

Kabale Resident Judge engages inmates during visit to Ndorwa Main Prison

The Resident Judge of Kabale High Court, Justice Ssemogerere Karoli Lwanga, yesterday visited Ndorwa Main Prison in Kabale District, where he had a candid engagement with inmates to assess criminal case management within the circuit and directly hear their concerns.

He was accompanied by Assistant Registrar HW Tumwebaze Kenneth, members of the Regional Coordination Committee (RCC), Justice for Children Coordinator Anguzu Jonathan, and Counsel Bakanyebonera Felix. The Judge and his team was received by ASP Emoru, Deputy Officer-in-Charge of Ndorwa Main Prison.

The visit provided a platform for open dialogue between the Court and inmates. It was noted that in 2025, the Kabale High Court Circuit conducted four criminal sessions presided over by three different Justices. In addition, sessions of the Court of Appeal were held within the circuit, alongside a High Court session in Kisoro handling both civil and criminal matters. These interventions significantly improved case disposal and eased backlog across the region.

As of yesterday, the prison population stood at 713 inmates in the male wing and 54 in the female wing, with seven inmates on remand for capital offences.

The Resident Judge commended the prison leadership, particularly ASP Emoru, for maintaining proper records and facilitating a transparent engagement. He acknowledged the critical role of prison authorities in safeguarding inmates' rights and welfare while supporting the administration of justice.

In a memorandum presented during the meeting, inmates expressed appreciation for the increased number of criminal sessions conducted in 2025, noting the positive impact on case movement. However, they appealed for more sessions, citing prolonged remand periods, especially for those charged with minor offences. They raised concerns about partial handling of cases, matters being dropped from cause lists, and allegations of witness coaching by prosecutors, issues they said affect confidence in the fairness and transparency of proceedings.

The inmates also called for renewed emphasis on plea bargaining, indicating that many would prefer structured and predictable resolutions rather than risking severe sentences after full trial.

In response, the Resident Judge encouraged inmates to approach 2026 with constructive engagement and assured them that their concerns had been noted. He explained that no criminal

session has yet been scheduled due to resource constraints but advised eligible inmates to consider plea bargaining as a lawful and practical option in the meantime.

He further reminded them of their right to apply for bail, whether mandatory or discretionary, emphasizing that each application is considered on its individual merits in accordance with the law.

Assistant Registrar HW Tumwebaze Kenneth assured inmates that administrative concerns, particularly regarding cause lists, would be reviewed and addressed to improve coordination and clarity.

Counsel Bakanyebonera Felix reaffirmed the commitment of members of the Bar to provide representation and encouraged inmates to raise any grievances where they feel unfairly treated so that appropriate legal support can be extended.