RNB
RADICAL NEW BAR

UGANDA LAW SOCIETY

EXECUTIVE ORDER RNB NO 14 OF 2026

ENFORCEMENT OF DECLARATION OF CHIEF JUSTICE DR. FLAVIAN ZEIJA AS A GLOBAL JUDICIAL PARIAH BY DENUNCIATION AND BOYCOTT OF HIS THANKSGIVING CEREMONY (KARAMA, RUKUNGIRI – 21 NOVEMBER 2026) AND AUTHORIZATION OF A PROTEST LETTER CAMPAIGN

Part 1 - FORMAL DENUNCIATION

The Uganda Law Society (ULS), acting through its Radical New Bar (RNB) Governing Council and in furtherance of **Executive Order RNB No. 7 of 2026**, hereby solemnly denounces the planned **"Thanksgiving Ceremony"** scheduled for Saturday, 21st November 2026 at Karama Primary School Playground, Karama Village, Nyarushanje Sub-county, Rukungiri District, in celebration of the appointment and first anniversary of Dr. Flavian Zeija as Chief Justice of the Republic of Uganda.

This event is not a private or community celebration of personal achievement. It is a public performance of legitimacy for an office whose holder has been formally designated by the Bar as a **Global Judicial Pariah and an active threat to the rule of law in Uganda.**

Executive Order RNB No. 7 of 2026, issued on 14 February 2026, records the following established facts and conclusions:

- The appointment process was suspiciously accelerated, irregular, non-transparent, and conducted without meaningful public participation or a properly constituted Judicial Service Commission that included ULS representatives.
- Dr. Zeija's prior conduct as Principal Judge and Deputy Chief Justice included documented administrative interference in pending matters, the removal of critical ULS appeals from the Court of Appeal cause list, and statements and actions inconsistent with judicial independence.
- Upon assumption of office, the Chief Justice excluded ULS leadership from the Ceremonial Opening of the New Law Year and issued public warnings against online criticism, signalling intolerance of legitimate scrutiny.
- The Judiciary under his leadership has failed to act as an effective check on executive power, with arbitrarily denied bail applications, unresolved habeas corpus applications concerning enforced disappearances, prolonged detention of political prisoners, and credible allegations of torture left unaddressed.

The planned ceremony in Rukungiri — home district of both the Chief Justice and opposition doyen Dr. Kizza Besigye, former Rukungiri Municipality MP aspirant Sam Mugumya, and other lesser-known detainees whose cases raise acute questions of liberty and judicial protection — exacerbates the moral injury. As the Observer article of 28 October 2026 by Muhwezi Joshua Lawel correctly observes, to feast and sing *Tukutendereza Yesu* while fellow citizens from the same soil remain in prolonged detention or unexplained custody is to reduce faith and community to performance and to treat the suffering of the powerless as somebody else's problem. The office of Chief Justice belongs to the nation; its holder cannot claim the community's thanksgiving while the institution he leads is perceived by a significant section of the profession and the public as captured.

Institutional decadence

The Karama Primary School event will be the fourth such thanksgiving since Dr. Zeija's contested appointment as Chief Justice. **These events have become a recurring and harmful pattern.** The same objections that justified the ULS boycott of former Chief Justice Owiny-Dollo's Patongo event apply with equal or greater force here:

- **Abuse of public resources and cost to judicial time:** Public funds, official transport, and the time of judges, registrars, court staff and judicial officers diverted to preparation, travel and attendance at a lavish homecoming celebration represent an unjustifiable diversion from pressing needs—case backlog reduction, court infrastructure, legal aid, and the delivery of timely justice. The judiciary's priority must remain the resolution of cases, not the organisation of social gatherings.

- **Creeping partisanship and threat of judicial politicisation:** High-profile attendance by political actors, local government leaders and other elites risks converting the occasion into a platform that aligns the head of the Judiciary with partisan or executive interests. Such optics undermine the appearance of neutrality required by the Uganda Code of Judicial Conduct (especially Principles 2.2, 4.4 and 4.6) and accelerate the perception of institutional capture.

