

Kabale High Court Judge Inspects Courts, Engages Stakeholders on Justice Service Delivery

The Resident Judge of the Kabale High Court Circuit, Justice Ssemogerere Karoli Lwanga, yesterday inspected Rubanda Magistrate Court and Kisoro Chief Magistrate's Court and held discussions with Judicial Officers, court staff and local leaders on justice service delivery.

The engagements provided an opportunity to identify challenges affecting court operations, including case management, staffing, infrastructure and access to Courts.

Rubanda Magistrate Court

At Rubanda Magistrate Court, His Lordship was received by HW Rukundo Isaac and his team, together with Assistant Registrar HW Tumwebaze Kenneth.

The Court currently has about 250 criminal cases and more than 400 civil cases, most arising from SACCO-related disputes, in addition to about three appeals.

The discussion also touched on the Court's working environment. HW Tumwebaze noted that plans were underway to relocate the Court to more suitable premises. He said the current landlord was willing to make adjustments to accommodate court operations, given the convenient location.

His Lordship emphasised the importance of a smooth transfer of files, particularly with plans for public engagement with stakeholders in the last quarter, stressing that proper safeguards should be put in place to ensure that no Court documents are lost.

HW Rukundo raised challenges in transferring juveniles from Rubanda to Kabale Remand Home, particularly after sentencing and conviction and when remand orders have been issued.

The Court was also informed that the land title for the proposed new Court premises is ready and awaiting collection from the Office of the Permanent Secretary.

Staffing remains another challenge, with HW Rukundo noting that the Court is understaffed. HW Tumwebaze said follow-up was being made on the matter.

His Lordship acknowledged the resource constraints facing the Judiciary and urged HW Rukundo to make the best use of the available resources while ensuring that the Court remains visible and accessible to the community.

Listening to Local Leaders

At Rubanda District Headquarters, His Lordship met the RDC, Kyeyune Ssenyonjo; Assistant LC V Chairperson Kesafari Prossy; and District Principal Secretary Mucunguzi Eria.

The leaders highlighted issues affecting justice service delivery in the district, including the need for additional Court facilities in distant areas.

The Assistant LC V Chairperson called for Courts to be established in Hamura, Bubare and Mukoo, noting that their location at the extreme ends of the district makes it difficult for some litigants to access existing Courts.

The RDC also shared complaints raised by members of the public. His Lordship encouraged him to bring such concerns to his attention whenever they arise so that they can be followed up.

On infrastructure, His Lordship noted that a land title had been secured for the construction of new Court premises in Rubanda. He also noted that District Coordination Committee (DCC) meetings had not yet commenced, despite resources having been provided for the activities.

The Rubanda District Police Commander, SP Tumwebaze John Bosco, reported improved security in the area, including a reduction in theft and highway robberies. He, however, identified the lack of a proper police station and a Police Health Centre II as key challenges. He also noted that Rubanda Police had received 14 motorcycles to support their operations.

Kisoro Chief Magistrate's Court

At Kisoro Chief Magistrate's Court, which oversees the Magistrates' Courts of Bunagana and Kyanika, His Lordship engaged HW Byamugisha Derrick and his team on case management and court administration.

The need to reduce case backlog and ensure timely disposal of cases was emphasised.

HW Byamugisha highlighted understaffing, particularly in the preparation and typing of records of proceedings. The Court has only one secretary, making it difficult to keep up with the workload.

The registry currently has about 560 files under management.