

Chief Justice approves mobile courts to boost justice access

BY PHILIP WAFULA

KAMPALA. Chief Justice Flavien Zeija has signed an instrument to roll out mobile courts, particularly on Ugandan islands.

Justice Zeija said while still serving as Principal Judge, he was “bothered” by the state of justice on Kalangala and Buvuma islands, where he often met people during court open days.

“So, last week, I signed the mobile court instrument to ensure that we can serve people where we don’t have courts,” Justice Zeija said while launching Phase II of the Community Justice Programme (CJP II) in Kampala.

He said they had initiated a programme to procure boats, and although three have been procured, only one has arrived.

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procuring, and with that instrument, our judicial officers can get a tent, chairs, put them on the boat, and go to some of the islands, hold court sessions, complete them, convict people, and come back,” Justice Zeija added.

He recalled prior visits to some islands while still Principal Judge, saying he heard that when a person committed an offence, they were arrested and placed in a police cell because of a lack of prison facilities, and after a day or two, the suspect was asked to provide money to be taken to court.

Turning to CJP II, Justice Zeija said it is a testament to the collective commitment to ensuring that the gates of justice and good governance are open to every Ugandan, regardless of their status or location.

The CJP II, running from December 2025 to December 2028, is a \$9.6m programme funded by the Swedish govern-



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ment through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

The Swedish Ambassador to Uganda, Ms Maria Håkansson, who hosted the launch, said Phase I of the CJP demonstrated that when communities are empowered, justice becomes more accessible, trusted, and relevant to people’s daily lives. She, however, noted that access to justice in Uganda remains limited due to constrained geographic coverage, high

legal costs, procedural complexity, and institutional capacity gaps.

“Against this background and in line with Sweden’s commitment towards enhancing equitable justice for all, in November 2025, Sweden entered into an agreement with the International Development Law Organisation to implement a second phase of the CJP,” said Ambassador Håkansson.

The IDLO Uganda Country Manager, Ms Barbara Kilei, said CJP II aims to ensure women have equal access to land, finance, technology, services, markets, and leadership.

She added: “From the State partnership from inception to Phase I to Phase II, and now also with the Netherlands programme and, hopefully, an Austria project, we hope to increase the engagement to enhance access to justice and ensure that the justice that is delivered is responsive to Ugandans’ needs.”