



# PNGCJE

FIRST QUARTER

# Newsletter

JANUARY - MARCH, 2026

PNGCJE delivering effective and responsive Judicial Education for a competent and efficient Judiciary

# Inside this edition

Cover Page	1
Content Page	2
2026 Legal Year Opening	3 - 4
The Investment Trade and Court	5
PNGCJE participates in regional coordination meeting PNGCJE strengthened global partnership in Fiji	6
PNGCJE welcomes British Deputy High Com. Judiciary welcomes 12 new judges	7
Botswana to the Pacific: Hon Justice Oagile Bethuel Key Dingake	8
Judicial accountability	9
Hon. Justice Dingake facilitates GBV in Western Highlands	10
Hon. Justice John Carey presents paper on Judiciary's role in safeguarding democracy	11
Hon. Justice John Carey lecture on mastering legal knowledge	12
PNG Judiciary showcase leadership at Commonwealth Judicial Educators meeting in India Courts enhanced readiness to address financial crimes	13
Judiciary led global push for integrity and judicial well-being COSP11	14
British High Com. hosts breakfast seminar on international judicial practice	15
Prof. Dapo Akande lecture at UPNG	16
Strengthening village courts through partnerships	17
Basic Mediation Skills Training (BMST)	18 - 19
Upcoming events	20
About PNGCJE	21

# 2026 Legal Year Opening

On 2 February 2026, judges of the Papua New Guinea Judiciary gathered at the newly commissioned Supreme and National Court Complex in Waigani for the formal Opening of the Legal Year. The dedication service, led by Chief Justice Sir Gibuma Gibbs Salika, reaffirmed the Judiciary's collective commitment to excellence, integrity, and the effective administration of justice.

The ceremony featured a march from Independence Boulevard, a Guard of Honour by the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary and Correctional Service, and attendance by judges, magistrates, lawyers, and justice sector partners. In his address, the Chief Justice commended the Judiciary's achievements in 2025 and expressed confidence that 2026 would continue under the theme "Preserve, Maintain and Improve."

The Papua New Guinea Centre for Judicial Excellence (PNGCJE), represented by Judge Administrator Justice John Carey and staff, reinforced its role in supporting judicial performance through education, leadership development, and capacity-building.

The event highlighted the Judiciary's ongoing dedication to strengthening public trust and advancing justice across Papua New Guinea.



Judges at the 2026 Legal Year Opening.



The 2026 Legal Year Opening Group Photo



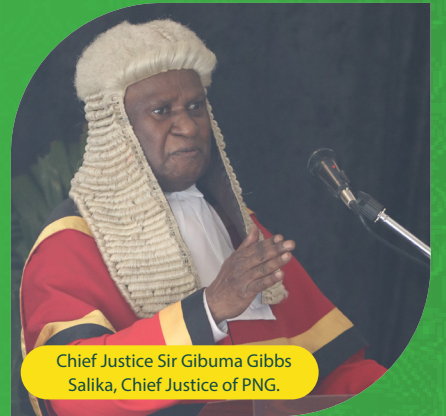
Judges at the 2026 Legal Year Opening.



(L-R) Justice Panuel Mogish, Deputy Chief Justice Ambeng Kandakasi and Chief Justice Sir Gibuma Gibbs Salika along with Judges of the Supreme and National Courts.



Judges of the Supreme and National Courts of PNG.



Chief Justice Sir Gibuma Gibbs Salika, Chief Justice of PNG.

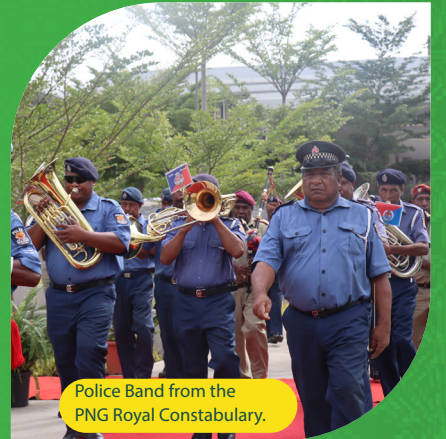
# Pictorial of the 2026 Legal Year Opening



Judges of the Supreme and National Courts.



Chief Justice inspecting the Guard of Honour.



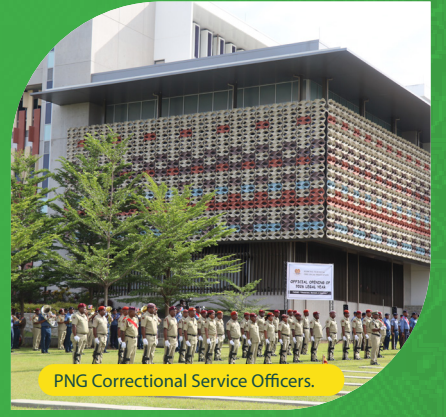
Police Band from the PNG Royal Constabulary.



