

Judiciary targets 500 land cases in mediation drive

The mediation fortnight was informed by the rising number of mediation cases being registered and successfully completed at the division.

BY ANTHONY WESAKA

The Land Division of the High Court will embark on a two-week mediation drive aimed at resolving close to 500 land disputes as the Judiciary intensifies efforts to reduce a growing case backlog.

The exercise, running from June 22 to July 3, 2026, will focus on settling land-related disputes through mediation, one of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms that the Judiciary has increasingly promoted as a faster and less confrontational way of dispensing justice.

According to the head of the Land Division, Justice Damali Lwanga, the move is informed by the rising number of successfully completed mediation cases at the division.

"The success mediation cases and their completion rates, coupled with the 477 pending causes, has informed



Principal Judge, Jane Francis Abodo (right) chats with Richard Buteera, a jurist on the UN's appellate tribunal during a roundtable discussion ahead of the mediation drive.

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our decision and we hope for a successful settlement," Justice Lwanga said on Friday during a roundtable discussion with stakeholders ahead of the exercise.

She added that although the operationalisation of the Entebbe and Wakiso High Court circuits reduced some of the workload previously handled by the Land Division, the division still grapples with a heavy land caseload.

Justice Lwanga revealed that at the start of the 2025/2026 financial year, the division carried forward 8,930 land

Land disputes. Land disputes are suited for mediation because they greatly involve family relationships, community ties, historical claims, and economic livelihoods. So many of these cases do not need to be dragged through the system for so long. They have effects, which are not good for all of us," - Principal Judge Jane Frances Abodo

matters from the previous financial year, of which 243 were for mediation.

Since the start of the current financial year, 3,692 new cases have been filed, with 655 referred to mediation.

She added that the division currently has 7,051 pending cases, including 477 mediation causes expected to be prioritised during the settlement fortnight.

Speaking at the same event, Principal Judge Jane Frances Abodo said mediation was particularly suitable for land disputes because such cases often in-

volve family and community relationships that can easily deteriorate if litigation drags on.

Supreme Court Justice Mike Chibita described land conflicts as some of the most sensitive disputes in society because they directly affect livelihoods, investments, families, and social harmony.

"Many of these disputes are deeply emotional and, if not handled carefully, can escalate into prolonged conflict and violence. It is, therefore, important that the justice system adopts approaches that are not only legally sound, but also practical, restorative, and capable of preserving relationships where possible," Justice Chibita said.

The Judiciary has in recent years increasingly embraced mediation and other ADR mechanisms as part of broader reforms aimed at reducing the case backlog and speeding up access to justice.

According to a recent Judiciary case census, a total of 167,353 cases are pending across all court levels, of which 46,542, representing 27.81 percent are classified as backlog. The High Court and Chief Magistrates' Courts carry the heaviest load, with 70,006 and 64,937 cases respectively.

In a related development, Justice Olive Kazaarwe was elected the new chairperson of the International Association of Women Judges, Uganda Chapter.

Justice Kazaarwe, who promised to uplift the voices of vulnerable women and girls legally, takes over from Justice Elizabeth Jane Alividza.

Speaking at the same function as the chief guest, the Principal Judge decried how women have to work three or four times as much as men to prove they are capable, while they occupy big offices.



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