



Press Release

THE JUDICIARY

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Justice Bart Katureebe's last day as Chief Justice

Today (Friday June 19) is Justice Bart Magunda Katureebe's last official working day as Chief Justice. "I am retiring from Judicial Service as the Chief Justice of Uganda on June 20, 2020," he said in a short letter of appreciation to stakeholders.

"I wish to take this opportunity to thank you all collectively and individually for the cooperation and support you have rendered to me, and the Judiciary as an institution during my tenure in office. It has indeed been a great honour and privilege to work with you all.

"I believe that together we have registered some achievements in the Administration of Justice in the Country. I would urge all to extend the same support to the in-coming Chief Justice," said Justice Katureebe.

Occupying his seat for the last time in the Chief Justice chambers at the Judiciary headquarters in Kampala, Justice Katureebe told some of his staff that: "I have retired and I'm going home. I want people to see that you can retire and go home. I am just winding up for the new person to come in.

"I'll be coming to Kampala as a visitor, and may be to the Supreme Court where I still have three months to finish my judgments. I also want to complete my book and I hope I can have the manuscript ready by December."

He said since the President has not yet appointed his replacement, he would on Monday hand over the office to his deputy, Justice Alfonse Chigamoy Owiny-Dollo, who will serve in acting capacity, pending the appointment of a substantive chief justice. "The Deputy Chief Justice (DCJ) will be acting from Sunday, because I technically leave on Saturday 20th June midnight. After that, I will not be able to sign anything as Chief Justice".

The Judiciary has organized a small symbolic handover ceremony on Monday (June 22).

A visibly contented Katureebe said to a few of his staff on Friday: "For me I am very happy with where we have reached – almost everything of mine has clicked.

"Justice for All"

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“The ECCMIS (Electronic Court Case Management Information System) is on course, the construction of the Appellate Courts is on course, the Administration of the Judiciary Bill, which was passed by Parliament and now assented to by the President (as of today) – that’s my achievement.” The law gives the Judiciary financial and administration autonomy.

He said terms and conditions of Judicial Officers have improved and now put in law, so it is no longer ex-gratia (paid at will) and that judicial officers now have retirement benefits. “When I joined the Judiciary (in 2005), judges were getting Shs5 million per month, but they are now getting an average of Shs25 million,” he said.

“There was nothing in the law for the Chief Justice and Deputy Chief Justice when they retire. We have not had a law in place providing for retirement benefits other than the pension and gratuity paid under the Pensions Act. Now we have the law in place providing retirement benefits for all judicial officers,” he said.

Justice Katureebe said he dedicated 36 years of his work life to public service: I worked for eight years as a state attorney; then I was a minister for 13 years, including service in the Constituent Assembly and Parliament – 21 years in government, plus the 15 years in the Judiciary, inclusive of the five years as Chief Justice.

He says he feels he has retired satisfied that some achievements have been made, but he acknowledges that a lot more still needs to be done, particularly in the reduction of case backlog.

Later in the afternoon, the Chief Justice was surprised and visibly moved by an impromptu birthday party organized by his staff at the Supreme Court on Friday afternoon, where he was presented with a birthday cake in his office.

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