



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA THE JUDICIARY

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

ZAMBIAN JUDICIARY HONOURED WITH PRESTIGIOUS GLOBAL AWARD FOR ELECTORAL JUSTICE INNOVATIONS

Medellín, Colombia, 19th May, 2025 – The Judiciary of Zambia has been honoured on the global stage after emerging as the winner in Category 1 of the Global Network on Electoral Justice (GNEJ) Awards under the theme “*Judicial-Electoral Integrity and Independence*.” The announcement was made during the Sixth Plenary Assembly of the Global Network on Electoral Justice held in Medellín, Colombia from 14th to 17th May, 2025.

This award marks a significant milestone for Zambia, placing its Judiciary among global leaders in electoral justice innovation. The recognition comes as part of the second edition of the GNEJ Awards, which aim to acknowledge exceptional and forward-thinking efforts by judicial and electoral bodies across the world.

The award was received on behalf of the Judiciary of Zambia by Chief Justice Mumba Malila, SC, who led the Zambian delegation to Medellín. He was accompanied by key members of his Advisory Committee on Election Management, including Hon. Lady Justice Maria Mapani-Kawimbe, Chairperson of the Committee and Judge of the Constitutional Court; Ms. Nalishebo Imataa, the Chief Administrator of the Judiciary; and Mr. Sangwani Nyimbiri, Registrar of the High Court (Chambers).

In its communication to the Hon. Chief Justice, the GNEJ stated that the selection process was conducted through a rigorous jury assessment. “The jury,

composed of the Scientific Committee of the GNEJ which evaluated numerous nominations, projects and papers from all over the world,” the organisation said.

Zambia’s Judiciary has earned this prestigious accolade for its comprehensive efforts through the Chief Justice’s Advisory Committee on Election Management to strengthen the country’s capacity to handle electoral disputes effectively and independently. The Committee, established under the powers conferred on the Chief Justice by Section 4 of the Judiciary Administration Act of 2016, has played a pivotal role in making recommendation to the Chief Justice on ways to improve the electoral dispute resolution mechanisms and process in Zambia.

Among the Committee’s notable achievements is the development of two essential resource materials for use by all judicial officers: a Digest and a Bench Book. These tools consolidate relevant case law, statutory provisions and the current legal framework governing the electoral dispute resolution mechanism in Zambia, providing much-needed clarity and guidance for adjudicators.

The Committee has also led the formulation of new High Court Rules on electoral disputes, addressing a long-standing procedural gap. Previously, courts relied on general civil procedure rules, which were not tailored to the specialised nature of electoral matters. In addition, proposed amendments have been developed for the Rules governing electoral disputes before the Constitutional Court in presidential election disputes and rules applicable to the local government elections tribunals. These proposals have since been submitted to the Ministry of Justice which has the mandate to draft legislation in the country.

Recognising the importance of public understanding and trust in the electoral justice system, the Committee has also prepared a user-friendly Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) guide. This tool simplifies complex judicial processes and empowers all citizens with clear and accessible information on how electoral disputes are managed at the Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government levels.

Speaking at the ceremony, Chief Justice Malila expressed gratitude for the international recognition, stating: *“This award is a testament to our commitment to judicial independence and to ensuring that our electoral dispute resolution mechanisms are fair, transparent and responsive to the evolving needs of our democracy. It inspires us to continue refining our systems and contributing to global best practices in electoral justice. I wish to commend the Judges, adjudicators and all support staff across the Judiciary of Zambia for their outstanding performance during previous electoral cycles. Through collective dedication and hard work, they successfully managed and concluded all electoral*

matters within the prescribed statutory timelines, despite the pressure of competing responsibilities. This award is a tribute to the entire Judiciary of Zambia and a moment for all to proudly savor.”

The award reflects the Judiciary’s commitment to upholding the principles of transparency and independence. It is also a testament to Zambia’s growing leadership in electoral justice reform across the continent and globally.

As the country looks ahead to future electoral cycles, this international recognition will serve not only as a celebration of the progress made by the Judiciary in enhancing electoral justice but also as an inspiration to continue strengthening the rule of law and judicial preparedness in electoral governance.

Finally, it is gratifying that this award places the Zambian Judiciary at the forefront of legal innovation in election management and stands as a proud moment for the country on the international stage.

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