

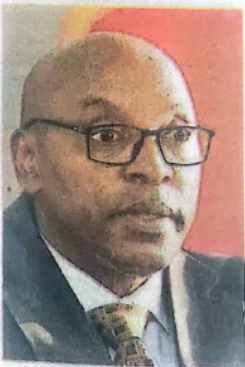
Sworn in at the farm, answerable to whom?

The Uganda Law Society (ULS) executive order No. 7 of 2026 which calls for the designation of our Honourable Chief Justice, Dr Flavio Zeija (pictured below), as a "Global Judicial Pariah" is not verbal excess but a serious juridical response to institutional collapse.

Where domestic remedies are structurally foreclosed, the ULS—despite Mr Ssemakadde's exile—has refused to be silenced, consistently innovating within the law to uphold its mandate.

Under Articles 3 and 126 of the 1995 Constitution, sovereignty resides in the people, and judicial power derives from us. When the Judiciary ceases to exercise that power independently, it forfeits any presumption of constitutional fidelity.

Judicial legitimacy is not preserved by ceremonies at Kisozi farm.



Uganda operates in a dual legal system, and international law reinforces this principle. The Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary (1985), the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct (2002), and Article 26 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights impose positive obligations on the State to guarantee impartial courts.

Persistent Executive encap-

sulation of the Judiciary—what some call Musevenism—is not merely an administrative irregularity. It violates jus cogens guarantees, including due process. Jurisprudence is clear: where domestic courts are unwilling or unable to prosecute serious violations, international mechanisms may step in. Cases like *Prosecutor v Tadić*, *Prosecutor v Kunarac*, *Prosecutor v Akayesu*, and *Prosecutor v Lubanga Dyilo* emphasise that impunity resulting from domestic incapacity cannot be tolerated.

Executive Order No. 7 articulates a doctrine still emerging in African public law: when State accountability mechanisms are captured, non-State constitutional actors such as bar associations may lawfully deploy reputational, diplomatic, and procedural constraints to restore equilibrium. These measures are grounded in associational autonomy, freedom of expression, and the ULS's fiduciary duty to the rule of law. If the law society cannot act in such moments, especially amid systemic institutional collapse, what purpose does it serve?

Engagement with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the International Criminal Court reflects a sober appreciation of complementarity. Where domestic courts fail, international scrutiny is not interference but legitimate legal continuity.

Equally significant is the proposed Zeija "Accountability Dossier," which archives patterns of silence, conflicts of interest, and suppression of dissent. In this era, no one should face imprisonment for criticising institutional failure.

Some lawyers may argue that declaring a sitting Chief Justice a pariah destabilises the Judiciary. But judicial legitimacy is not preserved by ceremonies at Kisozi farm. It rests on independence and integrity. When swearing-in rituals migrate to private estates and dissent is met with prosecutorial force, legitimacy erodes from within. The ULS's non-engagement would, in fact, be a dereliction of duty.

Ultimately, the legal profession retains one irreducible power: the defiant refusal to legitimise injustice. Executive rituals and farm-based ceremonies cannot substitute for constitutional fidelity. Where law fails internally, it is the duty of professional associations to act—and to act boldly.

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