Minister for Justice and Attorney General Hon. Pila Niningi.



PNG Royal Constabulary Officers.



PNG Correctional Service Officers.

# The Investment and Trade Court receives a judicial delegation from the Independent State of PNG

## 2025 Pacific Judicial Conference Highlights



The Investment and Trade Court meet with the PNG delegation.



The Investment and Trade Court meet with the PNG delegation.

His Excellency Judge Khalid bin Ali Al Obaidli, President of the Investment and Trade Court, received His Excellency Sir Gibuma Gibbs Salika, Chief Justice of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, along with the accompanying judicial delegation, as part of an official introductory visit to the Court.

The visit coincided with the delegation's presence in the country to participate in the Eleventh United Nations Conference against Corruption on Tuesday, 16 December 2025.

During the visit, the delegation was briefed through an extensive presentation on the jurisdiction and operational mechanisms of the Investment and Trade Court. The presentation covered adopted judicial procedures, advanced digital systems implemented by the Court, and best practices in adjudicating

commercial and investment disputes, reflecting the institutional and digital advancement of the judicial system. The Chief Justice and members of the visiting delegation expressed their appreciation for the advanced level of organisation, administration, and digital infrastructure at the Investment and Trade Court, commending the Court's pioneering judicial experience and its role in supporting the investment environment and strengthening commercial justice. For his part, Judge Khalid bin Ali Al Obaidli affirmed the Investment and Trade Court's commitment to strengthening judicial cooperation with international judicial bodies and to exchanging expertise in a manner that contributes to the development of judicial work and the consolidation of the principles of justice in accordance with the highest international standards



(L-R) Chief Justice Sir Gibuma Gibbs Salika with His Excellency Judge Khalid Bin Ali Al Obaidli, President of the Investment and Trade Court.

# PNGCJE participates in regional coordination meeting 2026

The Papua New Guinea Centre for Judicial Excellence (PNGCJE) participated in the Regional Coordination Meeting 2026, held on 11 February at Momi Bay, Fiji. Led by Chief Justice Sir Gibuma Gibbs Salika, accompanied by The Hon. Justice John Carey, Judge Administrator of PNGCJE; Mr Ian Augera, Registrar; Ms Stacey Levakia Wali, Assistant Director, PNGCJE; and Mr Paul Kelly, Advisor to the Chief Justice. They joined senior judicial leaders and development partners from across the Pacific to advance coordination in judicial capacity-building.

Discussions centred on priorities from the Chief Justices' Leadership Forum, including judicial independence, insti-

tutional strengthening, and democratic resilience. Programmes such as the Pacific Justice Sector Programme (PJSP), Federal Court of Australia initiatives, and PNGCJE's work were reviewed for better alignment with regional needs, alongside enhanced collaboration with DFAT and MFAT.

Chief Justice Salika emphasised the importance of coordinated approaches to judicial education, while Justice John Carey reaffirmed PNGCJE's commitment to responsive training and regional partnership. The meeting concluded with agreed action points and a shared pledge to reinforce cooperation, ensuring stronger judicial institutions and the rule of law across the Pacific.

## PNGCJE strengthened global partnerships in Fiji

Justice John Carey, Judge Administrator of the Papua New Guinea Centre for Judicial Excellence (PNGCJE), attended the Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting in Nadi, Fiji. On the sidelines, he met with Mr Steven Thiru, President of the Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA), and Ms Brigid Watson, CLA Secretary-General.

The meeting provided an important opportunity to discuss the rule of law, the role of continuing legal education in strengthening judicial capacity, and avenues for future collaboration between PNGCJE and the CLA.

Justice Carey emphasised that the dialogue reinforced PNGCJE's commitment to judicial excellence and international partnership.

Through this engagement, PNGCJE positioned itself to enhance professional development for judges and lawyers in Papua New Guinea, contribute to regional and global dialogue on upholding the rule of law, and expand collaboration with one of the Commonwealth's leading legal associations.



(L - R) Justice John Carey, Mr. Steven Thiru, President of the Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA), and Ms. Brigid Watson, CLA Secretary General.

# PNGCJE welcomed British Deputy High Commissioner



Caption (L–R): Mr. Peter Michael (PNGCJE Program Officer – Magisterial Services), Mr. Nicholas Mirou (PNGCJE Deputy Executive Director), Mr. Nial Cullens (Deputy British High Commissioner – Political and Development), Justice John Carey (PNGCJE Judge Administrator), and Mr. Tongia Kekebogi (PNGCJE Program Officer – PNG Judges).

The Papua New Guinea Centre for Judicial Excellence (PNGCJE) reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening access to justice and upholding the rule of law during a courtesy visit by the British Deputy High Commissioner, Mr Nial Cullens. Justice John Carey, Judge Administrator, together with senior staff, hosted the visit at the Centre in Port Moresby.

