



Press Release

THE JUDICIARY

Plot 2, The Square High Court Building
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IN ANY CORRESPONDENCE ON
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Normal Court operations to wait - Chief Justice

KAMPALA: Normal operations in the Courts in Uganda shall have to wait until the general opening of public transport, the Chief Justice, Bart M. Katureebe, has said.

The directive was contained in the Revised Contingency Measures to Prevent and Mitigate the Spread of COVID-19 in the Judiciary Circular issued on May 27.

“Partial Court operations are hereby reinstated while observing the Presidential Directives and Ministry of Health (MOH) Guidelines and Standard Operations Procedures (SOPs) as indicated hereunder,” said the Chief Justice.

“Courts shall continue to hear only applications and urgent matters until there is a general opening up of public transport. Upon the easing of the general public transport, courts shall resume normal hearings in civil matters.

“Criminal cases shall be restricted to: plea taking for Magistrates Courts, bail applications and plea bargains across the board, and appeals for the appellate courts. These restrictions shall remain in force until prisoners are able to be produced in Courts,” reads the CJ Circular in part.

The head of the Judiciary further stated that the use of audio-visual facilities shall continue alongside other modes of conducting hearings – determined by the head/in-charge of a specific Court/Station.

He also urged all Judicial Officers to continue writing and delivering judgments and rulings during this time.

Other new guidelines

- Each Judicial Officer shall handle not more than five cases cause listed per day. Only four people should be allowed to attend court in small Court halls and 10 people in bigger Court halls.
- All Court staff (Judicial and non-judicial) and court users must wear face masks while at Court premises.

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- All Court staff, advocates and litigants shall observe the SOPs as established by the (MOH) while accessing Court premises, including undergoing temperature measurements and sanitization.
- Social distancing should be observed at Court Registries – one person should be served at a time and the rest wait outside the Registry at a social distance of four meters apart.
- In-charge of Court/Station to determine the number of staff to report on duty on rotation basis, in line with SOPs issued by MOH.

The Chief Justice said the latest guidelines are additional to others in Circulars he issued on March 19, 26, April 29, and May 5, 2020, subject to amendments from time to time “in line with the National Health Policy”.

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