
ABOLITION OF COLONIAL COURT CULTURE

WHEREAS today marks Saba Saba Day, the East African commemoration of resistance against authoritarianism, the unity of purpose that forges a nation, and the unyielding demand of the people for civil liberties and justice;

WHEREAS the Judiciary is in an appalling state marked by executive capture, chronic delays, selective justice, prolonged pre-trial detention, judicial corruption, systemic bias towards the powerful and connected, and deliberate unresponsiveness to enforced disappearances, torture, and attacks against lawyers;

WHEREAS the Military routinely subverts judicial independence through illegal arrests, extrajudicial searches, detentions and executions, court invasions, obstruction of lawyers and journalists, and the trial of civilians in military tribunals;

WHEREAS these failures have been shielded and perpetuated by an archaic culture of ritualised civility, including bowing, scraping, and the compulsory use of feudal and colonial honorifics such as “My Lord”, “Your Lordship”, “My Lady”, “Your Worship”, and like titles that elevate judicial officers above citizens who are in reality their employers;

NOW THEREFORE, upon consultation with the Governing Council of the Uganda Law Society, and in the spirit of Saba Saba resistance and the Radical New Bar’s commitment to decolonising justice and restoring dignity to the people:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AS FOLLOWS:

1. Abolition of Deference Rituals

The practice of bowing or any other form of physical subservience before judicial officers is henceforth prohibited for all members of the Uganda Law Society.

2. Abolition of Feudal Honorifics

The following titles and forms of address are abolished with immediate effect:

- Your Lordship / My Lord
- My Lady / Your Ladyship
- Your Worship
- Any other honorific that implies lordship, worship, or feudal superiority.

Judicial officers shall be addressed plainly and equally as:

- “Mr. Justice” or “Madam Justice” for members of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal
- “Mr. Judge” or “Madam Judge” for members of the High Court
- “Mr. Magistrate” or “Madam Magistrate”
- “Mr. Registrar” or “Madam Registrar”
- Or simply by their surname where appropriate (e.g., “Judge Okello”, “Registrar Ankunda”, or “Magistrate Nakato”).

3. Plain Speech and Equal Dignity

All advocates and litigants appearing before any court or tribunal shall stand upright and speak as free citizens. No member of the Radical New Bar shall enforce or observe rituals that force Ugandans into postures of humiliation as the powerful enjoy comfort and deference.

4. **National Consultation on Court Culture and Client Charter**

Recognizing that the full decolonization of judicial costume, language, and service standards must reflect our history, climate, and diverse practices, the Legal Profession shall commence a public consultation on this matter within 90 days. The consultation panel shall comprise representatives of the Bench, the Bar, and Citizens' Associations.

The consultation shall:

- a. Review and report on the continued use of colonial wigs, gowns, and foreign language requirements, with a view to adopting dignified Ugandan alternatives that uphold equal dignity and public comprehension; and
- b. Review, redraft, and decolonize the **Judiciary Client Charter** to ensure it is written in plain language, reflects Ugandan realities, and guarantees citizens' rights to respect, information, time-bound service, and redress without deference or cost barriers.

5. **Purpose**

This Order shall strip away the theatrical props of elitism that insulate judicial officers from the daily discomfort, frustration, and powerlessness experienced by Ugandans in the justice system. By removing these barriers, we force the powerful to confront the humanity and dignity of the people they serve — or fail to serve.

6. Publication

This Executive Order takes immediate effect across all members of the Uganda Law Society. It shall be published immediately on the Uganda Law Society website and circulated via official email to all members.

Issued under my hand this 7th day of July 2026.


Isaac K. Ssemakadde, S.C.
President & Head Of The Bar