Discussions highlighted the strong partnership between PNGCJE and the British High Commission, with a focus on judicial independence, professional competence, and the effective administration of justice. A key point of dialogue was the forthcoming visit of Professor Dapo

Akande, the United Kingdom’s nominee to the International Court of Justice, who will deliver a seminar on international law and judicial practice in February 2026.

Justice Carey emphasised that such engagements are central to PNGCJE’s mission of building judicial competence, strengthening court leadership, and enhancing public confidence in the justice system. PNGCJE expressed appreciation to the British High Commission for its ongoing support, which continues to enable meaningful dialogue and high-quality judicial training.

# PNG Judiciary welcomed 12 new judges

Following the official opening of the 2026 Legal Year, the Waigani National Court Complex hosted a historic ceremonial sitting on 2 February to formally welcome twelve newly appointed judges to the Supreme and National Courts of Papua New Guinea.

Chief Justice Sir Gibuma Gibbs Salika emphasised that the expansion of the bench would strengthen the

judiciary’s capacity to deliver timely justice nationwide, reminding the new judges of their responsibility to uphold fairness, impartiality, and accessibility.

Justice Minister Hon Pila Niningi and PNG Law Society President Mr Hubert Namani also addressed the gathering, reaffirming the government’s and the profession’s commitment to judicial excellence and independence.

# From Botswana to the Pacific: Hon. Justice Dingake's historic ICJ nomination



Hon. Justice Oagile Bethuel Key Dingake.



Hon. Justice Oagile Bethuel Key Dingake.

*“From the villages of Botswana to the islands of the Pacific, dedication to justice can carry one to the world’s highest judicial forum.”*

With these words, Justice Oagile Key Dingake captured the essence of his nomination to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). His candidacy is not only a personal milestone but a historic moment that bridges Africa and the Pacific, amplifying voices that have too often been overlooked in global legal discourse. Justice Dingake, Judge of the Supreme and National Court of Papua New Guinea (PNG) have been nominated the Botswana’s candidate for election as Judge for the ICJ for the 2027–2036 term. Born in Botswana, a nation celebrated as Africa’s “quiet miracle” of democracy, and seasoned through years of judicial service in PNG and across the Pacific, Justice Dingake embodies both the universality of law and the distinct perspectives of diverse regions. His journey reflects a lifelong devotion to justice and a commitment to ensuring that the Pacific’s lived realities—climate change, maritime boundaries, and indigenous rights—are woven into the fabric of international jurisprudence. Justice Dingake joined the bench in 2002, as Judge of the Labour Court and in 2005 His Honour was appointed to the High Court of Botswana. His Honour has served the PNG Judiciary for over seven years and is currently the Judge Administrator of the Judicial Review and Appeals. Justice Dingake whilst interviewed for the nomination stated: “This nomination is not just about Botswana or Africa. It is a call to serve as a jurist of the world.

Law, like the desert winds of the Kalahari, knows no borders—it carries fairness across continents.” The candidacy highlights the Pacific’s growing role in shaping international law. Once seen as remote, the region is now central to global debates on climate change, maritime boundaries, and self determination. Justice Dingake emphasized, by stating the Pacific’s lived realities—its resilience, diversity, and custodianship of the oceans—deserve visibility at the ICJ. My nomination is a bridge between Africa and the Pacific, ensuring that our voices enrich global jurisprudence.” Papua New Guinea’s home grown constitution and unmatched cultural diversity stand as a beacon of constitutional innovation. This nomination underscores PNG’s contribution to comparative constitutionalism and its role in demonstrating that nations far from traditional centres of power can profoundly influence international judicial thought. “This is a call to dream boldly—to believe that Pacific voices matter in shaping global law.” The election of ICJ judges is a process of diplomacy and engagement among states. While proud to stand as Botswana’s nominee, Justice Dingake recognizes that service to international law is not confined to one institution. “Whether at the ICJ or the International Law Commission, I will embrace the opportunity with gratitude. Service to international law is a lifelong vocation,” Justice Dingake concluded.

# Judicial accountability

*A paper delivered by Honourable Justice professor OBK Dingake at a Conference of the Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association (CMJA), 9th – 12th of September, 2019, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.*

*Hon. Justice Professor OBK Dingake is a Judge of the Supreme and National Courts of Papua New Guinea, Adjunct Professor of Law, College of Business, Law and Governance, James Cook University, Australia and Honorary Professor of Law at the University of Cape Town, South Africa.*

Hon. Justice Professor OBK Dingake, in his address at the Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association Conference in Port Moresby (2019), explored the critical theme of judicial accountability and its relationship with judicial independence. He emphasized that accountability is not a threat to independence but its necessary partner, essential for maintaining public confidence and the legitimacy of the judiciary.

