

JTI Trains Western Region Judicial Officers on Forensic Evidence in Criminal Trials

The Judicial Training Institute (JTI) has commenced a two-day training for select Judicial Officers from the Western Region Cluster One to strengthen their capacity to assess and apply forensic evidence in criminal trials, amid growing reliance on scientific investigations in the administration of criminal justice.

The training, taking place at the Supreme Court Conference Hall in Kampala, brings together High Court Judges, Judicial Officers of the lower bench and representatives from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP), the Inspectorate of Government (IGG) and the Uganda

Police Force.

Among the Judicial Officers attending are Justice Allan Paul Mbabazi Nshimye, Head of the Mbarara Circuit; Justice Amos Kwizera, Resident Judge of the Bushenyi Circuit; Justice Karoli Lwanga Ssemogerere, Resident Judge of the Kabale Circuit; and Justice Gelase



Kwemara Kafuuzi, Resident Judge of the Mbarara Circuit.

The training was officially opened by the Executive Director of JTI, Justice Prof. Andrew Khaukha, who represented the Deputy Chief Justice. He emphasised the growing importance of forensic science in criminal adjudication, noting that evolving crime patterns, particularly those involving digital technology, require Judicial Officers to deepen their understanding of scientific and expert evidence.

Justice Khaukha revealed that requests for forensic analysis received by the Directorate of Forensic Services had increased from 1,135 in 2019 to 3,178 in 2025, highlighting the growing role of forensic investigations in criminal cases. He called for a more comprehensive training curriculum, including a proposed 40-hour programme, to equip Judicial Officers with deeper knowledge and practical skills in forensic science.

He also emphasised the need to train prosecutors and other justice sector actors alongside Judicial Officers, noting that the effective presentation and evaluation of expert evidence requires a shared understanding across the justice chain.

In her remarks, the Chief Registrar, HW Agnes Alum, highlighted the importance of continuous professional development in addressing procedural and operational challenges that affect the timely and effective disposal of criminal cases.

She urged participants to strengthen their understanding of the collection, preservation, analysis and presentation of forensic evidence, as well as their ability to assess expert testimony and determine the reliability and evidential value of scientific findings.

HW Alum further challenged participants to apply the knowledge acquired to improve case management, reduce avoidable adjournments and promote consistency in the application of evidentiary rules and procedural safeguards.

Participants are being taken through the work of the Uganda Police Force's Directorate of Forensic Services, with emphasis on the relevance of forensic evidence to criminal proceedings. The session is facilitated by Assistant Commissioner of Police Andrew K. Mubiru.

Other topics scheduled for Day One include the recovery of forensic evidence from crime scenes, fingerprint identification, firearms and tool-mark examination, and the role of DNA in human identification. Practical demonstrations and plenary discussions are also being conducted to deepen participants' understanding of forensic procedures and their application in court.

Other facilitators include Inspector of Police Robert Icoot, Senior Superintendent of Police Jonathan Kalungi, Superintendent of Police Derrick Nasawali and Assistant Superintendent of Police Wazodi Amos. The training is moderated by HW Lillian Bucyana, In-charge at JTI.

The training forms part of JTI's broader efforts to strengthen the capacity of Judicial Officers and other justice sector actors to respond to emerging evidentiary challenges and enhance the quality, fairness and effectiveness of criminal adjudication.

Rita Mukundane & Abigail Erumbi