin J. Odoki and Bart M. Katureebe**, for being forward looking: Their endearing ideas and labour have given birth to this gigantic child. The strategic guidance provided by the steadfast members of the Judiciary Top Management has immensely contributed to the success of the project. I extend further gratitude to the **Hon. Justice Richard Buteera, Deputy Chief Justice, Hon. Justice Flavian Zeija, Principal Judge, Dr. Pius Bigirimana, Permanent Secretary/Secretary to Judiciary, HW Sarah Langa Siu, the Chief Registrar and Eng. Dr. Christopher Ebal, Commissioner Engineering and Technical Services**, for the mind boggling ideas we shared that have ultimately shaped the present beacon of justice.

I specially laud **Dr. Pius Bigirimana** for his passion, commitment, attention to detail and determination in ensuring these structures progressed and have been completed in record time. I also pay tribute to previous Permanent Secretaries: **Mr. Kagole Kivumbi (RIP) and Ms. Dorcus Okalany** for their contribution to the realization of the magnificent buildings we see today.



**As the building is commissioned today, we take you through the journey that has brought us this far. We have an in-depth feature that will take you behind the scenes, providing insights into the creative process, the challenges faced, and the vision that has propelled this project to fruition.**

I thank the procurement team that was headed by **HW Sarah Langa Siu** as the Chairperson Contracts Committee, **Ms. Maureen Kasande** the Chair of the Evaluation Committee and **Mr. Deo Kasozi** the Head of the Procurement and Disposal Unit for their professionalism and integrity in the procurement process.

Through this transparent process we secured a brilliant and professional contractor. The contractor, **Ms. Seyani Brothers & Co. (U) Ltd** and **Parbat Siyani Construction Ltd**, undoubtedly did a commendable job that you see before us today. To Fab House, we are grateful for the interior designs that have added value to the contractors' work. They supplied all the health club equipment and the furnishings in the court halls, chambers, restaurants and conference rooms. I thank them boundlessly for their dedication, industry and timely delivery of the project. I am particularly glad for their accommodative will to our changing demands during the execution of the project. Their taste for beauty and art is equally greatly appreciated. Our contractors have made our long standing dream come true.

I thank all the Judiciary Staff and the Court Users for your patience and understanding. You have suffered insurmountable inconvenience ranging from noise, dust, grit, to lack of parking space and so forth; but have endured the same for the four years the project has run. The reward for your endurance is now before you to reap – ample parking space, serene environment, enormous conference facilities, a fully stocked wellness centre, fully functional Registry, spacious Chambers and magnificent Court Halls.

Lastly, I thank God who made all this possible in His time.

God bless you all.

**Alfonse Chigamoy Owiny - Dollo**  
CHIEF JUSTICE

# Judiciary Top Management



Hon. Justice Alfonse Chigamoy Owiny- Dollo  
**CHIEF JUSTICE**



Hon. Justice Richard Buteera  
**DEPUTY CHIEF JUSTICE**



Hon. Justice Dr. Flavian Zeija  
**PRINCIPAL JUDGE**



Dr. Pius Bigirimana  
**PERMANENT SECRETARY/  
SECRETARY TO JUDICIARY**



HW Sarah Langa Siu  
**CHIEF REGISTRAR**



# The Founding of the Judiciary of Uganda - 1902-2024

## The Uganda Judiciary Through The Years

### Judicial Authority

*The Judiciary is a distinct and independent arm of Government entrusted with judicial authority, and mandated to administer and deliver justice to the people. It plays a fundamental role in the promotion of law and order, human rights, social justice, morality and good governance.*

The independence of the Judiciary is guaranteed by the constitution in a number of its provisions regarding among others, the appointment, removal, salary and other conditions of service of judicial officers. The core of the Judiciary's independence is the absence of interference from the Executive and the Legislature in judicial decisions.

The mandate of the Judiciary is to establish and facilitate effective and efficient machinery capable of functioning as an adjudicating authority in Uganda and of quickly administering and delivering justice and related services to the people of Uganda.

The key function of the Judiciary is, therefore, the adjudication of civil and criminal cases. In addition, it interprets the constitution and gives effect to its provisions, as well as providing the expertise in interpreting the laws. Further, the Judiciary performs other related duties in promotion of human rights, social justice and morality.



**The independence of the Judiciary is guaranteed by the constitution in a number of its provisions regarding among others, the appointment, removal, salary and other conditions of service of judicial officers.**



The first High Court House at Entebbe (Source: <https://umsi580.Isait.lsa.umich.edu/s/high-court-o-uganda-archive/page/About>)



High Court building in Kampala. The building was completed in 1930.

# The Journey from High Court to Supreme Court

## The High Court of Uganda as the highest court

*The High Court of Uganda was established in 1902, by virtue of the British Order in Council 1902. It was the final court of appeal for all subordinate and native courts in colonial Uganda, with jurisdiction over all persons and matters in respect to criminal and civil cases. In Uganda were established customary native courts which adjudicated disputes between African litigants, while civil courts tried criminal cases and decided litigation among non-Africans.*

The High Court was the last recourse in cases tried in both customary and civil courts. Its judges were members of the colonial legal service, most of them trained in England or in India. They were enjoined—under the Uganda Order in Council, 1902—to take ‘guidance’ from native law where the litigants were Africans, insofar as native law was ‘not repugnant to justice and morality’. After Uganda’s independence in 1962 the High Court continued to act as Uganda’s highest court under the direction of Chief Justice, **Sir Udo Udoma**, a Nigerian.

## Establishment of the Court of Appeal for Eastern Africa

In 1967 a new East African Court of Appeal was constituted to determine appeal cases originating from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zanzibar; but for most litigants the High Court continued to function as the decisive voice in matters of law. The 1967 Constitution declared that decisions of the High Court could be appealed to the Court of Appeal for Eastern Africa (CAEA), or to a new Court of Appeal established by Parliament of Uganda. This became the de facto legal system until the





collapse of the East African Community (EAC) in 1977 when the Uganda government withdrew from the CAEA and created a national Court of Appeal. The legal system virtually broke down during the 1970s, in part because Idi Amin undermined the judicial system when it attempted to maintain its independence on decision making.

### The birth of the Ugandan Court of Appeal

In 1980 the Government made the Chief Justice the head of the High Court only and appointed a separate President of the Court of Appeal. These changes led to problems in the administration of justice during the next several years. The problems stemmed primarily from the anomalous position of a Chief Justice constitutionally restricted to be head of an inferior court.

### The birth of the Supreme Court and the demise of the Court of Appeal

To eliminate administrative squabbles, the NRM Government introduced the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 1987, and the Judicature (Amendment) Bill, 1987, which the NRC passed in August 1987. The name of the Court of Appeal was changed to the Supreme Court of Uganda. The Chief Justice became its head and the chief administrator of the Judiciary. Two new positions were created, a Deputy Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and a Principal Judge, who became head of the High Court. Appeals from any decision of the High Court were to be referred to the Supreme Court.

### The revival of the Court of Appeal of Uganda

When the current Constitution of Uganda was enacted in 1995, it provided for the Supreme Court as the apex Court, the Court of Appeal as the second highest court that also serves as a Constitutional Court and the High Court that is clothed with both original and appellate jurisdictions. The three are the Courts of record, but there are other Subordinate Courts such as the Magistrates courts, the martial courts and quadhis courts. These provisions were operationalized through the enactment of the Judicature Statute, 1996, that later changed name to the Judicature Act Cap. 13 (Laws of Uganda, 2000 edition).

### The Supreme Court as a homeless wanderer

For over four decades the appellate courts have languished in rented premises, as a result of which they have had to shift from place to place for different reasons. At one time, it's the landlord pushing them out, at another occasion it is the expansion drive making it inevitable, on another turn it is the unfitness of the premises to suit the needs of a court house: Whatever the reason, shifting from place to place has been the worst nightmare for Judiciary. Not only does it call for avoidable costs, it has led to disastrous loss of furniture, ICT equipment, and valuable documents and court files. A host of them are damaged, others are misplaced and others may never be seen again. At the new place, it would take months to settle down and resume normal business.

Rented premises also tend to threaten the security of the Courts and the court staff. Many of these premises are designed as business arcades or residential apartments. They do not offer the befitting court ambience and lack the usual entry and exit points that a court should have. Often the buildings are shared with bars, banks, restaurants and other businesses not compatible with court work. The result is the sharing of common facilities such as lifts, restaurants, washrooms and parking yards with the public and strangers. This compromises the security, the privacy and independence of judicial officers and court staff and gives room to intimidation, influence and corruption. The worst part is where the Landlord turns into a litigant and the same court is naturally to preside over the case. There are also instances where rent payments delay and the landlord is heard by all and sundry, loud and clear, threatening to evict a Court or to **take the Court to court** for non-payment of rent.

The Supreme Court of this country has endured these unfortunate challenges for over three decades. We are grateful that we are finally liberated from this mess. We are also grateful that the Government has always found money and that at no time were any of our courts evicted for non-payment of rent. We now have more reason to celebrate and be glad, in our new permanent home.

# Significant years in the journey of the S



The High Court of Uganda continues to act as Uganda's highest court under the direction of Chief Justice, Sir Udo Udoma, a Nigerian.

A new East African Court of Appeal was constituted to determine appeal cases originating from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zanzibar.

Uganda Government withdrew from CAEA and created a national Court of Appeal.

1902

The High Court of Uganda, a final court of appeal by then, was established by the British Order in Council 1902

1962



1967

The 1967 constitution declared that decisions of the High Court could be appealed to the Court of Appeal of Eastern Africa (CAEA), or a new Court of Appeal established by the Parliament of Uganda.

1977

With the approval of the drawings, costing was done and estimated at shs105.6 billion only.



Construction of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal begins in March.

2024

Supreme Court and Court of Appeal buildings launched

2020



2019

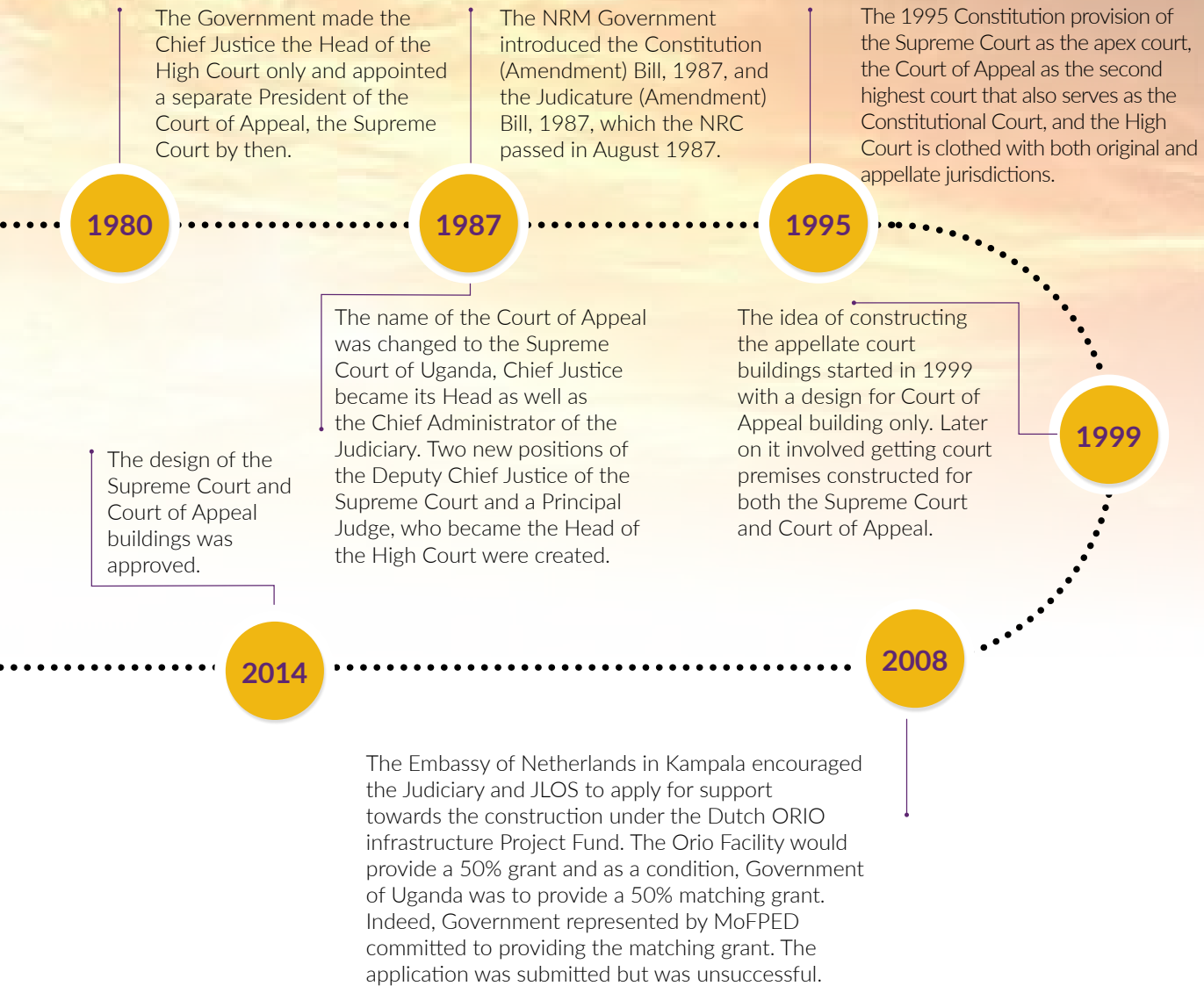
In September, adverts were made in newspapers and Ms. Seyani brothers & co. (u) ltd and Parbat Siyani construction Ltd jv at a Contract amount 63.9bn. This was for the civil works mainly while Fire Fighting, Heating Ventilation and Air Condition and Information, Communication Technology were brought in later bringing the contract price to 106.2bn.

Groundbreaking of the Appellate Court Structure

2018



# Supreme Court





# The Chief Justices of Uganda

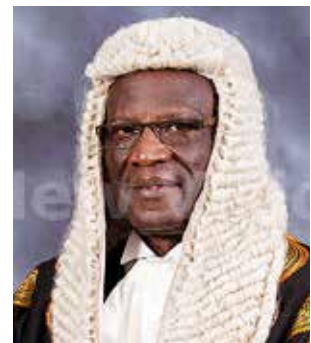
History has it that the first Chief Justice of Uganda was William Morris Carter who led the Judiciary until 1920. He was replaced by Charles James Griffin (1921 - 1932), Sidney Solomon Abrahams (1933 - 1934), John Harry Barclay Nihill (1935 Acting Chief Justice), Robert Evans Hall (1935 - 1937), Norman Whitley (1937 - 1947), David Edwards (1947 - 1952), John Bowes Griffin (1952 - 1956) and Audley McKisack (1956 - 1962). Since independence, the following Chief Justices have superintended over the Judiciary.