Judicial accountability is broad, encompassing the selection and appointment of judges, disciplinary proceedings, criticism of judicial decisions, recusal, declaration of assets, and more. Justice Dingake argued that judges must adopt the mindset of being “servants of the people,” recognizing that the judiciary is a service provider entrusted with dispensing justice. Accountability ensures that the judiciary earns respect, rather than demanding it, and reinforces its legitimacy as a co-equal arm of government. A central theme of the paper is the compatibility of independence and accountability. While independence protects judges from external pressures, accountability ensures transparency, fairness, and efficiency. Justice Dingake stressed that mechanisms to foster accountability must never suffocate independence.

Instead, they should complement it by reinforcing professionalism, integrity, and public trust.

Several mechanisms were highlighted:

- **Transparent appointments and removals:** Judges should be selected on merit through open processes, and disciplinary proceedings must be fair and not politically motivated.
- **Reasoned judgments and appeals:** Providing clear reasons for decisions is a primary form of accountability, while appellate review ensures oversight.
- **Publication of judgments and reports:** Transparency through public access to decisions and

annual reports strengthens legitimacy.

- **Codes of conduct and disclosure of assets:** Ethical standards and openness about interests prevent corruption and enhance trust.
  - **Performance evaluations:** Useful for encouraging professionalism, though they must be carefully managed to avoid misuse.
  - **Recusal:** Judges must step aside when impartiality is reasonably questioned, though not too readily to avoid manipulation of judicial assignments.
- Justice Dingake acknowledged persistent challenges, particularly in developing countries, where judicial corruption and politically motivated criticism undermine trust. Malicious attacks on judges, he warned, can erode independence, but the best defence is delivering well reasoned judgments grounded in law. He also noted that undue delays in delivering judgments weaken confidence in the judiciary’s efficiency.

Judicial accountability differs from that of the executive and legislature, as judges are accountable through the constitution rather than directly to voters. Nevertheless, the judiciary must earn legitimacy by treating all litigants equally, including marginalized groups and powerful states, and by ensuring justice is transparent, affordable, and expeditious.

His Honour reminded colleagues that publicity and openness are “the very soul of justice.” Justice Dingake concluded that judicial accountability strengthens independence, enhances respect for the judiciary, and ensures justice is dispensed fairly. He urged Chief Justices to prioritize accountability in judicial reforms, supported by judicial codes of conduct and professional associations.

Ultimately, accountability ensures that the judiciary fulfills its core mandate: delivering justice according to law, impartially and transparently, while maintaining the confidence of the people it serves.

# Justice Dingake facilitates GBV training in Mt. Hagen, Western Highlands Province



Participants of the gender based violence along with facilitator Justice Oagile Bethuel Key Dingake in Mt. Hagen, Western Highlands.

The Papua New Guinea Centre for Judicial Excellence (PNGCJE), in collaboration with the Australia–Papua New Guinea Law and Justice (APLJ) Partnership, reaffirmed its commitment to addressing gender-based violence (GBV) through judicial education and community engagement, following the recent awareness programme held in Mt Hagen, Western Highlands Province.

Justice Oagile Bethuel Key Dingake, Judge of the Supreme and National Courts of Papua New Guinea, facilitated the programme and described it as highly effective in deepening participants’ understanding of the legal protections available to survivors. “The programme emphasised survivor-centred justice, highlighted the importance of timely intervention, and reinforced the judiciary’s role in ensuring survivors are not re-traumatised by the legal process,” Justice Dingake said.

Feedback from police officers, prosecutors, and judicial officers was overwhelmingly positive. Police officers valued practical guidance on handling complaints with sensitivity and preserving evidence. Prosecutors highlighted new strategies to strengthen cases, while judicial officers emphasised the importance of impartiality and trauma-informed approaches.

Justice Dingake noted that awareness programmes such as Mt Hagen’s play a crucial role in bridging the gap between community realities and the formal justice system. “By educating judicial officers and law enforcement personnel, survivors encounter a justice system that is empathetic, accessible, and responsive,” he said.

Interactive discussions and case studies proved to be the most impactful elements of the programme, allowing participants to reflect on real-life challenges such as cultural pressures and logistical barriers. These sessions encouraged open dialogue and practical problem-solving across the justice sector.

Looking ahead, Justice Dingake emphasised the importance of expanding outreach to other provinces, strengthening collaboration between justice sectors, engaging community leaders, and offering continuous education for judicial officers. “By embedding these lessons into ongoing judicial practice, the judiciary can demonstrate its commitment to protecting survivors, thereby strengthening public trust and encouraging more survivors to come forward,” he affirmed.

