

The Judiciary's "art of the insult"

In a week when the Chief Justice warned against "insulting" judges on social media, arrests over alleged online abuse and a growing case backlog have prompted this tongue-in-cheek exploration of how, exactly, one insults without insulting.

BY PHILIP MATOGO

During the ceremonial opening of the New Law Year 2026 on February 5, the newly appointed Chief Justice issued a stern warning against using social media to insult or harass judicial officers.

He stated that the Judiciary would no longer tolerate such attacks, describing them as "irresponsible" and a source of emotional trauma for judges. Please, let's put away the violins and have some respect for the disrespected.

Out of this (but mostly because Arsenal Football Club lost last weekend), we witnessed the recent arrest and remand of city lawyer, known to present-day Budonians as Mabireezy, who was charged with hate speech and malicious information for allegedly insulting

two musicians who both strangely go buy...excuse me...by the name "Just Ice" on TikTok.

"Insult" in English is used as both a verb (to act rudely) and a noun (the rude act itself), meaning to offend, disrespect, or treat with contempt. Common usages include intentional verbal abuse, actions that humiliate, or expressing that an offer/remark is condescending, such as "an insult to my intelligence".

We are aware that the preceding words may also be presumed as insult, especially to the thin-skinned. So, we asked another musician, who also goes by the name Just Ice (what are the odds?) and he sung out loud what the Judiciary considers to be an insult.

According to the Judiciary, it was more important to set aside a case backlog of over 167,353 pending cases to define the word "insult" in several ways:

As a verb, to insult means to treat someone with disrespect or scorn. For example, "I did not mean to insult you by arriving late". "She was insulted by the low job offer". I support the banning of insult as a verb. So my salary arrives inoffensively on purpose and in royal amounts, marked by their highness.

As a noun, an insult is a rude expression or action intended to offend. For example, "He hurled insults at the referee". "That



comment was a personal insult". This one, as you can see, arose out of Arsenal fans behaviour during a loss they took personally.

Anyway, the Judiciary has also outlawed the phrase "Insult to one's intelligence". Again, you're no longer allowed "to add insult to injury". If you're a downtown trader, that does not give you a license to "trade insults", okay?

In medicine, an insult is a formal term for an injury, trauma, or a harmful physical event that damages the body. Cerebral insult:

Damage to the brain, such as from a stroke or trauma. Environmental insult: Exposure to toxins or pathogens that harms an organ. Developmental insult: An event that disrupts normal growth, such as maternal separation in early childhood.

As of the outlawing of insults, all who suffer from or are exposed to the above have been declared cured or liable for serious jailtime. What you suffer from or are exposed to being mutually inclusive.

Mbidde, the grandest of the

grandiloquent, advised that in order for Ugandans to avoid prosecution, they had better borrow his personal dictionary. Then, after thumbing through it, select a multisyllabic stretch of words for a more sophisticated-sounding "put-down".

In this way, he says, you can insult people and nobody will know what you're saying. In fact, they will think you made up those words. When you use one, you use another and so on and so forth. Follow this fashion: Bid, Bidder, Mbiddest.

Mr Bombastic advised that we use the following three insults to avoid jailtime: Ninnyhammer: An old-fashioned term for a foolish person. Bedswerver: An archaic term for an unfaithful spouse. Cumberworld: Someone who is so useless they simply "cumber" (clutter) the world.

The Judiciary has okayed some metaphors to insult the Opposition, however. And they are as follows: The pot calling the kettle black: To remind NUP that democracy is not only foreshortened by three-character abbreviations that begin with the letter "N." All hat and no cattle: Someone who is "all talk" and has no substance or action to the extent that he didn't even vote for himself, remember? Barking up the wrong tree: Advice to Kakwenza to never mistake the mvule for the mzee. One sandwich short of a picnic...at the Democratic Front Party.