**2020 - 2026:** Hon. Justice Alfonse Chigamoy Owiny - Dollo



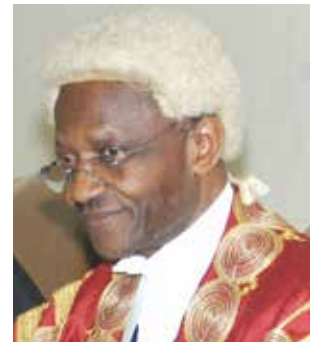
**2015 - 2020:** Hon. Justice Bart Magunda Katureebe



**2013 - 2015:** Hon. Justice Steven Kavuma (Acting Chief Justice)



**2001 - 2013:** Hon. Justice Benjamin Josses Odoki



**1986 - 2001, 1979 - 1980 & 1972 - 1975:** Hon. Justice Samuel Wako Wambuzi



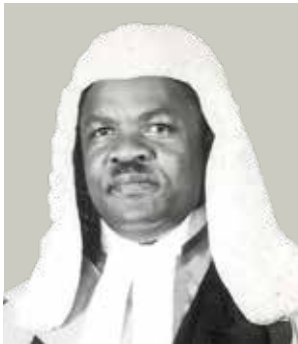
**1985 - 1986:** Hon. Justice Peter Allen



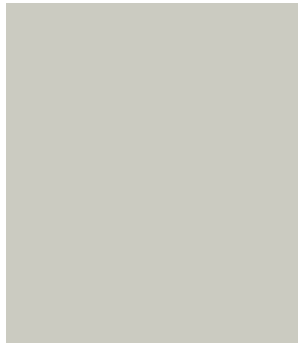
**1980 - 1985:** Hon. Justice George Masika



**1975 - 1979:** Hon. Justice Mohammed Saied



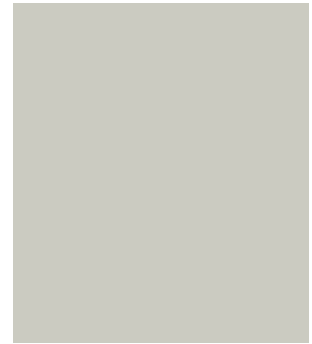
**1971 - 1972: Hon. Justice Benedicto Kiwanuka**



**1969 - 1971: Dermot Joseph Sheridan**



**1963 - 1969: Egbert Udo Udoma**



**1962 - 1963: K. G. Bennet (Acting Chief Justice)**



*The Chief Justice inspecting the land offered for construction of High Court at Rukungiri on July 18, 2022.*



*The Chief Justice with stakeholders discussing the Court development plan.*

# The Judiciary as an Arm of Government

*After President Godfrey Binaisa was toppled by the Military Commission of Paulo Muwanga and Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, in 1980, the Judiciary was given a big role in the headship of the country. A Presidential Commission was established to rule the country until a new leader was elected.*

This interim government consisted of Justices Saulo Musoke and Polycap Nyamuconco who were judges from the High Court and Court of Appeal respectively, and Joel Hunter Wacha Olwol (pictured right) who had risen through the civil service ranks from Permanent Secretary to head of civil service.

During the Independence Day celebrations of 1980, these president (s) addressed Ugandans at Kololo, as heads of state. The trio was sworn in as Heads of State by the Chief Justice and took a presidential oath. They ruled Uganda for eight months from May to December 1980.





The Judiciary Top Management led by the Chief Justice (fourth right) join the Vice President, Speaker of Parliament and Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs during the opening of the 25th Annual Judges Conference recently. Extreme right is Supreme Court Justice, Mike Chibita.

# The Present Day Judiciary

*The Judiciary is established under Article 126 of the Constitution of Uganda, 1995, which provides that:*

*“Judicial power is derived from the people and shall be exercised by the courts established under this Constitution in the name of the people and in conformity with law and with the values, norms and aspirations of the people.”*

**The Chief Justice** is the head of the Judiciary and is responsible for the overall administration and supervision of all Courts in Uganda. He provides the link between the Judiciary and other arms of Government while exercising general direction and control over the Judiciary. In the performance of the functions of the office, the Chief Justice is assisted by the Deputy Chief Justice and the Principal Judge.

In accordance with Article 133 of the Constitution and section 3 of the Administration of the Judiciary Act, the Chief Justice has authority to issue orders and directions to the courts necessary for the proper and efficient administration of justice; to assign work of a higher status or jurisdiction to any Judicial Officer other than Judges for a specified period of time; to establish performance and evaluation systems for the Judiciary, and to take any other action appropriate to the exercise of the powers specified in this section and any other laws.

**The Deputy Chief Justice** deputises for the Chief Justice; he/she is the head of the Court of Appeal/Constitutional Court and in that capacity assists the Chief Justice in the administration of the Court. He/she also performs such other functions as may be delegated or assigned to him or her by the Chief Justice.

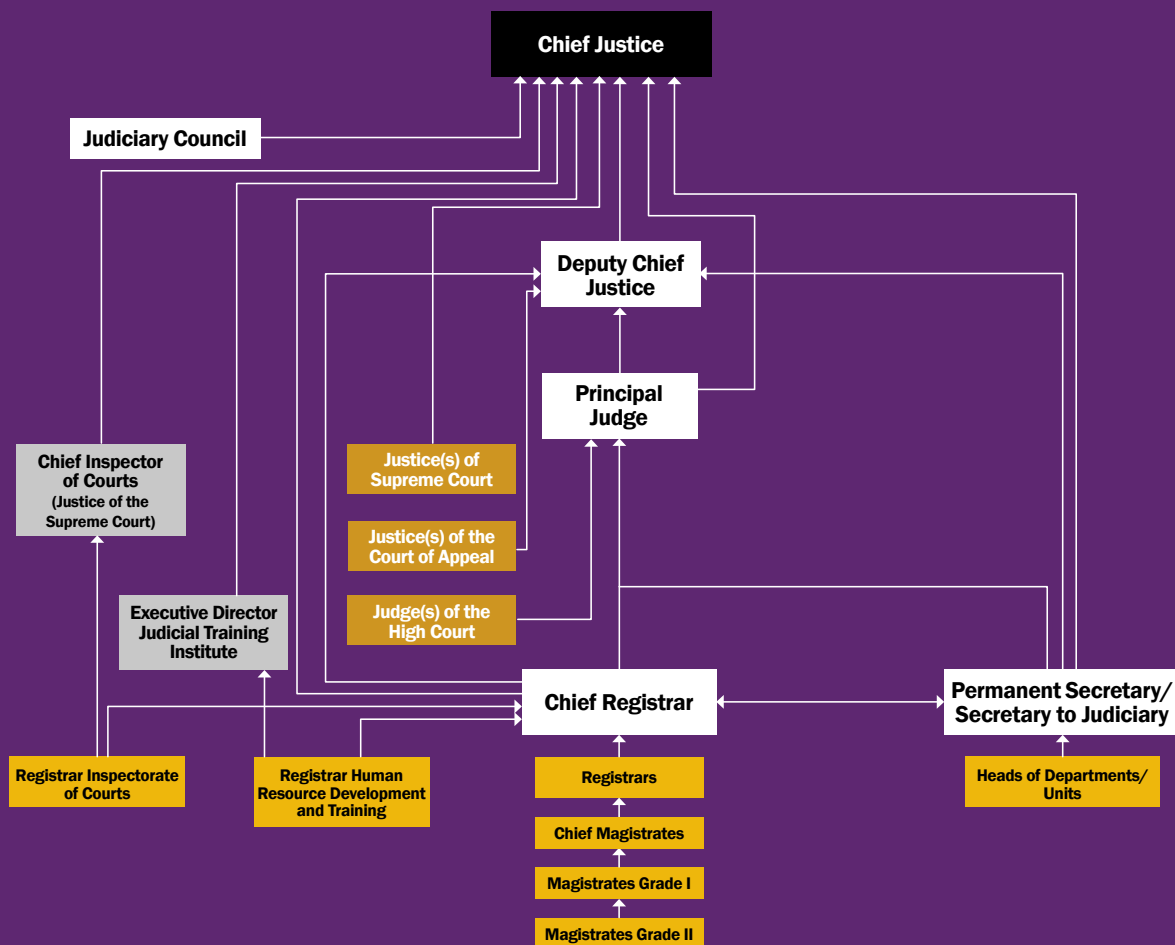
**The Principal Judge** is the head of the High Court, and in that capacity, assists the Chief Justice in the administration of the High Court and subordinate courts. He also performs such other functions as may be delegated or assigned to him or her by the Chief Justice.

**The Secretary to Judiciary** is appointed under Article 174 of the Constitution and section 17 of the AJA. His/her functions are spelt out in section 17 of the Act, thus: He/she is responsible for the organization of the Judiciary; tendering advice to the Chief Justice in respect of the administration of the Judiciary; implementing policies of Government; implementing the Judiciary Strategic Plan; managing the expenditure of public funds and any other duty that may be assigned to him/her.

**The Chief Registrar** is appointed under Article 145 of the Constitution and section 15 of the AJA and is the overall supervisor of all Court Registries and is, *inter alia*, responsible for implementing the judicial activities and administrative policies of the Judiciary. The day-to-day administration of courts is superintended by the Registrars of various ranks and the Magistrates in their respective Divisions, Circuits, Magisterial Areas

The approved Macro Structure of the Judiciary is as presented in the chart below: (put the colored structure)

## The Judiciary Macro Structure



### The Hierarchy and Structure of the Courts of Judicature

As already noted, the main actors under the Judiciary service are the Courts of various grades and jurisdictions. Article 129 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 establishes the courts of judicature empowered to exercise judicial power as follows:

- a. the Supreme Court of Uganda;
- b. the Court of Appeal of Uganda;
- c. the High Court of Uganda; and
- d. such subordinate courts as Parliament may by law establish, including Qadhis' courts for marriage, divorce, inheritance of property and guardianship, as may be prescribed by Parliament.

The Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and the High Court of Uganda are the superior courts of record. Subordinate Courts include Magistrates Courts, Local Council Courts, *Qadhis* courts and tribunals established under various laws. There are three levels of Magistrates Courts: Chief Magistrates, Magistrates Grade One and Magistrates Grade Two.

Other Courts and Tribunals including, Martial Courts, Industrial Court, Local Council Courts, Administrative Tribunals and *Qadhis* Courts, eventually feed into the Court system through the Appeal, Judicial Review or Revision processes.



Members of the Judiciary Council at one of their retreats. The Council is mandated to advise the Chief Justice on matters of policies for planning and developing the Judiciary to improve the administration of justice.

## The Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020 (AJA)

In order to strengthen judicial accountability and judicial independence, the Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020 (AJA) was enacted and it ushered into the Judiciary new structures and processes hitherto unknown in our history. It also streamlined the roles of existing offices and created more transparency.

Briefly the AJA established the Judiciary Service under section 13 and also introduced the following new organs into the Judiciary:

- a. The Judiciary Council
- b. The Judiciary Committees
- c. The Judicial Training Institute, and
- d. The Inspectorate of Courts

The AJA also required the Judiciary to put in place, Performance Management Systems, provide for funeral benefits for Chief Justice, Deputy Chief Justice, Principal Judge and Justices of Supreme Court, in event of death; establish a Judiciary fund, publish Annual Performance Reports and pay special retirement benefits to retired Judicial Officers.

## Other Administrative Organs of the Judiciary

### The Judiciary Council

Section 4 of the Administration of the Judiciary Act establishes the Judiciary Council whose membership is as follows:

- a. The Chief Justice
- b. The Deputy Chief Justice
- c. The Principal Judge
- d. The Attorney General
- e. The Director of Public Prosecutions
- f. One Justice representing Superior Courts
- g. One Judicial Officer representing the lower bench;
- h. The Solicitor General
- i. The Chief Registrar
- j. The Secretary to the Judiciary
- k. A representative of JLOS Institutions, (but not the Minister of Justice)
- l. The President, Uganda Law Society
- m. The Chairperson, Uganda Law Council
- n. Two members of the public nominated by the Judicial Service Commission
- o. The Chief Inspector of Courts





Section 4 of AJA mandates the Judiciary Council to advise the Chief Justice on: Policies for planning and development of the Judiciary; Ethics and integrity within the Judiciary; Ways and means of securing adequate funding for the Judiciary; Matters relating to personnel or staff development and welfare; Improvement of the administration of justice; Policies for the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the Judiciary; and any other matter relating to the administration or operation of the Judiciary.

The Chief Justice is the Chairperson and the secretary of the Committee is the Chief Registrar.

### The Committees of the Judiciary

Section 6 of the Administration of the Judiciary Act empowers the Chief Justice to establish Committees to assist him/her in the performance of his/her functions under the Act. The Committees are: -

- a. The Planning, Development and Finance Committee;
- b. The Human Capital Development, Gender and Equity Mainstreaming Committee;
- c. The Information, Communication Technology and Documentation Committee and;
- d. The Audit Committee.

Additional Committees are provided for under The Administration of the Judiciary (Establishment of Committees) Regulations, 2023. These are: -

- a. The Case Management Committee;
- b. The Law Reform Committee;
- c. The Performance Management and Awards Committee;
- d. The Disciplinary Committee and;
- e. The Sexual Harassment Committee.

The functions of the Committees are spelt out under section 7 of the AJA as well as the Committee Regulations.

### The Secretary to the Judiciary

The Secretary to Judiciary is appointed under Article 174 of the Constitution and section 17 of the AJA. His/her functions are spelt out in section 17 of the

Act, thus: He/she is responsible for the organization of the Judiciary; tendering advice to the Chief Justice in respect of the administration of the Judiciary; implementing policies of Government; implementing the Judiciary Strategic Plan; managing the expenditure of public funds and any other duty that may be assigned to him/her. In the performance of his/her duties the PS/SJ is responsible to the Chief Justice but also answerable to the Parliament of Uganda for all the funds disbursed to the Judiciary.

In accordance with Article 164 of the Constitution and section 45 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, the Secretary to Judiciary is an Accounting Officer responsible for controlling the regularity and proper use of money appropriated to the judiciary, authorizing any commitment made by the Judiciary vote and controlling the resources received, held or disposed of by the Judiciary.

The Secretary to Judiciary is supported by the Under Secretary (in Charge of Finance and Administration), the Commissioners and Heads of various Departments (such as: the Commissioner Engineering and Technical Services, the Commissioner Human Resources; the Principal Economist; the Principal Information Technology Officer, the Principal Assistant Secretary, the Principal Procurement Officer and the Principal Accountant.)

### The Chief Registrar

The office of the Chief Registrar is created by Article 145 of the Constitution and section 15 of the Administration of the Judiciary Act. The statutory functions of the Chief Registrar are enumerated under Section 15 (2) of the AJA to include: performance of judicial functions vested in him/her under the law; giving effect to policies and directions of the Chief Justice, the Deputy Chief Justice and the Principal Judge; effectively overseeing Judicial Operations of all courts of judicature; monitoring and enhancing the quality of services and official procedures; communicating with Government and the public on matters relating to the Judiciary and any other matters of Government interest; implementing the



judicial activities in the Judiciary Strategic Plan; assisting the Chief Justice, the Deputy Chief Justice and the Principal Judge in facilitation and supervision of the Courts; linking the Judiciary and the Judicial Service Commission on appointments, promotions and disciplinary matters relating to Registrars and Magistrates; and any other matter assigned to him/her by the Chief Justice, Deputy Chief Justice or Principal Judge.

In accordance with section 15 (2) (a) of AJA, the office exercises other judicial functions vested by other laws and regulations including licensing advocates and court bailiffs.

The Chief Registrar is assisted by a management team of Registrars who take charge of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, the High Court, the Inspectorate of Courts, the Judicial Training Institute, the Registry of Communication and Public Relations, the Registry of Planning, Research and Development, the Registry of Human Resource Development and Training, among others. He/she is also assisted by Deputy Registrars and Assistant Registrars in the management of Court Divisions and Circuits as well as Chief Magistrates in the management and supervision of Magisterial Areas.