# Justice Carey presents landmark paper on judiciary's role in safeguarding democracy

Justice John Carey, Judge Administrator for the Papua New Guinea Centre for Judicial Excellence (PNGCJE), Judge of the Supreme and National Courts of Papua New Guinea, and Adjunct Professor of Law at Griffith University, presented his paper "The Role of the Judiciary in Safeguarding Democracy: A Commonwealth Perspective" to the Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting in Nadi, Fiji on 9 February, 2026. The study highlights how courts strengthen democracy not by governing, but by ensuring legality, proportionality, and reasoned decision-making. Anchored in the Latimer House Principles, the Commonwealth Charter, and the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, Justice Carey emphasized that judicial independence and accountability are complementary forces that reinforce executive legitimacy and public trust.

## Key Findings:

- **Safeguarding, Not Governing:** Courts derive authority from constitutional design, not electoral mandate, stabilizing political systems through equality before the law and reasoned decisions;
- **Rule of Law as Infrastructure:** Judicial independence, transparent appointments, and adequate resourcing are essential to democratic; resilience, reducing conflict and enabling sustainable development;
- **Separation of Powers:** Comparative cases from South Africa and Samoa show courts enforcing constitutional boundaries while respecting political choice
- **Judicial Independence as a Public Good:** Independence protects rights and economic stability, while accountability mechanisms—appeals, ethics regimes, and transparent reporting—ensure legitimacy without intimidation.
- **Contemporary Risks:** Disinformation, politicized appointments, and under-resourcing threaten judicial credibility. Pacific initiatives, including digital courts and regional cooperation, demonstrate practical solutions.
- **Decolonisation and Restraint:** Courts advance



Hon. Justice John Carey.

constitutional decolonisation by rejecting colonial-era practices like ouster clauses and executive supremacy, while exercising restraint to preserve legitimacy.

## Case Highlights:

- **Bahamas:** Courts invalidated statutory ouster clauses and limited parliamentary privilege, reinforcing constitutional supremacy.
- **Caribbean (Belize/CCJ):** The Attorney General was empowered to sue former ministers for misfeasance, ensuring accountability beyond criminal prosecution.
- **South Africa & Samoa:** Landmark rulings upheld constitutional checks, demonstrating judicial oversight in politically charged contexts.

Justice Carey concluded: "Independence and accountability are not oppositional—they are the twin pillars of democratic resilience." The Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting, chaired by Fiji, brought together law ministers and senior officials from across the Pacific, Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and Asia.

Discussions focused on strengthening justice systems across member states and reaffirmed that strong legal safeguards protect everyday life—from people's ability to participate in democracy and earn a fair living, to their right to live in safe and healthy communities.

# Hon. Justice John Carey inspires law students and lawyers at UPNG with lecture on Mastering Legal Knowledge

The Papua New Guinea Centre for Judicial Excellence (PNGCJE) and the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) School of Law (SOL) recently hosted a lecture by Justice John Carey, Judge Administrator of PNGCJE and Judge of the Supreme and National Courts of Papua New Guinea. He addressed law students and members of the legal fraternity on the theme “Mastering Legal Knowledge – Developing depth, coherence, and practical command of legal principles in both study and professional practice.”

Justice Carey shared his personal journey from mechanical engineering into law, recounting the challenges of his early years at the University of Liverpool and the resilience required to succeed. He emphasised that “law is not for the intellectually deficient” and urged students never to quit in the face of difficulty.

Drawing from courtroom experiences, Justice Carey illustrated how legal mastery goes beyond memorising statutes and case law. He stressed the importance of recognising opportunities in litigation, preparing thoroughly, and advancing creative arguments supported by binding precedents. He also warned of the dangers of outdated research tools and highlighted the need for access to current case law and digital resources.

Justice Carey addressed the growing role of artificial

intelligence in law, referencing a recent case in Papua New Guinea involving AI-generated fake authorities. He reminded students and practitioners of their ethical duty to be truthful to the court, noting that while technology can assist, it cannot replace professional integrity and mastery of legal knowledge. The lecture also underscored practical strategies for success:

- Building confidence through competence and ethics;
- Writing in clear English, the language of the courts;
- Networking with practitioners and members of the judiciary to strengthen professional development; and
- Applying structured problem-solving approaches to client matters.

The event concluded with a strong message: mastering legal knowledge is a lifelong commitment requiring resilience, ethical grounding, and a passion for service to uphold democracy and the rule of law in Papua New Guinea



Students of the University of Papua New Guinea Law School together with Justice Oagile Bethuel Key Dingake and Justice John Carey after the lecture.

# Courts enhanced readiness to address financial crimes

The Supreme and National Courts of Papua New Guinea announced strengthened capacity to address money laundering, proceeds of crime, fraud, and corruption, building on more than a decade of institutional development and judicial training.

Central to this effort is the National Court's dedicated Fraud Track, established in 2013, which ensures complex financial crime cases are managed efficiently and with specialist attention. Chief Justice Sir Gibuma Gibbs Salika reaffirmed the Judiciary's commitment, noting that financial crimes evolve rapidly and require robust judicial tools and expertise.