- **Risk of judicial capture, exposure to improper influence, and lack of transparency:** Large public celebrations create opportunities for lobbying, gift-giving and favour-trading. Any solicitation or receipt of contributions that exceed Leadership Code limits, or that create the impression that organisers or donors stand in a special position of influence, compromises integrity. Opacity around funding and guest lists compounds the problem.

- **Disconnect from public needs and erosion of public trust:** While ordinary litigants face delayed justice, under-resourced courts and unresolved human-rights claims, the spectacle of thanksgiving feasting reinforces perceptions of an elitist, self-celebrating institution detached from the citizens it is meant to serve.

- **Conflict with professional ethics and demand for humility:** Participation by judicial officers and advocates in such events conflicts with the ethical duty to prioritise integrity, public interest and institutional independence over personal or communal vanity. The judiciary should embody humility and service, not self-indulgence.

The Uganda Law Society therefore declares that any participation in, endorsement of, or attendance at this ceremony by members of the Bar, the Bench, the clergy, local leadership, or civil society constitutes the conferral of undeserved legitimacy upon judicial capture and is incompatible with the professional and ethical obligations of an independent legal profession.

This denunciation is issued in defence of constitutionalism, judicial independence, and the rule of law. It is not personal animus. It is institutional duty.

Part 2 - BOYCOTT NOTICE

Pursuant to Article II of Executive Order RNB No. 7 of 2026 – Perpetual Zero Engagement

All members of the Uganda Law Society, its allies, and all persons who respect the independence of the Bar and the Judiciary are hereby directed and urged as follows:

1. **Total Boycott** of the Thanksgiving Ceremony of 21 November 2026 at Karama Primary School Playground, and of any related events, receptions, or fundraising activities organised in connection with it.

2. No ULS member shall attend, speak at, sponsor, advertise, or otherwise lend presence, resources, or prestige to the event.

3. Any invitation extended to ULS officers, Council members, or ordinary members shall be declined in writing with reference to this Notice and to Executive Order RNB No. 7 of 2026.

4. Members are reminded that any engagement outside mandatory judicial interactions with the office of the Chief Justice is characterised under the Order as conferring legitimacy on judicial capture.

5. Law firms, chambers, and legal associations are requested to issue internal directives ensuring compliance and to report any pressure or inducement to participate.

6. Particular vigilance is required of all citizens against the diversion of official judicial time, transport, or resources to the event, and against any appearance of partisan alignment or improper influence with respect to judicial office.

This boycott is perpetual until the conditions set out in Executive Order RNB No. 7 of 2026 for the lifting of the Global Judicial Pariah designation are met: clear, verifiable, and independent restoration of judicial autonomy and impartiality.

Non-compliance by members will be treated as a serious professional matter and shall attract internal scrutiny and political censure under the Society's governing instruments.

Part 3 - LETTER CAMPAIGN – CALL TO ACTION

The Uganda Law Society calls upon every member of the Bar, every advocate of the rule of law, and every citizen of conscience to write and publish open letters, formal communications, and public statements denouncing the ceremony and demanding accountability.

This campaign is to be conducted in the same spirit as the Society's ongoing **Call for Petitions** to the Chief Justice, the Deputy Chief Justice and the Principal Judge, requiring the leadership of the Judiciary to state publicly its position on President Museveni's Address to the Nation of 4 July 2026 — in which the Head of State described the current judicial system as "colonial, neo-colonial, tragic-comic, obscurantist, disconnected, and provocative" and signalled a desire for the security forces to assume judicial functions "to fill the gaps."