### The Inspectorate of Courts

Section 8 of AJA establishes the Inspectorate of Courts headed by a Chief Inspector of Courts designated by the Chief Justice from among the Justices of the Supreme Court. In the execution of this task, the Chief Inspector of Courts is assisted by a Secretariat headed by a Registrar and a team of Registrars (Inspectors) and other administrative staff.

The functions of the Inspectorate are: to receive and process complaints against any staff of the Judiciary; investigate cases of mal-administration of justice; examine and take custody of any judicial administration records necessary for its investigations; recommend appropriate remedial action to correct cases of mal-administration in Judiciary; interface with and sensitise stakeholders



**In order to strengthen judicial accountability and judicial independence, the Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020 (AJA) was enacted and it ushered into the Judiciary new structures and processes hitherto unknown in our history.**

and the public on the administration of justice; enforce the Judicial Code of Conduct and Public Service Code of Conduct in the Judiciary; and to produce quarterly reports of the inspection work to the Chief Justice.

The operations of the Inspectorate have been further strengthened by the Administration of the Judiciary (Inspectorate of Courts) Regulations, 2023. The Regulations among others provide for the Disciplinary processes, establish the Judiciary Integrity Committee and Peer Committees as soft tools for adherence to the Code of Judicial Conduct.

### The Judicial Service Commission (JSC)

The JSC was established by the 1995 Constitution of Uganda and was operationalized by the Judicial Service of 1997, which was an *Act to regulate and facilitate the discharge by the President and the Judicial Service Commission of their functions under Chapter Eight of the Constitution pursuant to article 150 (2) of the Constitution and for other matters related to the Judiciary.*

The Judicial Service Commission is a Constitutional body established under Article 146 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995, whose core mandate is to recruit judicial officers and other staff of the Judiciary and to regulate their conduct.

The mandate and functions of the Commission are defined under Articles 146-151 of the Constitution.



*Members of the Judicial Service Commission in a photo moment with the Chief Justice during their retreat.*

The Membership of the Commission is spelt out under Article 146 of the Constitution. It provides for a nine-member commission. The Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and the Members are all appointed by the President with approval of Parliament. The tenure of service of each of the members of the Judicial Service Commission is four years but renewable only once.

It is important to note that the Judicial Service Commission is not part of the Judiciary hierarchy. However, before the current establishment as per the 1995 Constitution, the Chief Justice was the Chairperson of the Commission.

### **Functions of the Commission**

The functions of the Judicial Service Commission are spelt out under Articles 147, 148 and 148A of the Constitution which include: –

1. to advise the President in the exercise of the President's power to appoint persons to hold or act in the office of Chief Justice, Deputy Chief Justice, Principal Judge, a justice of the Supreme Court, a justice of Appeal and a judge of the High Court and the office of the Chief Registrar and a Registrar.
2. to confirm appointments of the above officers;
3. to exercise disciplinary control over and to remove the said officers from office;
4. to review and make recommendations on the terms and conditions of service of judges and other judicial officers;
5. to prepare and implement programmes for the education of, and for the dissemination of information to judicial officers and the public about law and the administration of justice;
6. to receive and process people's recommendations and complaints concerning the judiciary and the administration of justice;
7. to act as a link between the people and the judiciary;
8. to advise the Government on improving the administration of justice; and
9. to perform any other function prescribed by the Constitution or by Parliament.
10. to appoint persons to hold or act in any judicial office other than the offices specified in article 147 (3) of the Constitution and to confirm appointments in and exercise disciplinary control over persons holding or acting in such offices and to remove such persons from office.
11. To appoint, discipline and remove non-judicial staff of the judiciary as may be prescribed by Parliament by law.



H.E President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni after the swearing in ceremony of the newly appointed Acting Judges of the High Court on August 17, 2023.

# The Judiciary Transformation Journey

*Upon being appointed Chief Justice of Uganda on 20th August 2020, Hon. Alfonse Chigamoy Owiny – Dollo studied the contemporary challenges faced by the Judiciary – paramount of them being case backlog and inaccessible justice services – and set out to ameliorate them, through the Judiciary Transformation Agenda, 2020-2025. His Transformation Plan is a realistic dream of what he could humanly achieve as a Chief Justice in the short five-year span that he would be in office.*

Together with his Top Management Comprising **Hon. Justice Richard Buteera, the Deputy Chief Justice, Hon. Justice Dr. Flavian Zeija, the Principal Judge, Dr. Pius Bigirimana, Permanent Secretary/Secretary to Judiciary and HW Sarah Langa Siu, the Chief Registrar**, the team agreed on the interventions and synergies that were necessary to realise the Judiciary Vision in the short run.

Facilitated by the Judiciary Council, the Judicial Service Commission, the various heads of Departments and the Judiciary Committees; and working hand in hand with the Judicial Training Institute and the Inspectorate of Courts, the Chief Justice promised to substantially achieve these dreams in the five years.

Under the Judiciary Transformation Agenda, 2020/21-2025/26, the Judiciary has mobilized tools and resources and redirected its fight against delays and case backlog and has focused on **enhancing access to justice services across Uganda** by concentrating energies on a few pivotal areas.

These are:

1. Consolidating and harnessing the efforts commenced by the previous Judiciary administration and enhancing the works and programs initiated by them.
2. Enhancing the Judiciary Structure and recruitment and deployment of more judicial and non-judicial officers and providing them with modern and adequate tools of work.
3. Establishing more Courts across the country in order to eliminate case backlog and to bring justice services nearest to the people.
4. Strengthening the Judicial Training Institute to offer up-to-date capacity building and refresher training to the judicial and non-judicial staff.
5. Reinforcing the Inspectorate of Courts, to effectively supervise court operations, promote judicial accountability and fight corruption.
6. Promoting innovations, simplifying court processes and enhancing the use of ICT in case management and delivery of justice services.



## Strategic Objectives

*The Transformation Agenda is guided by the Judiciary Strategic Plan V, 2020/21-2024/25 which encompasses the following Strategic Objectives:*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To enhance equitable access to Judiciary Services.</li> <li>b. To improve Court processes and case management.</li> <li>c. To strengthen the use of ICT in the administration of justice.</li> <li>d. To develop and support the Judiciary</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. To improve coordination, partnerships and accountability.</li> <li>f. To improve public awareness and the image of the Judiciary.</li> <li>g. To enhance resource mobilization and management.</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

## Some of the Achievements so far Registered

*Since the year of our Lord, 2020, the Judiciary has made remarkable progress in the following areas:*

1. The **enactment of the Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020** (AJA) was the first achievement registered on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020. AJA operationalises the Constitutional provisions on independence, financing and administration of the Judiciary. The enactment of this law gave an impetus to the Judiciary transformation agenda.
2. **The Judiciary Strategic Plan V (2020/21-2024/25) developed** to guide the implementation of the Judiciary Transformation Agenda.
3. **Annual Performance Reports were successfully published** for the F/Ys 2021/2022, 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 in accordance with section 39 (1) of the Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020.
4. **Successive improved Court Performance have been registered over the years.** The Magistrates Courts progressively completed more cases than previously, as follows: **119,919 cases** in FY 2020/21; **168,316 cases** in FY 2021/22 and **202,460 cases** in FY 2022/23. The High Court's performance was equally outstanding as follows: **35,350 cases** were completed in FY 2020/21; **36,766 cases** in FY



*The Chief Justice, Alfonso Chigamoy Owiny - Dollo, flanked by the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs at the launch of the 2022/2023 Judiciary Annual Performance Report on October 20, 2023.*



*The Principal Judge, Dr. Flavian Zeija, joins other stakeholders during the launch of the Moroto High Court Circuit on May 8, 2023.*

2021/22 and **62,702 cases** in FY 2022/23.

5. **Efforts in fighting Case Backlog have been stepped up.** As a result, we have steadily diminished case backlog from 52,102 cases in 2020, to 48,836 cases in 2021 and then to 44,339 cases in 2022. Currently our backlog stands at 43,161 cases.
6. **Alternative Dispute Resolution** interventions have been promoted. These include the following:
  - a. Plea-Bargaining
  - b. Small Claims Procedure
  - c. Mediation of civil disputes
  - d. Community service orders
  - e. Diversion of juvenile and domestic violence cases

The **Alternative Justice Systems (AJS)** were launched on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023 by which we intend to identify African methods of dispute resolution and popularize them across the country and beyond; as an alternative, cheap and acceptable means of settling disputes.

8. **Electronic Court Case Management Information System (ECCMIS) have been rolled out.** On 01.03.2022 we started implementing the Electronic Court Case Management and Information System (ECCMIS) in 07 Cluster 1

Courts, which are: The Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal/ Constitutional Court, Anti-Corruption Division, Commercial Court, Land Division, Civil Division and Mengo Chief Magistrates Court. The implementation of ECCMIS has resulted into:

- i. The average case filing rate has increased at a rate of 2.8% in the courts operating ECCMIS;
- ii. Non Tax Revenue (NTR) has increased from UGX. 5 Bn to 7 Bn;
- iii. The use of ECCMIS has reduced payment of court fees by cash and increased the use of mobile money (35%) and point of sale (PoS) modes (64%).

8. **The Judiciary has designed a number of Strategies and staff Manuals**, including the following, which are pending implementation:
  - a. The Anti-Corruption Strategy 2023-2026.
  - b. The Communications Strategy, 2023-2026
  - c. The Information Communication (ICT) Strategy, 2023-2027
  - d. The Registry Operations Manual, 2023
9. Since 2020, **the Laws and Procedural Rules have been deliberately reformed** in order to ease access to the Court services. The following Rules were gazetted on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022.
  - a. The Judicature (Court Bailiffs) Rules, S.I. 53/2022



*The Hon Chief Justice, Alfonse Owiny - Dollo Chigamoy at the launch of the Gulu High Court video conferencing system donated by development partners led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on August 21, 2023. Looking on is the UNDP Resident Representative Ms Elsie G. Attafuaah (L), Justice Geoffrey Kiryabwire, and Justice Phillip Odoki.*

- b. The Judicature (Amicus Curiae) Rules, S.I. 54/2022
- c. The Judicature (Legal Representation at the Expense of the State) Rules, S.I. 55/2022
- d. The Constitution (Bail Guidelines for Courts of Judicature) (Practice) Directions, L. N. No. 8/2022
- e. The Constitution (Land Evictions) (Practice) Directions, Legal Notice No. 2 of 2021

In order to strengthen the Judiciary administration, the following Statutory Instruments were enacted.

- a. The Administration of Judiciary (Judiciary Council) (Procedure) Rules SI. No. 43 of 2021
- b. The Administration of the Judiciary (Inspectorate of Courts) Regulations, S.I. No. 92 of 2023
- c. The Administration of the Judiciary (Establishment of Committees) Regulations, S.I. No. 93 of 2023
- d. The Judicature (Designation of High Court Circuits) Instrument, S.I. No. 94 of 2023. This has facilitated the expansion of the High Court from 20 Circuits to 38.

- 10. More court houses and Justice Centres are being constructed.
  - a. The Court of Appeal and Supreme Court Towers are completed and ready for occupation. This will save the Judiciary

- approximately **UGX 6.0 billion** spent annually on rent for the two Courts.
- b. The construction of Mukono High Court, Butambala, Mayuge and Kamwenge, Chief Magistrate Courts, and Kole, Namayingo and Buhweju Justice Centres has been completed.
- c. Construction is still ongoing for two (2) High Court buildings: Soroti is on the second floor, and Rukungiri is at the painting stage.
- d. Construction is still ongoing for three (3) Chief Magistrates Courts:
  - i. Alebtong is at plastering stage;
  - ii. Lyantonde is at plastering and fitting of windows; and,
  - iii. Budaka is at the painting, tiling, and external works stage.
- e. Construction is ongoing for three (3) Magistrate Grade 1 Courts:
  - i. Abim is at roofing stage;
  - ii. Karenga is at painting stage; and
  - iii. Patongo is at finishing stage
- f. We have also acquired land at Gulu, Mbarara and Mbale cities for the construction of the first two Regional Courts of Appeal.

- 11. The Judiciary completed **renovation on a number of Court buildings**, including: Courts buildings



*The Deputy Chief Justice, Richard Buteera, interacts with stakeholders during the Ibanda Chief Magistrates Court Open Day held on July 20, 2023. Looking on is the Head of Mbarara High Court Circuit, Lady Justice Joyce Kavuma.*



*The Chief Justice Alfonse Owiny - Dollo Chigamoy at the commissioning of the Mukono High Court building on May 11, 2023. Right is the Judiciary Commissioner Engineering and Technical Services, Eng. Dr. Christopher Ebal.*

including Commercial Division, Mubende High Court & CM, Mbale High Court & CM, Gulu High Court & CM, Soroti CM, Kamuli CM, Tororo CM, Kumi CM, Nakasongola CM, Pader CM, Katakwi CM, Otuke G1, Kalongo G1 and Nakawa G1

**12. Operationalization of more High Court Circuits and Magisterial Areas is being stepped up,** in order to enhance access to justice and fight case backlog.

- a. High Court Circuits of Moroto, Tororo, Iganga, Luwero, Hoima, Rukungiri, Kitgum, Bushenyi, Kiboga and Kasese and also enhanced deployment in the High Court Divisions have been operationalized.
- b. Magisterial Areas, including: Dokolo, Mayuge, Sironko, Katakwi, Rakai, Kiryandongo, Kyenjojo, Bubulo, Kumi, Kamuli, Isingiro, Kotido, Kira, Lugazi, Yumbe/Koboko, Kalangala, Sembabule, Budaka, Kibaale, Bundibugyo and Kaberamaido have also been operationalized.
- c. New Magistrate Grade One Courts across the country have been opened up. These include: Kyotera, Kyanika, Bunagana, Kole, Lamwo, Kyazanga, Kalungu, Amuria, Atanga, Kalongo, Kangulumira, Namungalwe, Kibito, Nyarushanje, Atiak, Hakibale, Kichenche, Amudat, Mulanda, Ruhaama, Kakindu, Kyankwanzi, Baitabogwe, Ndaija and Toroma; plus, Municipal Courts of Mbarara, Masaka, Tororo and Arua.

**13. In furthering the development of the Human Capital and enhancement of staff welfare,**

the Judiciary has launched a number of programs, health awareness camps and trainings aimed at improving the human capital. These interventions include:

- a. All the newly appointed/promoted Judicial officers were fully inducted into the Judiciary Service, by attending two-weeks training courses under the auspices of the Judicial Training Institute.
- b. Refresher trainings of various staff in thematic areas of interest have been conducted.
- c. Better salaries to our judicial staff, and are making effort towards achieving commensurate terms for the non-judicial staff.
- d. Judiciary has subscribed the staff to reputable health insurance schemes offered by reputable health Insurers.
- e. Timely payment of enhanced retirement benefits and pension has been ensured.
- f. The Court Clerks who were hitherto paid on salary scale U.7 were upgraded to the appropriate Scale and paid all their arrears.
- g. Judiciary has purchased and distributed more new vehicles, motor cycles and ICT equipment to enhance service delivery.
- h. Hon. Justice Rubby Opio Aweri and Hon. Justice Stella Arach Amoko, who died





in the Service as Justices of the Supreme Court of Uganda, were accorded a State Burial in accordance with section 23 of the Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020.

