

The new Attorney General office in Hoima is expected to reduce case backlog.

BY JOSEPH KASUMBA

More than 5,000 people are involved in 47 compensation-related cases currently pending before the High Court in Hoima, raising concerns over delays in delivering justice in the rapidly developing Albertine region.

The Resident Judge of the Hoima High Court, Justice Vincent Opyene, revealed that the disputes are connected to compensation claims arising from government development projects, land acquisition, and infrastructure works in the region.

"We have about 47 cases involving the Office of the Attorney General, the National Forestry Authority, Uganda Road Fund, and Uganda National Roads Authority. These are mainly compensation-related cases," Justice Opyene said.

The judge made the remarks on Monday during an interview with the *Daily Monitor* at the newly established Hoima Regional Office of the Attorney General. Justice Opyene attributed the cases delays to the previous absence of a regional office for the Attorney General in Hoima, saying this created challenges in coordination and slowed court processes.

He appealed to officials at the new office to work closely with the Judiciary to ensure faster disposal of cases and timely justice for affected residents.

According to him, mediation will help willing parties settle matters quickly and reduce the growing case backlog at the court. He said unresolved cases will later be fixed for hearing during special

5,000 people stuck in Hoima case backlog



court sessions.

Justice Opyene further added that the court intends to begin with cases involving very large groups of claimants because of limited space at the court premises.

The opening of the Hoima Regional Office forms part of government efforts to decentralise legal services and bring them closer to the people.

Mr Charles Ouma, the deputy Solicitor General, said the government would open five other regional offices in the 2025/26 financial year.

The locations include Kabale, Masaka, Hoima, Lira, and Iganga, bringing the total number of regional offices across the country to 12.

47

The number of stalled cases in Hoima District, most of which are compensation related.

Justice Vincent Opyene (4th left), the Hoima High Court judge, commissions the Attorney General's chambers Hoima regional office on Monday.

PHOTO/JOSEPH KASUMBA

"The main purpose of the regional offices is to bring services closer to the people, and I hope that with this expansion we shall be able to make wonders. However, we have not come to fire-fight, but to be progressive. We want to facilitate, guide, and educate institutions plus local governments," Mr Ouma said.

He added that the Attorney General's chambers will work closely with local governments and other institutions to support development and reduce legal conflicts before they escalate into court battles.

He expressed gratitude to the Judi-

ciary for coping with the staffing and logistical challenges that government lawyers faced over the years.

According to Ouma, the limited number of regional offices forced some lawyers to appear in several courts at the same time amidst long travels.

"Our lawyers could be in three courts at the same time, but we are going to have a collaborative approach with the Judiciary on how to handle these cases," Mr Ouma said.

Relief

Meanwhile, Mr Alex Katusabe welcomed the establishment of the regional office, saying it comes at a critical time when the Albertine region is experiencing rapid economic transformation.

He added that ongoing oil and gas activities, road construction projects, urbanisation, and industrial growth are increasing legal disputes in the region.

"The regional office has come at a critical time in the development of the Albertine Region, Hoima and the surrounding districts that are experiencing economic transformation given by the ongoing oil and gas activities, road infrastructure projects, urbanisation, industrial growth, and increasing private investment. Such rapid transformation brings legal challenges involving land acquisition, compensation, commercial transactions, contracts, estates, labour disputes, and public governance," Mr Katusabe said.

The new Hoima regional office is expected to strengthen coordination between government lawyers and the Judiciary while helping thousands of residents access legal services and justice more quickly.

Spark