Recommended addressees (copy all):

- The organisers of the 21 November 2026 ceremony
- Local government authorities, religious leaders and community leaders in Rukungiri District and Nyarushanje Sub-county
- The Chief Justice, the Deputy Chief Justice and the Principal Judge (submit to info@judicature.go.ug and copy uls@uls.or.ug)
- The Judicial Service Commission
- The Speaker of Parliament and relevant parliamentary committees
- Diplomatic missions and international partners in Kampala
- Regional and international bar associations
- UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers
- African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

Core points for inclusion in every letter (strengthen with these specific failures of leadership):

- Reference to Executive Order RNB No. 7 of 2026 and the designation of Dr. Flavian Zeija as Global Judicial Pariah.
- The contradiction between celebrating the head of the Judiciary while citizens (including those from the same district) face prolonged detention, wrongly denied bail, and unresolved claims of torture.
- The waste of scarce judicial time and public resources that could otherwise address case backlogs, court infrastructure and access to justice, together with the risk of creeping partisanship and politicisation.
- **Above all, the pattern of institutional failure under the current Chief Justice**
    - His conspicuous failure to present in public any institutional defence of judicial independence following President Museveni's 4 July 2026 attack on the Judiciary.
    - His conspicuous failure to publicly state the Judiciary's position following the Judicial Service Commission Chairperson Dr. Douglas Singiza Karekona's 28 October 2026 visit to the headquarters of the Patriotic League of Uganda, and his accompanying endorsement of the candidature of Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba.
    - His failure to acknowledge or act upon the detailed feedback submitted by the Bar concerning Administrative Circular No. 1 of 2026 on the transition to paperless courts, particularly the numerous and well-documented concerns about abuse and dysfunction of the Electronic Court Case Management Information System (ECCMIS).
    - The abuse of the mobile-court rules to establish a mobile court at Ggaba purely for executive convenience.
    - The persistent shying away from genuine Bench-Bar reconciliation efforts, thereby prolonging avoidable conflict, intrigue and the deliberate exclusion of the independent Bar from institutional processes.
    - The failure to conduct meaningful inspections of the Constitutional Court, High Court and other superior courts and judges while continuing the bad practice of administrative interference previously documented.

- The elevation of ceremonial mascotry, prayer breakfasts and non-judicial travel over the hard, unglamorous work of restoring judicial independence, clearing backlogs, and defending the institution against executive overreach.

Sample opening and closing language (adapt as appropriate):

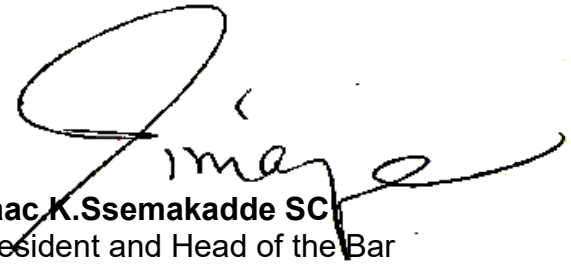
"We write pursuant to Executive Order RNB No. 7 of 2026 of the Uganda Law Society and in support of the Society's Call for Petitions arising from the Presidential Address of 4 July 2026.

The planned thanksgiving ceremony of 21 November 2026 is the latest manifestation of a leadership that prioritises spectacle over substance. While the Chief Justice has failed to defend the Judiciary against a direct presidential attack on its independence, failed to address the Bar's concerns on ECCMIS and paperless transition, abused mobile-court powers for executive convenience at Ggaba, refused meaningful Bar–Bench reconciliation, neglected inspection of the superior courts, and continued patterns of interference — he nevertheless finds time and resources for ceremonial journeys across the country and the globe.

Until the Judiciary demonstrates, through transparent and verifiable action, that it is no longer an instrument of executive convenience and that its scarce time and resources are devoted to justice rather than spectacle and mascotry, no amount of singing, feasting or community pageantry can cleanse the office of the stain of capture. We therefore call upon you to withdraw support from, and to publicly dissociate yourselves from, the planned ceremony of 21 November 2026, and we further demand that the leadership of the Judiciary publicly state its position on the Presidential Address of 4 July 2026."

Letters should be submitted to **info@judicature.go.ug**, copied to **uls@uls.or.ug**, and thereafter shared widely to amplify the call for independent and impartial justice. All correspondence will be archived in the ongoing Zeija Accountability Dossier.

Issued under my hand this 2nd day of November 2026.



Isaac K.Ssemakadde SC
ULS President and Head of the Bar