14. Judiciary has progressively and consistently recruited more judicial and non-judicial officers over time.
  - a. On 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021, Cabinet approved the structure and establishment of the Judiciary (up to 1,155 Judicial staff) and payment of enhanced salaries for the Judicial officers. Insert table of the new judicial structure
  - b. On 22/5/2023, Cabinet again approved the structure establishment of the Judiciary structure for non-Judicial Staff vide Minute No. 195 (CT 2023). When implemented the Judiciary will have a total of 5,936 non-judicial staff who will support the 1,155 Judicial staff to accomplish the Judiciary Transformation Agenda across the country.
  - c. On 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023 the Parliament of Uganda also passed a resolution approving the staff ceiling for High Court Judges from 83 to 151, which gives the Judiciary opportunity to recruit more Judges subject to availability of funds.
  - d. On 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023, the Parliament of Uganda passed the **Judicature (Amendment) Bill, 2023** increasing the number of Justices of Court of Appeal from 15 to 35.
  - e. In the year 2022, the Judiciary recruited a total of 297 Judicial and non-judicial staff, while in 2023 a total of 641 staff were recruited and deployed.
  - f. Over time, the Judiciary has received new appointments and promotions of some of its deserving staff, since 2020 as follows:
    - The Judges of the High Court have increased from 56 to 81.
    - The number of Registrars has grown from 44 to 86.
    - The Chief Magistrates have increased from 54 to 92.
    - The Magistrates Grade one have increased from 165 to 371.
15. Judiciary has stepped up stakeholder engagements.
  - a. Court Open Days have been institutionalised in the Judiciary as a platform for engagement with the court users and the public with the aim of demystifying our processes and procedures but also receiving feedback from our users. Between 2020 and today we have conducted about 50 Court Open Days in various High Court Circuits and Magisterial Areas across the country.
  - b. On 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 we shall be having the first National Court Open Day which will feature the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal and the High Court Division in Kampala among others.
  - c. The new High Court Circuits of Bushenyi, Kasese, Kiboga and Kitgum will also be officially and publicly launched before the end of March 2024. The court users and the public will through these launches understand the processes of Court and to seek for answers to their justice challenges.
16. **The Judiciary successfully hosted a number international conferences and high profile guests since 2020 being;**
  - a. The *2<sup>nd</sup> Annual East African Judicial Conference* from 25<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2022 and
  - b. The *17<sup>th</sup> International Association of Women Judges Conference* from 26<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2022.
  - c. The 20<sup>th</sup> East African Magistrates and Judges Conference (EAMJA) from 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
  - d. Judiciary was honoured, during these conferences to host H.E the President of Uganda as well as the various Honourable Chief Justices, heads of Constitutional Courts and Councils and the President of the East African Court of Justice, among others.
  - e. Hon. Justice John Eudes Keitirima was voted the new President of EAMJA and Uganda was selected to host the next EAMJA Annual Conference in December 2023.



*The Vice President Maj (Rtd) Jessica Alupo (with yellow scarf) in a group photo with Chief Justices, Deputy Chief Justices, Principal Judges, and the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Nobert Mao, at the opening ceremony of the 20th East African Magistrates and Judges Association Conference at the Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort on December 5, 2023*

- f. **Hon. Justice Raymond Zondo**, the Chief Justice of South Africa delivered a Keynote Address on Judicial Independence and Access to Justice at the Annual Judges Conference, 2023, while **Hon. Justice Angelina Mensah-Homiah** and **Hon. Justice Afia Serwah Asare-Botwe** of the Court of Appeal of Ghana delivered a Paper on Performance Assessment, Monitoring and Mentoring.
  - g. During this team building conference the Justices, Judges and Registrars were able to share diverse experiences in case management, Judiciary administration, challenges and opportunities, among others, all geared towards improving performance and human resource development.
  - h. The Judicial Training Institute in conjunction with the IDLO successfully conducted a retreat for the Justices of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal between 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of May 2023. The retreat was a platform for the Justices to share experiences and best practices and matters like collegiality, appellate review, appellate mediation and appellate performance appraisal, were identified for conversation during the retreat. At the retreat **Hon. Justice Prof. Joel Ngugi of the Court of Appeal of Kenya** shared the Kenyan experience on legal research and judgment writing.
  - i. Judiciary successfully organized the first **High Level National Summit on Alternative Justice Systems (AJS) in Uganda** (from 26<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023) which brought together national actors in the justice service industry, including leaders and representatives from the Judiciary, Ministry of Justice, Uganda Law Society, Law Reform Commission, Uganda Bankers Association, Uganda Law Reform Commission, Deans of Law Schools, among others.
  - j. Judiciary is now planning to hold an **African ADR Conference** to be championed and hosted by Uganda in March 2023 ahead of the **International Pan African Summit of Chief Justices** to be held in Switzerland in June 2024, under the auspices of the Pepperdine University. The African ADR Conference will bring together all the Chief Justices from the African continent to share diverse native experiences on ADR and deliberate on the way forward for ADR in Africa.
17. Establishment of the Judiciary Council
- a. The Judiciary Council, a Committee mandated by AJA to advise the Chief Justice in the administration of the Judiciary was successfully inaugurated on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021.
  - b. The **Administration of Judiciary (Judiciary Council) (Procedure) Rules SI. No. 43/2021** were gazetted on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021, to guide the Council in the day to day conduct of its business.
  - c. The Judiciary Council, in its meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 approved the establishment



and composition of the Judiciary Committees, and endorsed the following regulations:

- d. The *Administration of the Judiciary (Establishment of Committees) Regulations, S.I. No. 93/2023* which are intended to establish committees necessary for the effective administration of the Judiciary in accordance with sections 6 and 7 of the Act, and to provide for their powers, functions and procedures.
- The *Administration of the Judiciary (Inspectorate of Courts) Regulations, S.I. No. 92/2023* to operationalise Part III of the Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020 by detailing the functions, powers and procedures of the Inspectorate.
  - The *Judicature (Designation of High Court Circuits) Instrument, S.I. No. 94 of 2023*, which increased the number of High Court Circuits from 20 to 38, distributed across the various regions of Uganda.
- e. On 28<sup>th</sup> September 2023, the Judiciary Council also approved the *Magistrates Courts (Magisterial Areas and Magistrates Courts) Instrument, 2023* and the *Judicature (Designation of High Court Circuits) Instrument, 2023*. These laws will see the creation of more Magisterial Areas and High Court Circuits across the country aimed at bringing justice services nearer to the people.
- f. This year, 2024 the Judiciary Council will further consider *the Administration of the Judiciary (Judicial Training Institute) Regulations, 2024*; and the *Administration of the Judiciary (Judiciary Service) Regulations, 2024*, among others.

## Challenges Encountered

*In a bid to drive the Judiciary Transformation agenda and to achieve the Judiciary Vision, the following impediments have affected our drive.*

### Inadequate Budgetary support

The Budgetary support to Judiciary has been very small compared to the extent of its size and mandate. It has therefore been difficult to fund basic judicial services and infrastructure leading to unsatisfactory performance and failure to roll out justice services to the different corners of the country nearest to the people.

Recently, however, the Judiciary received a leap in its budgetary allocation from UGX 199,077,590,548 for the FY 2020/2021 to UGX 380,724,313,502 for the FY 2021/2022, and for FY 2022/2023 383,259,936,439. This enhancement has seen the Judiciary perform a few miracles as indicated above, but is of course still inadequate to give rise to the desired impact.

More UGX205 billion is required to fulfil H.E the President's promise of midterm improvement to the Judiciary budget of UGX800 billion.

### Loss of Pivotal Staff

On a sad note, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2022, the Judiciary family lost Hon. Justice Rubby Opio Aweri, who was a Justice of the Supreme Court, Chief Inspector of Courts and a distinguished member of the Judiciary Council.

Judiciary also lost Hon. Justice Kenneth Kakuru, a Justice of Appeal, who died on 07/03/2023. Justice Kakuru was pivotal at the Court of Appeal where he had served for about 10 years, since 2013 as the Justice in-charge of case management and registry operations.

On 17/06/2023, Hon. Justice Stella Arach Amoko, a Justice of the Supreme Court, also serving as Court Administrator, passed on. Justice Arach had served the Judiciary for a fruitful period of 26 years in various other capacities: She was a Deputy Principal Judge of the East African Court of Justice from 2006 to 2013; she was a serving member of the Judicial Service Commission;



**The Judiciary has not yet fully established a Judiciary Service that is envisaged in the Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020. In addition, the number of judicial and non-judicial officers is still very small, compared to the population of over 50 million people that the Judiciary has to serve.**

she had chaired the Management Committee of the Law Development Centre and the Governing Council of the Judicial Training Institute, as well as served as a member of the Uganda Law Council.

On 15/10/2023, Judiciary again regrettably lost **HW Aanyu Margaret**, Chief Magistrate Soroti who had tirelessly served the Judiciary for a period of 14 years. We painfully lost several other judicial and non-judicial staff which has greatly impacted on service delivery.

### Case Backlog

The inadequate funding and staffing of the Judiciary inevitably resulted in escalating case backlog at all court levels. However, with increased human resources this challenge is being addressed and the overall Case backlog is reducing gradually. It can be noted that the performance for 2022 surpassed that of 2021 by **91,598 cases** thereby reducing case backlog by **4,915 cases**, i.e. a reduction in backlog from **52,102 cases** in 2020, **48836 cases** in 2021, **44,339 cases** in 2022 and **43,161 cases** in 2023.

### Non establishment of the Judiciary Service

The Judiciary has not yet fully established a Judiciary Service that is envisaged in the Administration of the Judiciary Act, 2020.

In addition, the number of judicial and non-judicial officers is still very small, compared to the population of over 50 million people that Judiciary has to serve.

Accordingly, there's a growing caseload that needs to be timely managed, hence need for further recruitment.

### Low wages for administrative and support staff

While the salaries of judicial officers were enhanced to reasonable levels, the administrative and support staff still grapple with very little pay which affects their day-to-day livelihood and negatively impacts on their morale and output.

### Inadequate court infrastructure

Whereas we are today celebrating a new home for the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court, most of the court buildings across the country are not only old but also small and inadequate to match the staff and court user space needs. Very crucial courts are operating from rented premises, while other gazetted courts, including some High Court Circuits, cannot start operations because of lack of premises. Rented premises cost the Judiciary approximately **UGX 11.15bn** per annum, which resources could have been spent on case management and other developments.

There are also challenges of dilapidated structures, inadequate toilet facilities at courts, lack of archives /exhibit stores and other court premises are not customised with specific facilities for the PWDs, the elderly, children and pregnant and lactating mothers which hinders access to judiciary services.

There is also need for deliberate budget support for institutional houses to cater for accommodation especially in the following Districts, which are hard to reach and hard to stay: Kalangala, Buvuma Island, Bulisa, Buyende, Abim, Karenga, Napak, Bukwo, Nakapiripirit, Moyo & Buhweju.

### Poor road infrastructure and insecurity in some parts of the country

The road network in some places such as Buhweju, Kanungu, Bulambuli, Kaabong, among others is very poor, hence making accessibility and performance of courts very difficult. Some places, especially in the Karamoja region are still faced with insecurity that has



threatened life and property hence affecting delivery of justice services.

### **Insecurity of judicial officers and the courts**

Some Judicial Officers and other justice service providers continue to receive threats from known and unknown sources. Attempts at the lives of some judicial officers have been made, with some receiving consignments of live ammunitions (bullets) in addition to actual threats of violence through the phones and in the media. We have also some courts that have been broken into and vital court property stolen, burnt or damaged.

### **Impudence and refusal to respect court orders**

During the enforcement of court orders, some bailiffs have refused to follow the legal steps resorting to enforcing the orders unlawfully, violently, destructively and sometimes at night. In some other instances it is disrespect of court orders and interference with the execution process by

especially some members of the armed forces, some RDCs and even some lawyers that has frustrated service delivery.

### **Indisciplined litigants**

The Judiciary experienced a breed of litigants who were not advocates but were doing legal practice under guise. These impostors hoodwink litigants and file cases which need not have been filed at all. They are grossly unruly and some are serving sentences for contempt of court.

The Judiciary also encountered a breed of advocates who exhibited tendencies of corruption, mislead their clients into making undue complaints to irrelevant offices and into illegal alternatives to court process. Some lawyers also refuse to follow the due process and use underhand means to obtain wrong ends. Some lawyers are not adhering to the professional code of ethics, in dress, decorum and etiquette and are fond of attacking judicial officers over social media and making endless recusal applications rather than following the due process.

## **Conclusion**

***In the struggles, Judiciary has been blessed with the benevolent support from the Government of Uganda, the Justice Law and Order sector, our esteemed development partners and friends from both within and out of Uganda. We are eternally grateful to them for agreeing to fund access to Justice innovations within the Judiciary.***

Overall the Judiciary has made commendable progress over the past three years and we are optimistic that we shall soon drive home our Transformation Agenda. We are glad that the Government of Uganda and its key organs including Parliament and Cabinet have rallied their support to the Judiciary.

The Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs is working tooth and nail as well the Judicial Service Commission and the Uganda Law Society to ensure that the Judiciary Transformation Agenda comes to fruition. Together we shall change the face of justice in Uganda.

The new home is certainly a source of inspiration to us to work harder and serve our people better. The icon of justice will be a centre for coordinating Judiciary activity, Judiciary friends, Judiciary staff and court users.

We look forward to a renewed Judiciary service and a better Uganda. Special thanks go to our predecessors who started this journey and to the new generation who have nurtured it to fruition.

***Asante Sana.***



## PICTORIAL

### How it all started...



*The groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal buildings on December 3, 2019.*

### The process



*Excavation works at the construction site for the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal buildings commenced in May 2020.*



*By December 2020, the superstructure of the Supreme Court was steadily taking shape.*



## Laying the foundation stone



*H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni laid the foundation stone for the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal buildings on February 5, 2021. This was during the Opening of the New Law Year event.*



# PICTORIAL

## Benchmarking tours



*On the sidelines of the meeting with the Chief Justice, Members of Parliament on the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee were led on a guided tour of twin towers' superstructures on April 4, 2021.*



*The Deputy Inspector General of Government, Ms. Anne Twinomugisha Muhairwe, on a guided tour of the new Supreme Court building.*



*The Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Treasury, Mr Ramadhan Ggoobi during the tour of one of the courthalls.*



*Lady Justice Karamu Koome visited the construction site of the two courts on October 18, 2022 and was amazed by what she saw.*



*The Zambian Judiciary on their tour of the courts on May 23, 2023.*



*The Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Hon. Matia Kasaija being briefed by the Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Judiciary on the progress of the construction.*





The Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Judiciary leading Mr Keith Muhakanizi (RIP), the then Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Treasury on a guided tour of the construction site of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal buildings.



The PS/SJ and the Head of the Public Service and the Secretary to Cabinet, Ms Lucy Nakyobe during her tour of the two court buildings.

## Supervision visits



The Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Judiciary, Dr. Pius Bigirimana and the Chief Registrar HW Sarah Langa Siu regularly inspected the buildings to assess the progress.



Members of the Judiciary Top Management led by the Chief Justice, Alfonse Chigamoy Owiny - Dollo inspected at its different construction stages.