Recent training programmes in 2023 and 2025, fa-

cilitated by international experts including Judge Michael Hopmeier and Justice Teresa Berrigan, equipped judges with advanced knowledge on money-laundering typologies, cross-border crime, evidentiary challenges, and asset recovery.

Building on this, a specialised information session on money laundering and proceeds of crime will be convened in April 2026 to update judges on global trends and best practices. Through specialised court structures, ongoing judicial education, and international collaboration, the Judiciary continues to uphold public confidence, safeguard the rule of law, and protect Papua New Guinea's economic integrity.



# PNG Judiciary showcases leadership at Commonwealth Judicial Educators meeting in India

The Judiciary of Papua New Guinea proudly demonstrated its commitment to excellence and international collaboration as Hon. Justices Colin Makail and Hon. Vergil Los Narokobi represented the country at the 11th Biennial Meeting of Commonwealth Judicial Educators, held at the Supreme Court of India in New Delhi from 13–15 February 2026.

With the theme "Educating for Judicial Leadership", the conference brought together judicial educators from 14 Commonwealth nations to discuss pressing issues including artificial intelligence in judicial practice, environmental justice, judicial well-being, and judgment

writing. Justices Makail and Narokobi contributed to sessions on AI and judicial leadership, highlighting both opportunities and governance challenges for modern courts.

Their participation reinforced Papua New Guinea's growing role in shaping judicial education across the Commonwealth. The insights gained will inform future training initiatives, strengthen judicial capacity, and enhance public confidence in the rule of law, affirming PNG's place as an active contributor to the global judicial community.

# PNG Judiciary led global push for integrity and judicial well-being at COSP11

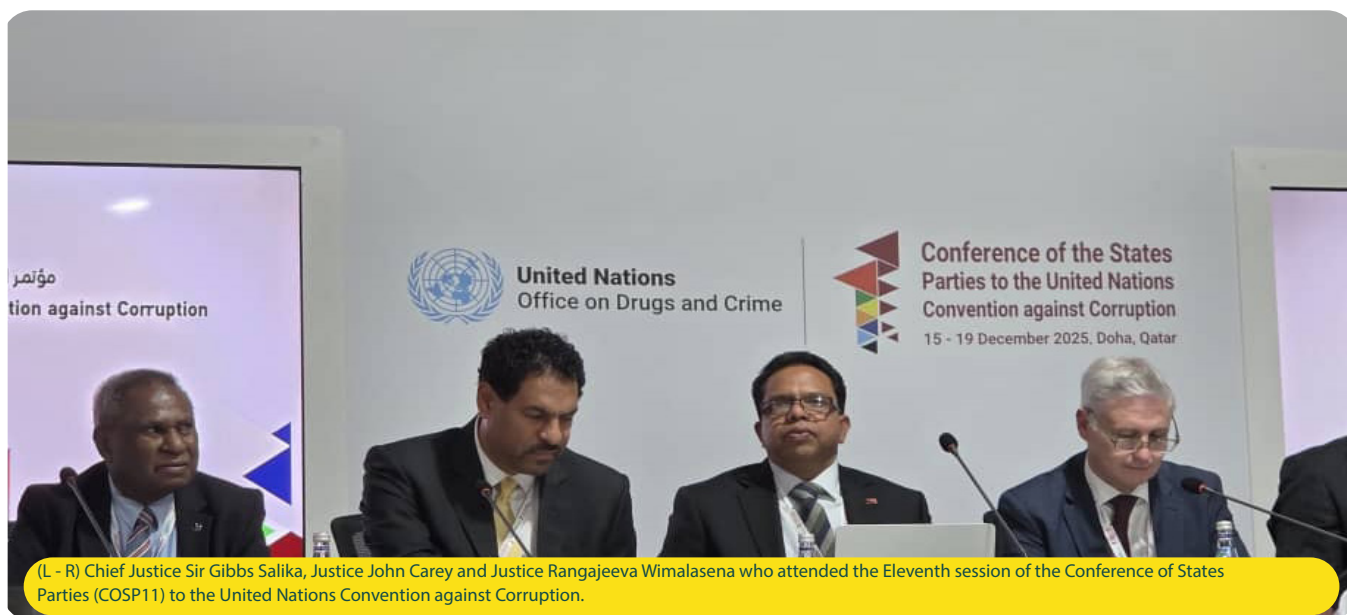
The Judiciary of Papua New Guinea reaffirmed its leadership in advancing judicial integrity and well-being at the Eleventh Session of the Conference of States Parties (COSP11) to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, held in Doha, Qatar, from 15–19 December 2025.