## PICTORIAL



*Justices of the Court of Appeal/Constitutional Court led by the Deputy Chief Justice (L) during their inspection of the new Court of Appeal building.*



*L-R: Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Judiciary, Dr. Pius Bigirimana, the Principal Judge, Dr. Flavian Zeija and Eng. Dr. Christopher Ebal, the Commissioner Engineering and Technical Services and Project Manager for the construction of the courthouses. In the background is part of the contractors' site team.*



*The Chief Justice, Deputy Chief Justice and Justices of the Court of Appeal Justices shortly after the tour of the new courthouses.*

# Behind the construction and supervision of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal buildings

*The Judiciary Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Judiciary, Dr. Pius Bigirimana, shares highlights of the journey to the new home of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal.*

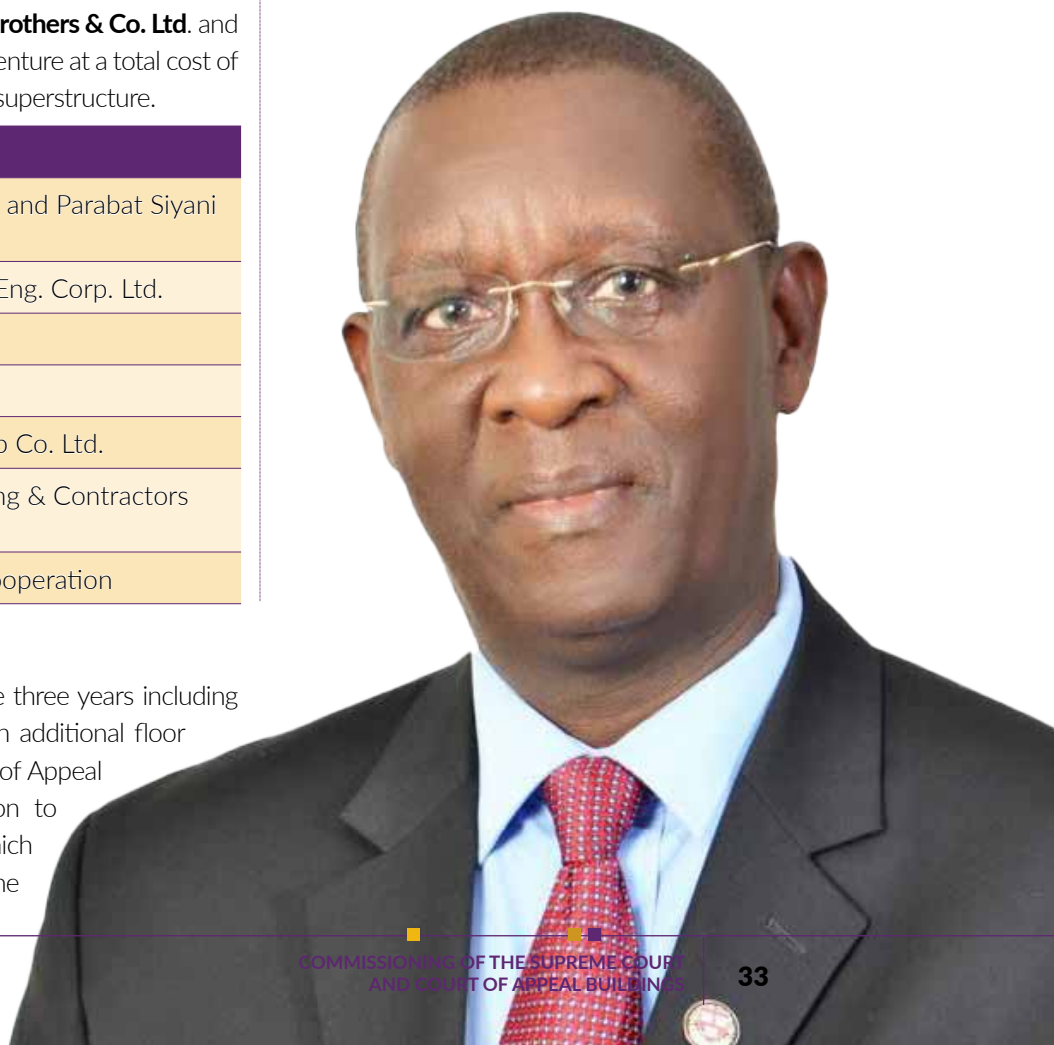
## Please share how the procurement of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal buildings was handled

The idea of constructing the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal was conceived in 1999 but remained on the shelf until 2014 when it was approved by the Judiciary Top Management. But even then, it remained on the wish list because of what was reported to be lack of funding. In July 2019, Top Management made a decision to start with the construction of the super structure with whatever funds were available. The rest would be considered as funds became available. On 2nd September 2019 through tender advertisement, seven firms responded and the Successful Contractor was **Seyani Brothers & Co. Ltd.** and **Parabat Siyani Construction** joint venture at a total cost of Shs.63.9billion for only a nine floor superstructure.

No.	Name of the Bidder
1	Seyani Brothers & Co. Ltd. and Parabat Siyani Construction
2	China State Construction Eng. Corp. Ltd.
3	Roko Construction Ltd.
4	Anaya & Ambitious Jv
5	Anhui Sijian Holding Group Co. Ltd.
6	Samcrete Egypt Engineering & Contractors Sarick Cost. Ltd. Jv
7	China Geo Engineering Cooperation

Construction was supposed to take three years including defects liability period. However, an additional floor on both Supreme Court and Court of Appeal was factored into the construction to cater for Conference facilities which have been draining money from the

budget to finance them in Hotels. The above together with the installation of Information Communication Technology facilities (ICT), Heating Ventilation and Air Condition facilities (HVAC) and Firefighting equipment pushed the construction completion to an estimated four years. Actual construction started May 2020. Today 9th February 2024 Judiciary is entering before the four years. This is a big statement to confirm that after all Government can deliver especially when the players have got an Abundance Mentality coupled with patriotism.





H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni laid the foundation stone for the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal buildings on February 5, 2021.

Additional cost	
7th Floor (Conference rooms)	<b>Shs.7,081,322,138</b>
Information Communication Technology	<b>Shs.21,994,699,977</b>
Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning	<b>Shs.6,844,941,373</b>
Fire-fighting facilities	<b>Shs.6,378,663,172</b>
Interior Design Works	<b>Shs.4,332,185,070</b>
	<b>Shs.46,631,811,730</b>

The overall cost was **Shs.110,531,811,730/=**

The project is a twin tower with two underground floors with a capacity of 226 vehicles. Gross area in Square meters including basement is Supreme court - 15,528 and Court of Appeal - 15,528 giving a total of 31,056 Sq. Meters.

**Even with the additional floors on both buildings, we have come to learn that the construction was managed within expected costs. Tell us how you managed to stay within the budget?**

At the end of the construction, the actual construction rate per square meter is USD901 far lower than the construction cost per square meter which had been estimated at USD1,047 thereby saving Government almost Shs.16bn arrived at by the difference between the original estimate cost per square meter and the final unit cost multiplied by the total square meters.

This was possible because of the following reasons:

- i. Proper Project documentation
- ii. Professional tendering
- iii. Adhering to original specifications
- iv. Minimizing variations in civil works
- v. Minimizing penalties like late payments
- vi. Constant monitoring enabled compliance to construction schedules
- vii. Having a professional Project Management Team

This is not an ordinary structure. First of all, it is a Supreme Court and Court of Appeal structure. Second, it is a State of Art building that answers to the modern Health demands with facilities like Gym, Sauna, Steam and Massage. The following is a summary of some of the space:

**Supreme Court;** 3 Court Halls, 19 Chambers (Self-contained), 1 Conference Hall, 5 Boardrooms, 1 Restaurant, 1 Gym, 1 Sauna, 1 Steam, 1 Executive Cafeteria, 1 Baby feeding room, Childcare room, Advocates changing room, State Attorney room, DPP room, Mediation room, Library, Archives, etc.

**Court of Appeal;** 4 Court Halls, 22 Chambers (Self-contained), 1 Conference Hall, 5 Boardrooms, 1 Restaurant, 1 Gym, 1 Sauna, 1 Steam, 1 Executive Cafeteria, 1 Baby feeding room, Childcare room, Advocates changing room, State Attorney room, DPP room, Mediation room, Library, Archives, etc.

**We have seen many projects start but are never completed. In your view as Accounting Officer, why is this the case?**

Many projects fail to take off or fail mid-way and some others are not completed because of many factors. However, the most prominent emanate from failures on the following four phases in procurement.

**Scoping Stage**

- i. Inadequate skills to develop specifications, Terms of Reference (TORs) and Bills of quantities (BOQs)
- ii. Inadequate stakeholder's consultation which causes resistance in procurement process.

- iii. Inadequate funding to facilitate scoping for example funds for market survey in case of development of bills of quantities

**Sourcing Stage**

- i. Complex Bidding procedures particularly for smaller enterprises
- ii. High cost of bidding including non-refundable fees, printing, bid securities, etc.
- iii. Corruption undermining fair competition
- iv. Inadequate local supplier's participation especially in complex procurements



*An aerial view of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal building.*



*Interior: The Chief Justice's Chamber (L) and one of the boardrooms (R).*



- v. Unclear specifications
- vi. Limited competition, especially in specialized procurements

#### **Bid Evaluation**

- i. Conflict of interest which compromise the impartiality of selection process
- ii. Subjectivity in evaluation sometimes due to unclear evaluation criteria
- iii. Transparency issues which erodes trust and confidence

#### **Contract Award and Contract Management:**

- i. Bureaucratic delays in obtaining necessary approvals which lead to project delays
- ii. Insufficient contract management skills which leads to challenges in enforcing contractual obligations
- iii. Weak Monitoring and Evaluation by users and other stakeholders
- iv. Delayed payment as a result of budget cuts
- v. Shoddy work by some contractors who are unpatriotic

#### **Who have been the major players on this journey?**

First and foremost, thanks go to **H.E. the President** for his support when he directed that funds be made available by enhancement of Judiciary budget in the year 2021/22. This was a game changer in the life of this project.

The procurement was transparent. That is why there were not administrative reviews. Thanks to the then Contracts Committee Chairperson headed by **HW Sarah Langa**

**Siu**, the current Chief Registrar who ensured fairness and transparency in the procurement process.

Similar thanks go to **Ms. Maureen Kasande** the Under Secretary, who chaired the evaluation committee that produced an evaluation report that was not challenged. The Procurement Unit headed by **Mr. Deo Kasozi** did a fantastic job by technically guiding the procurement.

Many times Project Consultants cause problems in delaying to review the construction work. Habitat Consultants deserve credit for having done a good job with appropriate advice given in a timely manner.

**Seyani Brothers & Co. Ltd.** and **Parabat Siyani Construction** joint venture, the Contractors were up to the job. They kept time in the face of monitoring pressure we put on them. Almost every weekend for the three years, Dr. Ebal and myself were on their bumper. They have delivered quality work within the timeframe.

The Contractor may not have succeeded in doing the work as expected without the close Technical Supervision by the Contract Manager, **Eng. Dr. Christopher Ebal** and his team take credit.

There is a Team of young officers who ensured the final interior design work was acceptable. The team was headed by **Ms. Maureen Kasande**, US/FA and supported by **Ms. Apophia Tumwine**, C/HRM and **HW Agnes Alum**, Deputy Registrar. The design work



*Interior: Gym facilities (L) and one of the courtrooms (R).*

was delivered by FAB House SMC Ltd. headed by **Ms. Lee**.

The project would not have succeeded in time without the support from Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. I recognize **Hon. Matia Kasaija**, Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the Late **Keith Muhakanizi** (May His Soul Rest in Peace), **Mr. Ramanthan Goobi**, Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Treasury, **Mr. Ocailap Patrick**, Deputy Secretary to the Treasury, **Mr. Kenneth Mugambe**, former Director Budget, **Mr. Lawrence Semakula**, Accountant General, all of whom never got tired of my constant calls. Thanks for their commitment.

I recognize the initial initiatives by the former **Chief Justice Benjamin Odoki** succeeded by **Justice Bart Katureebe** who together with the Top Management then who broke the ground before his retirement and provided encouragement and leadership in mobilization of resources.

I wish to extend my gratitude and congratulate the Top Management of the Judiciary headed by **Hon. Alfonse Owiny - Dollo**, the Chief Justice, **Hon. Richard Buteera**, Deputy Chief Justice, **Hon. Dr. Flavian Zeija**, Principal Judge and **HW Sarah Langa Siu**, Chief Registrar for the teamwork and transformational Leadership.

I once again thank H.E. the President who continued to advocate for an increased budget for the Judiciary and made commitment to ensure that Judiciary budget reaches Shs.800bn in the Medium Term. We hope when the situation improves we shall reach at least Shs.600bn next financial year which is our budget projection in the Budget Framework Paper. However, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has only indicated they can provide Shs.392bn leaving a shortfall of Shs.205bn. I believe that Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development can consider our Regional Courts of Appeal since we have demonstrated that we can put the funds to good use.

I wish to conclude by stating that this country requires patriots with lenses that focus on opportunities. It requires Public Servants with Private Sector mindset. By constructing the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal, Government will save Shs.6bn in terms of rent annually. However, with the Conference Halls, all Seminars, Workshops and Conferences will be held within house thereby saving more money which was being spent in the outside expensive premises.

We have delivered in the timeframe we committed ourselves.

For God and my country.



*The Chief Justice (C) Deputy Chief Justice (R) the Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Judiciary (2nd L) during a tour of the gym facilities. Looking on is the Judiciary Technical Advisor, Prof. Andrew Khaukha.*



# The year 2024 will remain remarkable in the history of the Judiciary

*Today, we are witnessing a historic moment in the Judiciary during which H.E the President of the Republic of Uganda is inaugurating the newly constructed towers to house the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal of Uganda. Because of the significance of the event and the buildings, it is proper to say this is a new dawn for the Judiciary of Uganda as our Supreme Court and Court of Appeal (herein after referred to as appellate Courts) move to their permanent premises.*



**Sarah Langa Siu**

Chief Registrar

Finally, this event brings an end to years of renting private premises. While the rented premises housed our justices, and enabled us to continue to serve Ugandans, this arrangement came with many challenges and we were never comfortable with it.

First, these premises were not suitable as offices and chambers as they were either malls or residential homes that were converted to chambers. Second, the premises were shared with other tenants, sometimes posing challenges with regard to the organization of security in the premises. Navigating the relationship as a tenant was therefore often too complex and uncomfortable, and challenged institutional independence of the Judiciary. As a result, we longed for a place we would call home.

I am therefore overjoyed that we now have a suitable home for the appellate court buildings. I am especially proud to be associated with the successful and timely completion of the construction because, by God's Grace, I have been part of the entire journey of these magnificent structures, from the very start.

Prior to being appointed Chief Registrar, I was privileged to serve as

the Chairperson Contracts Committee from July 2017 to March 2021. I thank Mr. Kagole Kivumbi, then Secretary to the Judiciary (RIP) who first appointed me in that capacity, and also Dr. Pius Bigirimana, who extended my term as Chairperson when he joined the Judiciary as the Secretary to the Judiciary.

At the time of my appointment I was a Deputy Registrar at the Anti-Corruption Division. I must admit I was not so excited by the appointment to Contracts Committee, and I recall my futile attempts to decline the opportunity. My cold feet stemmed from the numerous cases regarding public procurement that we had handled at the ACD. In some of the cases, billions of shillings had been lost to "brief case" companies or money paid and 'air' supplied or shoddy work done. So anything that I knew about procurement was trouble and I didn't want any trouble. In short, this was not a task someone who had presided over cases of failed or fraudulent procurements was keen to take on ordinarily.

However, the more people I spoke to about it, the more I got convinced that it was a worthwhile call and that it was timely for me to take up the appointment, as long as we did so diligently while





**I am forever thankful to H.E. the President and the Judicial Service Commission for giving me an opportunity to serve the Judiciary and Uganda in this capacity.**

**God has surely made everything concerning the appellate buildings, beautiful in His time.**

adhering to the procurement principles of transparency, confidentiality, fairness, accountability. At the time of my appointment to chair the Contracts Committee, I had been described as 'young' but the most important thing I had was passion, and my strength came from knowing that Judiciary wanted competence, not age. My confidence also came from knowing that the God I served would be there for us.

My able team comprised Hon. Justice Tadeo Asiimwe (then Registrar- Inspector of Courts), HW Stella Beatrice Atingu (now Registrar), HW Peter Fred Lochomin (Chief Magistrate), Ms. Claire Asiimwe (then Senior Assistant

Secretary) and Ms. Destiny Letasi Asea (Senior Economist and Secretary of the Contracts Committee). I am forever thankful to God for these able members. We worked with many procurement officers but I must single out Mr. Deo Kasozi the Head of Procurement and Disposal Unit - a brilliant, hardworking and very knowledgeable officer. He made our work easy and also responded to any issues or concerns that came up.

As we journeyed the procurement lane, little did we know we were the team that would handle two of the biggest procurements of the Judiciary of our present time - the construction of the Appellant Courts' Buildings and the Electronic Court Case Management System (ECCMIS).

The procurement process for the Appellant Buildings began in 2019. Seven companies submitted their bids and six progressed to the evaluation stage. The Evaluation Committee was chaired by Ms Maureen Kasande, the Under Secretary. Other members of the team were Hon. Lady Justice Immaculate Busingye (then Registrar), Hon Justice Vincent Emmy Mugabo (then Registrar), Hon. Lady Justice Susan Abinyo (then Registrar), Eng. Dr. Christopher Ebal (Commissioner Engineering and Technical Services), Mr. Naigo Stephen Emitu (Assistant Commissioner Accounts), Simon



Peter Opolot (Principal Economist), Francis Kalibala, Senior Engineer, Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development and Mr. Deo Kasozi (Head Procurement and Disposal Unit).

At the end of the evaluation process, we awarded the contract to MS Seyani Brothers & Co (U) Ltd and Parbat Siyani Construction Ltd. Awarding the contract to Seyani Brothers was not a difficult exercise. They were technically compliant, had competent and qualified staff, as well as the necessary machinery and equipment for the execution of the assignment. They were also considered more financially sound, with their capacity demonstrated by the scale of the construction projects they had undertaken between 2014 and 2019. Most importantly, their track record rested our fears. They had constructed over 18 buildings in the country, including the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) Towers and the Offices of the Auditor General.

Before awarding the contract to Seyani Brothers, however, it was important that our Committee understood with great detail the type and design of structure being proposed.

I thank Dr. Christopher Ebal, Commissioner Engineering and Technical Services for his willingness to severally appear before the Contracts Committee to present and explain the architectural designs of the appellate buildings. We were struck by the magnificent towers proposed, and it was so inspiring to image these buildings standing at the High Court.

With this important process completed, all that was left was for us to pray for God's hand to take charge of the projects. However, I must admit that shortly after the award was given and the contractor moved to seal off the site, I suffered the worst form of conflict of interest – on the one hand we needed the buildings, but on the other hand, I could not imagine that the beautiful grass and open space where we usually attended the New Law Year was going to be no more.

But looking at the magnificent towers that stand before us today, I can say, the project was worth undertaking.



**The year 2024 will remain remarkable in the history of the Judiciary. Let there be no doubt, the challenges ahead are still many for the Judiciary, but we look to the future with optimism that the new premises will be of great value. I welcome you to the Permanent Home for the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal of Uganda.**

Not only have the buildings resolved one of our oldest problems – lack of a home for the Appellant Courts, they have also come with other modern facilities, including spacious chambers with befitting judicial ambiance, large court rooms to accommodate our users, boardrooms and conference facilities among others. Having concluded the procurement process, at the time, I thought my role as far as those structures are concerned was over.

However, on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2020, by the grace of God I was appointed Chief Registrar, by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda. This meant this appointment presented another opportunity to keenly follow the progress of these structures. By the time of my appointment, the groundbreaking of the appellate buildings had taken place a couple of months earlier.

After a couple of months, the super structure was off the ground and it continued to take shape. By virtue of being in Top Management, I found myself again closely associating with the ongoing construction of the Appellant Buildings.

I cannot forget the PS' routine phone calls or walking into my office and his trademark invitation and smile, "CR, I want to take you to see the building. You always have bright ideas and an eye for what could be improved." Yet, his own critical eye and attention to detail is truly admirable.

So, together we moved countless times into the appellate

buildings inspecting and giving suggestions and making changes here and there. Along the way we concluded that close supervision of projects by top leadership is critical. We also realized that without clear guidelines, there was a risk of too many people suggesting what a particular structure should look like or not being bothered about the importance of uniformity.

This led us to develop, consultatively, Guidelines for Architectural Designs for Court Houses, a process that I am so proud to have led, and hope that it will go a long way to inform future designs and standardize the appearance of courts in Uganda.

For me, it is wonderful, therefore, to see all the effort of so many people and committees come together to such a beautiful conclusion. It has been both a privilege and an honour to be part of this amazing story of the Appellate Buildings.

My Lord Chief Justice, words fail me to describe your zeal and passion to drive the transformation Agenda of the Judiciary. Your efforts have surely paid off. I am

grateful to My Lord the Deputy Chief Justice and My Lord the Principal Judge for their invaluable support on this journey.

I am forever thankful to H.E. the President and the Judicial Service Commission for giving me an opportunity to serve the Judiciary and Uganda in this capacity.

God has surely made everything concerning the appellate buildings, beautiful in His time. Ecclesiastes 3: 1 & 9 -There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven. He has made everything beautiful in its time.

The year 2024 will remain remarkable in the history of the Judiciary. Let there be no doubt, the challenges ahead are still many for the Judiciary, but we look to the future with optimism that the new premises will be of great value. I welcome you to the Permanent Home for the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal of Uganda.

**TO GOD BE THE GLORY.**



*The Chief Registrar and the Permanent Secretary during one of their routine inspections of the court buildings.*



The groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal buildings on December 3, 2019.

## Construction of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal Buildings: The Historical Perspective



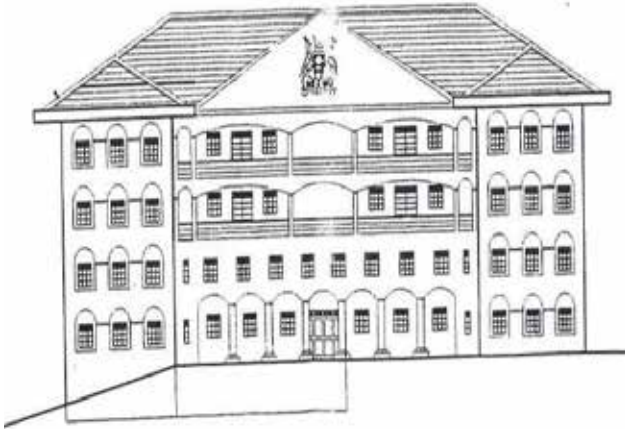
**Dr. Eng. Christopher Ebal**

Project Manager (Supreme Court and Court of Appeal Construction Project)

***The idea of constructing the appellate court buildings started in 1999 with a design for Court of Appeal building only. Later on it involved getting court premises constructed for both the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal.***

The Appellate Court project was conceived out of the need to provide a one-stop Centre for Judiciary in recognition of the fact that the different Courts are scattered over dispersed locations in Kampala. Several of these locations are in parts of the City that are inaccessible, yet the mandate of the Judiciary requires close proximity for communication, cooperation and coordination. The institutions are also located in rented premises that are not designed for the provision of Judiciary services and are inaccessible to the public.

The huge cost of renting various premises for Judiciary further compounds the challenges that the Justice system faces. The annual rental expense is quite high. Despite this huge cost, there is still inadequate space for staff requirements and limited space for storage. There is also virtually no space to adequately handle clients. It is in light of these challenges that the Judiciary approved the Appellate courts design in 2014.



Front elevation of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal building, 1999.

## Objectives of the Project

The overall goal of the project is to promote the rule of law through enhanced independence and public trust in the Judiciary in line with the national vision of transforming Uganda from a peasant to a middle income status by 2040.

The objective of the project was to provide office accommodation for the Judiciary in order to facilitate and improve service delivery and increase access to justice services. Specifically-

- a. To provide a green and intelligent building that will increase productivity and improve quality of Judiciary services at the Appellate level.
- b. To provide for a purpose-built Appellate Courts buildings that will promote access to judicial services

## Expected Outputs

- a. Enhanced operational efficiency and coordination among Appellate courts and reduced high cost of rent while releasing resources to improve operations and service delivery.
- b. Improved regulatory environment for doing business, private sector growth and enhanced competitiveness.
- c. Judicial independence and purpose-built, permanent facilities for Court.
- d. Reduced lead times for delivery of justice

## Funding Challenges of the Project

### Orio Project

In 2008, the Embassy of Netherlands in Kampala encouraged the Judiciary and JLOS to apply for support towards the construction under the Dutch ORIO infrastructure Project Fund. The Orio Facility would provide a 50% grant and as a condition, Government of Uganda was to provide a 50% matching grant. Indeed, Government represented by MoFPED committed to providing the matching grant. The application was submitted and but was **unsuccessful**.

### Bankable Project Proposal

In a meeting between the Chief Justice and the Minister of Finance, Planning Economic Development the Sector was advised to combine all the projects being pursued into one for purposes of bankability and coordination. The Sector was further advised to prepare a bankable project proposal for the combined project. This brought the JLOS House project.

The Judiciary procured a consultant who prepared a bankable project proposal which was duly submitted to the Ministry of Finance. During the consideration of the budget for FY 2010/11, the project as an unfunded priority to Parliament.

### Project Documentation

During a subsequent meeting with the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee of Parliament and the Prime Minister to consider the budget proposals, in 2011/12, the Minister of Finance requested the Judiciary to submit detailed drawings and bills of quantities so that procurement of a contractor could commence. These were procured from the savings on grants from the support of the Netherlands and Sweden.

The detailed designs were developed, bills of quantities were prepared and the project costed. The Judiciary and the JLOS Sector submitted the required documentation to MoFPED and in a letter dated February 2014, the MoFPED advised the Sector to procure the JLOS House Project under Public Private Partnership (PPP) modality.

The PPP approached was embarked on in 2014 and Ms.



*Three dimensional view of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal from Rwenzori House, 2014.*

Haki Consortium emerged the preferred bidder. Redesign and Valued Engineering were done and by 2016, the redesigns were completed except the Commercial close and Financial close. Due diligence was done in The United Kingdom, South Africa and Mauritius. By May 2017 the agreements were ready for signature.

However, in 2017, the Head of the Judiciary convinced the Executive that Judiciary should not be in somebody's buildings for over 20 years when it's an independent arm of the State.

Accordingly, the Judiciary had to go back to the designs and documentation of 2014 which had then been approved by the relevant authorities.

## Detailed Design and Documentation

### Design Concept

The design comprises of two short towers of up to seven floor levels on either side of the existing high court building. The office chambers and Court Towers are joined together below the ground with two Basement levels. The first Tower proposed at the left hand side of the high court

Front is to house the Court of Appeal whereas on the extreme right hand side is the supreme court. In between the two towers over the basement is a green overlay of passpallum grass. This allows at least the central part of the High Court to maintain a quality overview of the city Centre. The ground coverage of the building is about 60% of the green frontage.

Details are as follows:

- a. Car parking – At least 226 parking slots including two basements.
- b. Restaurants, Business Centre, Advocate Dressing Rooms on Ground Level.
- c. Canteen/Restaurant & Gym on 6<sup>th</sup> floor.

### Design Parameters

In order to come up with a design that facilitates a better working environment, the following parameters were taken into consideration;

- a. Accessibility to Site
- b. Vehicular movement i.e. Entry & Exit
- c. Court House Safety (Fire Escapes)
- d. Circulation & Security (Both internal and external)



- e. Environment issues (Building Orientation, Ventilation, Lighting)
- f. Geological & Topographical Land Surveys (Types of Soils, Landscape etc.)
- g. Availability of Building Services (Power, Water, Storm-water drainage, sewerage disposal, communication, fire escapes).
- h. Construction materials (Fabric, Internal Finishes, External Finishes availability and maintenance)

5No. Boardrooms, 3No. Registries, justices' restaurant, Conference facilities, Steam bath and sauna, Gym room, Executive board room, Deputy Chief Justice's mini library, PA to Deputy Chief Justice, Research assistants, staff restaurant, cells, building maintenance office, Business centre, Advocates robbing rooms, Security rooms, Mothers breast feeding rooms, consultation rooms, exhibit stores, Drivers room,

### Accommodation brief

**Supreme Court:** 19No. Chambers {1No. Chief Justices, 15No. Justices, 3No. Registrars}, 3No. Court halls, Justices' Restaurant, 4No. Boardrooms, 3No. Registries, 1 No. Computer room, Mediation lounge, 1 No. Library, Gym and sauna, Conference facilities, staff restaurant, business centre, Advocates robbing, Security room, Mothers' breast feeding room, staff lounge, State Attorneys' room, Accounts, Staff Library, archives, Research assistants, 2No. Mediation rooms, Chief Justice's mini Library, PA to Chief Justice.

**Court of Appeal:** 22No. Chambers {1No. Deputy Chief Justice, 18No. Justices, 3No. Registrars}, 4No. Court halls,

### Design Approvals

The Judiciary top management approved the design in



*Earth works in March 2020.*



2014 and the Kampala Capital City Authority approved the design in 2016.

### Construction Project Management

The implementation of the works started well in March 2020. The combined team from Habitat Consultants and Engineering and Technical services of the Judiciary provided technical management of the project to completion. Major factors controlled included quality assurance, time management, cost control and stakeholder management. The project management involved ensuring the right materials are used with test results, continuous cost appraisal, monthly site meetings and engaging the various stakeholders on a continuous basis. Proper specifications and documentation is vital for the success of any project

An extra floor was added on both towers to handle conferences and this increased the floor area to 31,056 sq. To increase the interior beauty, a team for interior design was contracted giving the project another touch.

As of early January 2024, the project is at practical completion level.

### Challenges

From the onset in 1999, funding was a major bottleneck until 2018/19 when the Government of Uganda accepted to fund the project over a number of years. Weather has also been a challenge during the sub structure activities. Covid-19 also brought serious issues with the supply of imported materials and partial lockdown. Adjusting services of water, sewage and electricity.



*Some of the facilities at the new court buildings*



## What others had to say...

### Twenty three years later, we now have a new headquarters for the Judiciary

I note that the commissioning of the Judiciary Twin Towers today is occurring after the just concluded 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Judges Conference. I am glad that these meetings that started, if I recall rightly, in 1996/97, continue to this day, as they provide a valuable opportunity for self-examination or introspection by the Judiciary and charting a way forward in improving our services to the public.