Represented by Chief Justice Sir Gibuma Gibbs Salika, Justice John Carey, and Justice Rangajeeva Wimalasena, Papua New Guinea highlighted national reforms such as the establishment of the Independent Commission Against

Corruption, the judiciary's Fraud and Corruption Track, and initiatives promoting judicial wellness. Key interventions underscored the importance of judicial well-being

as a core integrity reform, with programmes including wellness retreats, medical support, and fitness incentives. Justice Wimalasena emphasised the global significance of the Nauru Declaration on Judicial Well-being and the United Nations' proclamation of 25 July as the International Day for Judicial Well-being. Papua New Guinea also announced plans to establish a Judicial Well-being Secretariat to lead global initiatives.

Through its active participation, the Judiciary demonstrated its commitment to integrity, resilience, and judicial excellence, setting an example for the Pacific and contributing meaningfully to global anti-corruption efforts.



# British High Commission hosts breakfast seminar on international judicial practice



(L-R) Mr. Richard Jones, Mr. Nicholas Mirou, Justice Karen Carmody, Ms. Josephine Kilage, Justice Oagile Bethuel Key Dingake, Professor Dapo Akande, Acting Chief Justice, Justice Ambeng Kandakasi CBE, H.E. Paul Eastwood, Mr Albert Daniels, Justice Susan Purdon Sully and Mr. Niall Cullens.

The British High Commission in Papua New Guinea hosted a roundtable breakfast seminar with members of the Judiciary, featuring Professor Dapo Akande, the United Kingdom's candidate for election to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for the 2027–2036 term.

Senior judicial leaders, including Acting Chief Justice Ambeng Kandakasi, Justice Susan Purdon Sully, Justice Karen Carmody, and Justice Oagile Dingake, joined the discussion alongside representatives of the Magisterial Services and PNGCJE. The seminar focused on contemporary developments

in public international law, the evolving role of international courts, and emerging standards of judicial practice. Professor Akande and Justice Dingake shared perspectives from their extensive scholarly and judicial experience, enriching dialogue on how international adjudication can address global challenges such as climate change and democratic resilience.

The session concluded with a lively question-and-answer exchange, reflecting strong engagement by the judiciary and reinforcing Papua New Guinea's role in global judicial discourse.



(L-R) Justice Oagile Dingake and Professor Dapo Akande.



(L-R) Acting Chief Justice Hon. Ambeng Kandakasi, Professor Dapo Akande and Justice Oagile Dingake.

# Professor Dapo Akande delivers lecture to UPNG law students



Participants at the seminar.

The Papua New Guinea Centre for Judicial Excellence (PNGCJE), in partnership with the British High Commission and the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) School of Law, hosted a special lecture with Professor Dapo Akande, the United Kingdom's candidate for Judge of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for the 2027–2036 term.

Held at UPNG's new Lecture Theatre, the event brought together students, faculty, and distinguished guests. Professor Sam Kaipu, UPNG Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Law, opened the programme with remarks highlighting the importance of global perspectives in legal education.

Professor Akande delivered a lecture on contempo-

rary developments in international law, focusing on the ICJ's role in shaping jurisprudence and his contributions to the advisory opinion on climate change.

An interactive question-and-answer session followed, allowing students to engage on issues such as conflict resolution, enforcement of international law, and the evolving responsibilities of legal practitioners.

The event underscored strong collaboration between PNGCJE, UPNG, and the British High Commission, whose delegation included Deputy High Commissioner Mr Nial Cullens, Mr Richard Jones, and Mr Theo Singh.



Professor Dapo Akande.



Professor Dapo Akande middle with representatives of the British High Comm. the PNGCJE and the School of Law.

# Strengthening village courts through community partnerships

Village Courts remain one of Papua New Guinea's most vital community justice institutions, operating across 1,680 areas with the support of more than 16,000 Village Court Officials (VCOs). They play a central role in resolving disputes, restoring relationships, and maintaining peace at the community level.

In recent years, the Village Courts and Land Mediation Secretariat (VCLMS) and the Papua New Guinea Centre for Judicial Excellence (PNGCJE) have deepened collaboration to deliver practical training that strengthens justice responses and community support systems. With support from the EU–PNG Partnership for Good Governance (P4GG), pilot trainings in Bootless Bay Village Court Area have focused on family and gender-based violence, equipping participants with counselling skills, survivor advocacy tools, and gender sensitisation.

Importantly, the training extended beyond VCOs to include church leaders, women's representatives,

youth leaders, persons with disabilities, and other community actors—reflecting the Village Court Strategy's emphasis on civic participation. This approach is helping build stronger referral pathways linking Village Courts with health, legal, and protection services.

The initiative highlights the importance of partnerships, with contributions from the National Gender-Based Violence Secretariat (NGBVS), the PNG Counsellors Association (PNGCA), and financial support from PNGCJE. Lessons from the pilot are now being incorporated into PNGCJE's national training programme for 2026, ensuring survivor support, gender-responsive justice, and community engagement remain central to professional development across the justice sector.

This collaboration underscores that strengthening Village Courts is not only about improving the work of officials, but also about empowering communities to prevent conflict, support survivors, and uphold accessible, trusted justice.