On a date I do not exactly recall I received a Danish Judge, Judge Brydenscholt, who was paying a courtesy call on me. He was consulting for Danida in Uganda. We discussed Danida's work in Uganda. He told me that they are supporting human rights work in this country, such as provision of clean water, and so on. I challenged him that if human rights were central to their support for Uganda, it was imperative that they looked at the Arm of Government that provided the venue for enforcement of fundamental rights and freedoms. The state of administration of justice in a country provided the litmus test for the observance of and enjoyment of human rights. It was clear that we had a variety of daunting problems and we needed support. It is soon after that meeting that collaboration between Danida and the Judiciary started, leading to the creation of master plan for the Judiciary Estate, among other areas of support that Danida provided to the Judiciary.

Central to our plans was the question of a new Judiciary headquarter building to house the Supreme Court and an expanded High Court. Justice Plat who was on the Supreme Court, and acted as my 'Foreign Secretary', assisted in the development of a plan for the construction of the Judiciary Headquarters building. When we discussed with our partner, Danida, it was ultimately decided to concentrate their support, not on the Judiciary Headquarters building, but on other courts in and outside of Kampala which were probably in equal, if not, greater need for buildings and or refurbishment, the last one having been done in the late sixties or early seventies, which was Mbale Chief Magistrates Court. Danida sponsored the construction or renovation of a number of High Court Circuits Buildings, including Fort Portal, Gulu, Mbarara, Jnja, Mbale, and Chief Magistrates Courts buildings all over the country.

Those parts of the Judiciary Estate that Danida was not able to support were to be done by the Government of Uganda who were obliged to provide adequate facilities for the Judiciary to be able to execute its constitutional mandate. But as you may know that list was long, and by the time of my retirement, we had not been able to come to the question of a new Judiciary headquarters building that housed both the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal.

I am glad that finally the Government of Uganda was able to support the construction of the Appellate Courts building 23 years after my retirement, that is being opened today. I congratulate my successors who kept on track and finally have achieved this goal.

*Chief Justice S W W Wambuzi (Rtd)*



### Plans for the construction project were drawn during my reign

“Building of the Supreme Court was a dream that started during my tenure as Chief Justice. Plans that were drawn during my reign. It was agreed that the building would be situated at the High Court in Kampala. Therefore, I am glad that this dream has finally been realized,”

*Chief Justice Emeritus, Hon. Justice Benjamin J. Odoki.*

### Meeting the service level expectations from our customers

“This is a memorable occasion that is part of a larger project, which aims at ensuring that the Judiciary is transformed. The project of building the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal started in 1999 and has moved through many stages including the use of Public Private Partnership. The activities that we have witnessed today constitute part of the measures that the Judiciary is undertaking to meet the service level expectations from our customers by providing physical access to justice,”



*Chief Justice Emeritus, Hon. Justice Bart M. Katureebe, at the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal buildings*



### This is value for taxpayers money

“This is a job well done and the finishing speaks for itself. Well done for the great structures. I thank the Judiciary Accounting Officer, Dr. Pius Bigirimana, for being vigilant and ensuring that there is value for taxpayers’ money. He should come to Kenya and share the Ugandan experience as we embark on similar projects,”

*Chief Justice of Kenya, Lady Justice Martha Koome*

### At long last, we have customized courthouses

We are happy as Court of Appeal to have a home and this home is a purpose-built court. It was conceived, planned and built purposely to accommodate the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court. So, the court halls are structured for the purposes of accommodating presiding judges, witnesses, accused persons, advocates and the public. That is a big relief to these courts because we have been accommodated in buildings that were not purpose-built.

It has facilities for Judicial Officers, advocates, prosecutors, witnesses and all the other court users. The security has been catered for. Entrances and holding areas for accused persons have been catered for. There are robbing rooms for advocates, prosecutors and there’s parking space for court users. This shall be comfortable for everybody and user friendly.



We have been having problems of inadequate and inappropriate archives and registries. Now, we now have the opportunity to start afresh, and arrange our registries properly so that it is easy to file and retrieve documents that will help us in the smooth running of the court.

I think now everybody that needs court services knows where to go. There is the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal and High Court in one place. Therefore, the administration of the Judiciary is housed in one place, unlike the current situation where you have the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal and High Court in different locations. Both the Chief Justice and Deputy Chief Justice are in distant places for communication and work. Now we shall be in the same set-up as Top Management (Chief Justice, Deputy Chief Justice, Principal Judge, Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Judiciary, and the Chief Registrar). So Top Management is housed in one area for easy communication, and that helps in the smooth running of the Institution.

*Hon. Justice Richard Buteera, Deputy Chief Justice*

### **This project is going to save the Judiciary billions of shillings**

I have known about this project even before I became Minister. This project started in the reign of previous Chief Justices. It shows that even when leadership changes, there should be a commitment to finish any job that may have been started. I congratulate the Chief Justice, the other members of Top Management and the entire Judiciary for making us proud. This project is going to save billions that the Judiciary has been spending to rent space. Above all, the building is extremely impressive. I have visited many courthouses around the world, definitely on the continent of Africa, this one ranks among the best. In terms of finishing, the solidity of the structure, user friendliness both to court users from outside and even the Justices themselves. I think this is the very definition of value for money.



I thank the Secretary to the Judiciary for his transformational leadership under the guidance of the Chief Justice, Deputy Chief Justice and Principal Judge and the entire team This definitely is a remarkable achievement. Maybe other permanent secretaries can learn from him...he is the quinine without sugarcoating. But I know he is result-oriented. The workspace environment at the Judiciary has greatly improved thanks to leadership of the Chief Justice and the entire team he works with.

*Hon. Norbert Mao, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs*



### **Good job**

This is really good work. These developments make the Government very proud, well done,"

*Hon. Matia Kasija, Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development*



### This is a true manifestation of the Judiciary's transformation agenda

"It is a milestone for the Judiciary that the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal have their own homes. The Supreme Court is the highest Court of the land followed by the Court of Appeal, it was not looking good for the two highest Courts of the land to be renting. It is always a good feeling to have a place to call home. The buildings come with proper chambers, court halls and offices. The Judicial Officers and other Staff of the Judiciary will be able to sit in befitting offices where they can perform their functions with convenience and ease. The rented premises are not tailored for day to day court activities and Court functions. With the two new buildings, we shall have more space to accommodate our big staff numbers.

Renting for the appellate Courts has been taking a handsome sum from our Judiciary budget. The amount saved from rent will certainly help us in other areas most especially in organising court sessions. I'm extremely delighted that we have these buildings are in place. This is a true manifestation of the Judiciary's transformation agenda. We shall continue to lobby for resources to ensure that all our courts have homes. It's not something achievable in a short term but it's worth trying. I thank the Government for availing funds for the timely completion of the appellate Courts twin buildings. I commend every person whose efforts have finally led us thus far. I say thank you. It's now our duty as the Judiciary to ensure that the twin-buildings are a pillar of Justice. And this, we promise,"

*Principal Judge, Dr. Flavian Zeija*

### The Court buildings are proof of putting resources to good use

The completion of the Supreme Court and Court of appeal clearly demonstrates that it is not only money that matters. It is a matter of not only having **CONCEPTUAL CLARITY** but also having an **ABUNDANCE MENTALITY**. It is about teamwork. It is about "keeping the eye on the ball"and continuously giving a sense of direction. It is about integrity ensuring that the resources are put to the right use, keeping in mind timeframes for delivery.



*Dr. Pius Bigirimana, Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Judiciary*



### Justices finally have befitting structures for their work

"As the Chairperson of the Contracts Committee that handled this procurement, I am surely very proud and I believe members of the Contracts Committee of that time are equally very proud of this great milestone. Finally, Justices of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal have befitting working environment to carry out their roles, and save about UGX6bn spent on rent annually. May Justice flow like a river to all who seek the same."

*Her Worship Sarah Langa Siu, Chief Registrar*

### We hope the new premises will aid in access to justice

"I congratulate the Judiciary on the opening of the new appellate court buildings. We hope that the new premises will aid in access to justice while providing better working conditions for the appellate bench. Our hope is that the appellate courts will now expedite the hearing and disposal of cases before them,"

*Bernard Oundo, President Uganda Law Society*



### It's a great work

"This is very good work; you are doing us a very good service. You can proudly say Government of Uganda has done its part funding the project,"

*Mr Ramadhan Ggoobi, Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Treasury*



"Through this Committee, we have played a crucial role in shaping the appearance of these buildings and construction of the appellate courts,"

*Ms. Robina Gureme Rwakoojo, Chairperson, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee*



### This is a commendable work

"This is a commendable work in terms of quality and progress. There is need for other Government projects to emulate the construction of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal buildings,"

*Ms. Anne Twinomugisha Muhairwe, Deputy Inspector General of Government*



### This is a very important achievement

It is my singular honour to congratulate His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda, the Chief Justice and the entire Judiciary as well as all partner institutions under Administration of Justice Programme for this very important achievement. This is a commendable development where Justices of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal can execute their duties in comfort and dignity. This is so deserving of the honourable job that they do in dispensing justice. As members of the Uganda Law Society, we are delighted to know that we are going to work in a dignified environment. The twin towers separate us (Judiciary) from the old way of having to move from place to place looking for places to rent. We thank God.

*Dr. Elly Karuhanga, Senior Partner, Kampala Associated Advocates*



# Celebrating the achievements of the Uganda Judiciary

*The Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Judiciary in his recent engagement with members of the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee noted that the Judiciary has registered a number of achievements for Financial Year 2022/23 and half year of FY 2023/24. Below are the highlights of his presentation.*

The Judiciary received an increment in the budget allocation from Shs.199 Billion in the FY 2020/2021 to Shs. 376 Billion in FY 2021/22 to Shs. 381 Billion for the FY 2022/2023. The current approved budget for FY 2023/24 is Shs. 392 Billion. This increment has enabled the Judiciary to achieve the following;

## 1. Improve Court Performance

### a. Court Performance for FY 2022/23

At the end FY 2022/23, Courts registered progress in case disposal completing **266,323** cases out of a total caseload of **422,672** cases that comprised of the **128,652** cases brought forward from FY 2021/22

and **294,020** registered in the financial year. This was commendable because, on average, the courts completed cases faster by almost **6 months (177 days)** compared to FY 2021/22.

The disposal rate for FY 2022/23 stood at **63.01%** against the target of **52%** which is the highest in comparison to the last three Financial Years at **55%**, **49%** and **45.2%** in FY 2021/22, FY 2020/21 and FY 2019/20 respectively. Overall, the Courts disposed of **119,678** cases in the half of FY 2023/24 out of the case load of **277,680** cases in the Judiciary system translating into **43.1%** disposal rate.

### Summary of Court performance for the half of FY 2023/24

Court Level	Bought Forward	Registered	Completed	Pending as at 31st December 2023	Backlog as at 31st December 2023
Supreme Court	694	189	54	829	371
Court of Appeal/Constitutional Court	8,190	2,641	508	10,323	6,145
High Court (Divisions & Circuits)	59,368	25,018	22,111	62,275	24,956
Chief Magistrate Courts	53,542	71,366	62,961	61,947	9,291
Magistrate Grade I Courts	16,746	38,751	33,196	22,301	2,386
Magistrate Grade II Courts	286	889	848	327	12
Grand Total	138,826	138,854	119,678	158,002	43,161





### b. Implementation of the expanded structure of Judicial Officers

Cabinet approved an expanded structure for Judicial Officers and non-judicial Officers. This included improved remuneration for members of the lower bench.

However, Cabinet only approved the Structure and establishment, but did not approve Salary Enhancement for non-judicial Officers.

The revised Structure and Terms of Service are a major prerequisite for transition of staff from the mainstream Public Service to the Judiciary Service.

The Judicature (Amendment) Bill, 2023 was passed by Parliament providing for increased number of Justices of Court of Appeal from 15 to 36. The Bill is pending assent by H.E The President.

### Lower Bench

S/N	Category	Approved Structure	Filled	Vacant
1	Chief Registrar	1	1	0
2	Registrar	12	10	2
3	Deputy Registrar	80	43	37
4	Assistant Registrar	40	24	16
5	Chief Magistrate	160	90	70
6	Senior Principal Magistrate Grade I	40	10	30
7	Principal Magistrate Grade I	50	21	29
8	Senior Magistrate Grade I	70	34	36
9	Magistrate Grade I	514	299	215
10	Magistrate Grade Two	0	18	0
	SUB TOTAL	967	550	435
	TOTAL (Lower Bench plus Upper Bench)	1,144	652	510

### c. Appointments and promotions in the FY 2022/23

In the FY 2022/23 the Judiciary received **327** new appointments and promotions of staff as follows:

#### Summary of appointments & promotions in the FY 2022/23

S/N	Court Level	Male	Female	Total
1	Justices of the Supreme Court	2	1	3
	Justices of Court of Appeal	0	1	1
2	Judges of the High court	8	9	17
3	Acting Registrars	0	1	1
4	Acting Deputy Registrars	8	6	14
5	Acting Chief Magistrates	7	15	22
9	Acting Senior Magistrates Grade One	14	15	29
11	Administrative Staff	102	138	240
	Total	141	186	327



*The Chief Justice and other senior Judiciary officials after the swearing-in of five Magistrates.*

#### d. Ongoing recruitments in the FY 2023/24

The Judiciary has for the first half of the FY 2023/24 received a total of 512 new staff as follows:

#### Summary of appointments in the FY 2023/24

S/N	Court Level	New appointments
1	Judge of the High Court	11
2	Acting Deputy Registrar	6
3	Acting Assistant Registrar	6
4	Acting Registrar	6
5	Acting Chief Magistrate	2
6	Principal Magistrate Grade One	1
7	Senior Magistrate Grade One	2
8	Magistrate Grade One	88
9	Administrative Staff	390
	Total	512

The above recruitments enabled us to operationalize and deploy Resident Judges in the four new High Court Circuits of Bushenyi, Kasese, Kiboga, and Kitgum. The Judiciary was able to operationalize and deploy Magistrates in new Courts of Toroma, Ishongororo, Busesa, Ndaija, Ruhama, Karugutu, Omoro, Kicheche, Kyankwanzi, Amudat, Maracha and Nyadri. Other

areas that equally benefitted from the deployments are Atiak, Mulanda, Hakibale, Kisinga, Kakindu, Kyangwali, Kiyunga, Kyanamukaka, Kigumba, Kasanda and Kyarusozzi.

## 2. Improve Judiciary Physical Infrastructure

### a. Construction of Appellate Courts

The construction of the Supreme Court building has been completed, while the Court of Appeal building is at **97%** completion.

The outstanding works for the Court of Appeal building include applying the final coat of paint, assembling furniture, testing electrical systems, testing the firefighting system, testing the air conditioning system, and general cleaning of the whole premise. All the pending work is projected to be completed by February 2024, and the building is scheduled to be occupied in March 2024.

### b. Renovation of Court buildings

The Judiciary rehabilitated and renovated court premises that were dilapidated so as to improve physical access to Judiciary services.



A total of 15 court buildings were renovated. These included: Commercial Division, Mubende High Court & CM, Mbale High Court & CM, Gulu High Court & CM, Soroti CM, Kamuli CM, Tororo CM, Kumi CM, Nakasongola CM, Pader CM, Katakwi CM, Otuke G1, Kalongo G1 and Nakawa G1.

### 3. Provision of Official Transport

The Judiciary provides transport equipment to judicial officers in hard-to-reach places and also facilitates locus visits, inspections, monitoring, and other adjudication functions. In the FY 2022/23, Fifty-one (51) vehicles were procured for Justices, Judges, Registrars, and Magistrates across the courts. In addition, a total of 52 motorcycles were procured to ease process service.

To facilitate process service, 85 motorcycles have been procured during the first half of FY 2023/24. The procurement of vehicles for new Justices and Judges is ongoing.

### 4. Enhance the use of ICT in Courts

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has proved to be a game changer in the world today, and the Judiciary is steadily progressing in embracing this through the following: -

#### a. Electronic Court Case Management Information System (ECCMIS)

The ECCMIS is a comprehensive IT-based system that automates the entire lifecycle of a court case, starting from the e-filing of a case to its e-archival. It is designed to align with the Judiciary's business processes, streamlining and enhancing the efficiency of court operations. ECCMIS is being implemented in eight Court Stations and ECCMIS Kiosks have been set up at the courts to provide a free service to Court users that are unable to e-file from their premises. ECCMIS is operational at:

- a. Supreme Court;
- b. Court of Appeal;
- c. Four High Court Divisions: Land, Civil, Commercial and Anti-Corruption;
- d. Luwero High Court; and
- e. Mengo Chief Magistrates Court

The Judiciary established an ECCMIS Service Desk/ Call Centre which is fully Operational. Accessed through toll Free 0800 225 587 or email: eccmis@judiciary.go.ug. Digital kiosks were set up at all of the 8 pilot stations to support litigants in e-filing.

The implementation of ECCMIS has resulted into:

- a. The average case filing rate has increased at a rate of **2.8%** in the courts operating ECCMIS;
- b. Non Tax Revenue (NTR) has increased from **UGX. 5 Bn to UGX. 7 Bn**;
- c. The use of ECCMIS has reduced payment of court fees by cash and increased the use of mobile money (**35%**) and point of sale (PoS) modes (**64%**).

#### b. Acquire additional Video Conferencing Systems

The Judiciary has continued to enhance capacity of Courts to handle cases online through installation of Video Conferencing Systems.

Additional **three** Video Conferencing Systems have been installed at Court of Appeal (COA) and High Court, Criminal Division and Gulu High Court. This brings the total number to **20** Courts with Video Conferencing System.



*Supreme Court Justices conducting the first court session while using the Electronic Court Case Management Information System.*



### c. Acquire Digital Court Recording and Transcription Systems

In an effort to speed up case hearing and production of the Court transcripts, five sets of Court Recording and Transcription Systems were procured and installed at the Supreme Court (2nd Court Room) and the High Court Circuits of Tororo, Luwero, Hoima, Moroto, and Iganga bringing the total number to **38 courts** with court recording systems.

This system enables Judicial Officers to free themselves from the vigorous writing in their Court Rooms, hence saving time and labour, and enabling them to focus on the hearing of the cases before them.

## 5. Promote Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

### a. Plea-Bargain

Plea-Bargain process involves the prisoner accepting to admit his guilt in exchange for a lenient sentence or lesser charge. This innovation is intended to solve the challenge of case backlog and reduce the congestion in prisons.

A total of **2,857** cases were completed through plea bargaining at the High Court level, while **1,160** cases were completed through the day-to-day hearing of cases and **1,697** cases through Plea Bargaining Camps. A total of **2,389** other cases were completed through Plea Bargaining Camps in the various Magisterial Areas. This reflects an **88.12%** clearance rate with an average lead time of less than one day.

### b. Small Claims Procedure

The Small Claims Procedure (SCP) is a reform initiative of the Judiciary intended to enhance access to justice for litigants with commercial disputes (supply of goods, debts or rental disputes) whose value does not exceed ten million Uganda shillings (UGX 10,000,000/=).

The Small Claims procedure therefore quickly releases capital that would be otherwise locked up in unresolved commercial disputes.

As at the end of FY 2022/23 SCP was rolled out in **178**

courts across the country. The increase in the number of SCP courts and the growing number of cases registered reflects a largely user-friendly and demand driven initiative. A total number of **22,092** cases were completed through SCP recovering claims, unlocking and releasing into the economy a total value of **UGX 16.4 Bn** as compared to **UGX 11.1 Bn** recovered in FY2020/21.

### c. Enhancing mediation of Civil disputes

Mediation as an alternative to protracted and adversarial litigation has also taken root across all court levels. In the FY 2022/23, a total of **1,250** cases were mediated to conclusion out of the **2,210** cases registered for Mediation.

There are efforts to engage retired Judicial Officers to take part in mediation. A Committee has been set up to amend the mediation rules.

## 6. Health Insurance Scheme For Staff

In order to enhance staff welfare and ameliorate on their health care challenges – especially the bulk of the support staff and the lower bench who have no provision for medical allowance – the Judiciary is implementing the Health Insurance Scheme for all the Staff of the Judiciary.

## 7. Fighting Corruption and indiscipline

The Judiciary is working closely with the Judicial Service Commission to ensure that errant officers are appropriately disciplined. As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, the following categories of judicial officers had been interdicted; and are pending disciplinary process by the Commission:

- a. 01 Deputy Registrar
- b. 05 Chief Magistrates
- c. 04 Magistrates Grade One
- d. 01 Magistrate Grade II

The Judiciary has also developed the Judiciary Anti-Corruption Strategy 2023 – 2030 to strengthen the Judiciary's capacity to combat corruption, enhance integrity, transparency and service delivery and resultantly enhance public trust in the institution

# Priorities for the FY 2024/25

## 1. Implementation of the recently approved Judiciary staff structure

Following the enactment of Administration of Judiciary Act, the Judiciary structure was reviewed to improve the remuneration of Judicial officers and to close man power gaps. Whereas, the structure for the non-Judicial officers was revised, the terms of service for the non-judicial officers were not reviewed. As a result of the expanded structure, the Judiciary has re-organized and created more High Court Circuits increasing the number from 20 to 38 in a move to bring judicial services closer to the people. There is need to recruit more Judicial Officers to increase the manpower so as to avoid delays in the administration of justice which arise from high case load resulting into case backlog.

## 2. Reducing Case backlog

Plans are under way to:

- a. Amend the Magistrates Courts Act to enhance the civil jurisdiction of Magistrates Courts so that they are empowered to handle disputes of an enhanced value consistent with the current economic trends and inflationary levels in the country.
- b. Revise the Magisterial Areas Instrument of 2017 to establish Chief Magistrates Courts in every district and Magistrate Grade One Courts at every county/constituency in Uganda, in order to bring Judiciary services nearer to the people
- c. Continue the deployment of Chief Magistrates at the District level, and Magistrates Grade One at the Constituency level;
- d. Recruit additional High Court Judges to facilitate operationalisation of new High Court Circuits to alleviate the severe inhibitions to access to justice in these areas;
- e. Build the capacity of Judicial Officers and non-judicial Officers through training;
- f. Revise Court rules of procedure and case management processes, by simplifying them; hence making them more user friendly and less time consuming.



*The recently completed Namayingo Magistrate Grade One Court.*

## 3. Construction and renovation of Courts

Most court buildings are dilapidated and others in are premises which are not customized with facilities for persons with disabilities, the elderly, pregnant and lactating mothers which hinder access to judicial services by such groups. Some of the gazzeted courts cannot start operations because of lack of premises.

In 2024/25, the Judiciary plans to complete the ongoing constructions:

- a. Soroti, Tororo and Rukungiri High Court buildings
- b. Alebtong, Budaka and Lyatonde Chief Magistrate Court buildings
- c. Abim, Patongo and Karenga Magistrate Grade 1 Court buildings

Start the construction of:

- a. Mbarara and Gulu Court of Appeal buildings (Phase 1)
- b. Hoima and Mpigi High Court buildings (Phase 1)
- c. Bunyangabo, Amolatar, Nyarushanje, Bubulo



- and Rakai Chief Magistrate Courts (Phase 1)
- d. Busembatia, Katine and Adwari Magistrate Grade One Court (Phase 1)
  - e. Institutional houses at Moyo, Karenga, Bukwo and Buhweju to accommodate Judicial Officers and staff in hard to reach areas.

#### 4. Transport Equipment

In order to facilitate Judicial Officer across the Courts especially in hard to reach areas, to facilitate locus visits and other adjudication functions of Courts the Judiciary acquired vehicles for Judges, Registrars and Magistrates.

During the FY 2024/25, we plan to procure 74 vehicles for Judicial Officers and supervision (Judges of the High Court (10), Deputy Registrars (10), Chief Magistrates (40) and Magistrates Grade 1 (10), 3 vehicles will be procured for field supervision and 1 Minibus (14 Seater); two (2) boats will be procured for Courts in islands areas of Buvuma and Kalangala; and 50 motorcycles will be procured for Process Service for Courts.

#### 5. Enhance use of Information and Communication Technology in the Courts

##### a. The Electronic Court Case Management Information System (ECCMIS)

The Judiciary plans to rollout ECCMIS to six Courts; Jinja High Court, Jinja CM, Kamuli CM, Bugembe GI, Kakira GI and Kagoma GI to ease case management.

##### b. Video Conferencing System

Through the use of Video Conferencing System, the Judiciary will enhance its capacity to handle cases online hence reducing case backlog and delays.

Three Video Conferencing Systems will be installed at three High Courts including their Main Prisons at Rukungiri High Court, Mukono High Court and International Crimes Division.

##### c. Court Recording and Transcription Systems

We plan to acquire and install 2 Court Recording and Transcription Systems at two High Courts of Tororo and Bushenyi.

The Court Recording and Transcription Systems enables the Judicial Officers to free themselves from the vigorous long-hand writing in court rooms.

##### d. Complete the development of Judgement Writing Tool for the Judicial Officer

The development of the Judgment writing tool for Judicial Officers is ongoing. This will ease the process of judgement writing and hence reduce on the number of undelivered judgements that lead to the growing case backlog.

##### e. Subscription to Online Legal Research Database for the Judicial Officers

The online legal research databases provide a useful research for the Judicial Officers as they write their judgements and court decisions.

#### 6. Promotion of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

The Judiciary will continue to revive the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms. We plan to:

- a. Rollout out Small Claims Procedure to 48 Magistrates Courts;
- b. Hold Plea-bargaining sessions at the Criminal Division, 23 High Court Circuits and at selected Chief Magistrate Courts;
- c. Revitalize the use of mediation in settlement of civil disputes;
- d. Train and accredit 160 mediators to support the application of mediation in dispute resolution.

#### 7. Provision of Alternative Source of Power

The Judiciary will procure and install solar systems in **12 Courts** of (Kaberamaido, Nebbi, Nakaseke, Kole, Nabweru, Bukedea, Busia, Paidha G1, Mityana, Namayingo, Kamwenge, Buhweju).

# Kayoola Electric Coach – Judiciary’s first bus

*As we celebrate the novel acquisition of our exquisite Supreme Court and Court of Appeal buildings, the Judiciary has a new addition to boast of. The Good Lord has delivered unto us yet another marvellous baby.*

As you all recall, Friday, the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 was the 38<sup>th</sup> NRM Liberation Day celebrations held in Jinja City.

At the commencement of the celebrations, we beheld the year’s blessing: H.E the President of the Republic of Uganda, Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni gifted a gorgeous *Kayoola Electric Coach* to the Judiciary of Uganda to alleviate transportation challenges in the Judiciary.

The *Kayoola Electric Coach* is a 43-seater executive bus with battery energy storage system (BESS) of 281.9 KWH. It is equipped with a USB charging system, on-board refrigerator, air conditioning system, seatbelts for all passengers, infotainment system, including TVs, microphones and radios, among others.

This historic donation comes in at a time when the Judiciary has lined up its priorities for the year 2024 to include: acquisition of **02 boats** for courts in island areas of Buvuma and Kalangala, **50 motorcycles** for Court Process Service, **03 vehicles** for field supervision, **01 Minibus** for group movements and **74 vehicles** for Judicial Officers (Judges (10), Deputy Registrars (10), Chief Magistrates (40) and Magistrates Grade One (10).

The Judiciary family is undoubtedly excited about the surprise acquisition of this loved guest. Once added on our fleet, this coach will be the first bus owned by the Judiciary and will certainly ease the movement of staff and high profile guests. H.E. the President of Uganda is expected to handover to the



**"Scientists from Kiira Motors gave me an electric bus which I also promptly gave Chief Justice Alfonse Chigamoy Owiny - Dollo. He will look after it for me. The charger of the bus is from China but soon they will make theirs,"**  
**H.E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni,**  
**President of the Republic of Uganda**

Hon. Chief Justice the gigantic coach, today.

The Judiciary is grateful to H.E. the President of Uganda for this great contribution. We also specially appreciate **Prof. Eng. Sandy Stevens Tickodri-Togboa**, the Executive Chairman of Kiira Motors Corporation, **Eng. Paul Isaac Musasizi** the Chief Executive Officer of Kiira Motors who brought this novel innovation on this land.



# Tribute to Dr. Pius Bigirimana - PS/SJ

*On December 15, 2021, Straford University awarded the Judiciary Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Judiciary, Pius Bigirimana, an honorary PhD in Leadership and Management. A few days later, the Judiciary Senior Management Committee, which he chairs, held an impromptu party to congratulate him. At the do, the Chief Registrar, HW Sarah Langa Siu had this to say of the meritorious recognition.*

“There is a man who was born in a beautiful district in the western part of this country. To access that district, one must drive along meandering roads over mountainous terrain. The serenity and beauty of this district I’m convinced partly earned Uganda the name Pearl of Africa.

This man like some of you who grew up in the rural settings, walked miles on end to attend school barefooted. As he journeyed through his academic life, he tried the Seminary. But as all of you who know him can attest, that was not his calling.

As a matter of fact, one can confidently state that he would have been greatly under utilised had he towed that line to this day. As God says in Jeremiah 29:11, He alone knows the plans for us all. The plan of God for the Kisoro gentleman was not at the pulpit but rather in the Civil Service of Uganda.

In this place, he found his calling and has served passionately for over three decades. In the Civil Service, he has emerged as a transformational leader; a fighter for the causes he believes and is passionate about and also a hunter for resources. I say he is a gifted resource mobiliser.

When you often or closely interact with him, be sure you will hear one or a combination of these words: - **Abundance mentality** - **Conceptual clarity** - **Mandate migration**. Various personalities have described him in many ways. Prominent among the descriptions is that of H.E President Museveni who said ‘he is like a pumpkin seed, wherever you plant it, it grows.’ Indeed as that pumpkin seed grew in various MDAs, a cloud of witnesses were keenly observing and closely following his works.



*Scenes from the party to celebrate the honorary doctorate.*

On 15th December 2021, the once barefooted rural boy, that grew to become one of the most seasoned Permanent Secretaries in this country was awarded an honorary PhD in Leadership and Management by the Geofidel Institute of Leadership and management UK in collaboration with Stratford University, USA.

As Senior Management Committee of the Judiciary, we celebrate and heartily congratulate you, Dr. Pius Bigirimana- PS/SJ/Accounting Officer for the well-deserved award.

In all, we thank God and return the glory to Him who made it possible.”

*Sarah Langa Siu, Chief Registrar*





**TALK TO US:**

**The Judiciary:** Plot 2, The Square,  
P. O. Box 7085, Kampala-Uganda  
**Tel:** +256 414 233 420/1/2/3

**Toll Free: 0800 111 900/0800 225 587**

**[www.Judiciary.go.ug](http://www.Judiciary.go.ug)**

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