# PNG Judiciary leaders launch Mediation training as a nation-building tool

Judicial leaders have reinforced the role of mediation as a critical nationbuilding mechanism following the successful completion of a threeweek Basic Mediation Skills Training (BMST) programme conducted by the Papua New Guinea Centre for Judicial Excellence (PNGCJE) in partnership with the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Division.

Delivered under the theme “Mediation: A Nation-Building Tool”, the programme commenced on 6 March 2026 with a Training of Trainers (ToT) session and was followed by two intensive training cohorts conducted between 9–20 March 2026 at the National and Supreme Court premises in Waigani.

The BMST is a structured, competencybased programme designed to prepare participants for mediation practice under the PNG ADR Rules 2022, while aligning with the Australian National Mediation Accreditation Standards. Participants received practical training in mediation process leadership, party empowerment, active listening, ethical practice, and cultural sensitivity.

This year’s programme placed a strong emphasis on the mining industry, attracting participants from the resource sector alongside judicial officers and court officials. Training was delivered in two cohorts held from 9–13 March and 16–20 March 2026, with final mediation assessments conducted jointly between 23–25 March 2026.

The training was facilitated by Australianbased organisation RREDD (Recognise, Respond, Engage, Design, Deliver), led by Mr Craig Jones and Mr Bradley Chenoweth, Associate Professor at the ANU Law School. They were supported by an experienced coaching team comprising Hon. Justice John Carey, Hon. Justice Derek Wood, Chief Magistrate Mark Pupaka, Mr Andrew Kwimberi (Team Leader and Lead

Coach), and accredited mediators from the judiciary and Family and Professional Accreditation streams.

Delivering the keynote address, Justice John Carey, PNGCJE Judge Administrator, highlighted mediation’s transformative role within the justice system.

“Under Section 7B of the National Court Amendment Act, courts may order mediation with or without the consent of parties. Mediation is not only a statutory requirement, but a culturally embedded practice in Papua New Guinea’s traditions of dialogue and consensusbuilding,” Justice Carey said.

He noted that mediation restores communication, preserves relationships, and builds trust between disputing parties.

Chief Magistrate Mark Pupaka underscored the importance of involving regulators and industry stakeholders in mediation training, particularly in the resource sector.

“Not every dispute requires a definitive court ruling. Many matters can be resolved through compromise and shared solutions. Mediation reduces court workloads while allowing parties to walk away with outcomes they can live with,” he said.

He added that mediation has long been practised informally in PNG communities and welcomed legislative developments such as the Arbitration Act and the forthcoming Mediation Act, which will further institutionalise mediation and align it with international best practice.

The PNGCJE and ADR Division reaffirm their commitment to strengthening mediation capacity across sectors, supporting courtordered mediation, and promoting sustainable dispute resolution for national development.



2026 BMST first cohort.



# Pictorial of the 2026 BMST



2026 BMST second cohort.

# LAWASIA

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CONFERENCE 2026

## Upcoming events



## The Environmental Rule of Law: What It Is, How It Is Implemented, Its Threats, Its Institutions, and How It Can Be Upheld

DATE

**19-21**  
AUG 2026

VENUE

**APEC HAUS**  
PORT MORESBY, PNG

ORGANISED BY:



SUPPORTED BY:



Commonwealth  
Lawyers Association



# About the PNG Centre for Judicial Excellence

**T**HE Papua New Guinea Centre for Judicial Excellence (PNGCJE) coordinates judicial education and training for Papua New Guinea Judiciary, Magisterial Services, and Law and Justice Sector agencies. The purpose of the Centre is to facilitate and coordinate structured professional training to all judicial officers, court officers, and officers of the law and justice sector to help improve the delivery of judicial services to the people.

The PNGCJE has been involved in various activities and programs in 2024 aimed at promoting court excellence and improving access to justice. The Centre also offered a variety of programs and assisted conferences including the Asia Pacific Mediation Forum, Advanced Mediation Skills Training, Protocol training, Fraud and Corruption workshops, Judicial Wellness Program, Financial Literacy, and Customer Service.

The PNGCJE was established in 2010 under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) entered between the Chief Justice of the PNG Supreme and National Courts, the Chief Magistrate and the Secretary for the Department of Justice and Attorney General.

## Key Objectives for the Establishment of PNGCJE

- Promote Judicial Excellence;
- Promote professional development and training; and
- Foster an awareness of judicial administration, developments in the law and social and community issues.

## Our Core Values

### The core values that underpin the professional development activities of PNGCJE are:

- Excellence in the professional integrity and competence of Judicial officers and Court staff;
- Excellence in dispensation of justice by the Courts according to international best practices;
- High level of competency, skills and experiences of Judicial officers and Court staff;
- Maintenance of democracy, good governance and the Rule of Law by the judiciary.



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