



JUDICIARY
THE BAHAMAS



2025

Annual Report

From Tradition to Transformation: Embracing Change in the Digital Era.

Grand Bahama

Abaco

Berry Islands

Harbour Island

Eleuthera

Nassau

Andros

Cat Island

San Salvador

Great Exuma

Long Island

Acklins

Inagua

Mayagua

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	3
	Foreword	
	Court of Appeal Report	
	Judicial Structure	
2	REPORTS	35
	Court of Appeal Registrar Report	
	Supreme Court Registrar Report	
	Magistrate's Court Report	
3	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT	83
	Human Resources Unit	
	Director Court Services Report	
4	JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS	97
	The Judicial and Legal Service Commission	
	Special Sitting of the Court of Appeal	
	Bahamian Judges Continue to Serve with Distinction in Regional Institutions	
5	BJEI REPORT	113
	The Bahamas Judicial Education Institute	
6	JUDICIAL HIGHLIGHTS	123
	Courtesy Visits	
	Opening of the Legal Year Speech 2025	
	Judicial Historical Nuggets!	



7	2025 CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS	139
	Strengthening the Judicial Office: A Judicial Officer and Research Assistant Programme, Guyana	
	24th Commonwealth Law Conference 2025, Malta	
	17th International Association of Women Judges Biennial Conference, Cape Town, South Africa	
	The Fourth Global Meeting of the International Hague Network of Judges	
	Chief Justices & Heads of Judiciary Conference	
	The International Law Enforcement Academy Anti-Corruption for Judges & Prosecutors	
	Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association Triennial Conference, Banjul, The Gambia	
	14th Edition Fraud, Asset Tracing & Recovery Conference	
	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States 19th Regional Law Conference, Grenada	
	Florida Black Lawyers Summit	
8	JUDICIAL ARTICLES	157
	The Dilemma of Judgments Delivered by Judges who have Retired	
	Judicial Wellness: Breaking the Silence	
	Ethical Implications of AI Misuse: Risks to the Justice System	
	ICMS: A Digital Transformation Success Story	
9	COURT SERVICE COUNCIL'S RETIREES AND IN MEMORIAM	173
10	EDUCATION OUTREACH	177
11	STAFF OF THE COURT SERVICES COUNCIL	181
12	COURT SERVICE COUNCIL'S 2024-2025 BUDGET REPORT ...	191



JUDICIARY
THE BAHAMAS

01

INTRODUCTION



www.courts.bs
www.courtsofappeal.org.bs



[@BAHJudiciary](https://twitter.com/BAHJudiciary)



[BAHJudiciary](https://www.facebook.com/BAHJudiciary)



2025

Bahamas Judiciary
Annual Report

Foreword

FOREWORD

—
CHIEF JUSTICE



THE HONOURABLE CHIEF JUSTICE

SIR IAN R. WINDER, KT.

FOREWORD

Chief Justice

The year 2025 was an incredibly successful one for the Judiciary as we continued to reform and retool our way of doing business in the service of the people of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. This annual report is historic as, for the first time, it includes the Court of Appeal and presents a unified report of the work of all aspects of the court system in 2025. The Court Services Act, 2023 which merged the financial and administrative arrangements of all three levels of the Court into the Court Services Council has facilitated this unification.

In January 2025, the Honourable Mr. Justice Milton Evans, MB took the leadership reins of the Court of Appeal, upon the retirement of the Honourable Justice Jon Isaacs, MB. In a special sitting of the Court of Appeal held on 20 January 2025 we said farewell to Mr. Justice Isaacs, after a long and distinguished career on the bench, and simultaneously welcomed President Evans into office. In the less than one year since President Evans has been involved in the leadership of the judiciary his impact has already been felt. I continue to wish him well in his tenure as President of the highest domestic court in The Bahamas.

On 1 July 2025 the Court Services Council completed its transition year and appointed its first staff members. Many public officers from across the three levels of the court system accepted offers of employment and opted to join the new entity. In advance of the 1 July 2025 deadline, the Court Services Council approved its Human Resources Policies, Post Qualifications and Salary Scales for staff. Transferred staff members received enhanced salaries and benefits packages. We also welcomed new members of staff in 2025 to replace exiting staff and to support the new areas of work. I wish again to formally thank the staff members who are no longer with us for their contribution to the judiciary over the years.

Significant steps were taken in 2025 to advance the required formal contributory pension arrangements and as well as towards establishing contributory medical insurance for staff. Director of Court Services, Ms. Mildred Bodie, assumed the reins as Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Court Service Council in January 2025 and Mr. Leron Neely joined the Council as Acting Director of Court Services in June 2025. Ms. Charmaine Deleveaux joined the Court Services Council as the Chief Financial Officer in January 2025 and has been building an effective finance and accounting department.

As Chairman of the Conference of Heads of Judiciary of the Caribbean, I was pleased to host the annual conference between 12-21 June 2025. The Conference brought together eleven (11) Judiciaries in the Caribbean. The annual event, held this year under the theme “Judiciaries in Transition”, was last hosted by The Bahamas in 2011. The Opening Ceremony was held at Baha Mar, and the closed sessions at The Cove, Atlantis. The meeting provided a forum for the promotion of fellowship, understanding and functional cooperation for the enhancement of the administration of justice within the jurisdiction of each member state and associate state. It also provided an opportunity to examine judicial problems, whether of a national or regional nature, and to arrive at better solutions to them. Topics discussed included: Judicial leadership; Execution of strategic plans; Constitutional and Administrative implications of delayed judgments; Judicial Administration Models in the Caribbean; and Drafting an AI Policy/Guidance for Your Judiciary.

While the conference agenda was compacted, we managed to set aside some time for some sightseeing and outdoor activities to afford our guests a taste of our beautiful islands. Attendees included: Hon. Justice Ivor Archie ORTT, Chief Justice of Trinidad & Tobago; Hon. Justice Bryan Sykes, OJ CD, Chief Justice of Jamaica; Hon Justice Mabel Agyemang, Chief Justice of The Turks and Caicos; Hon. Dinesh Sewatan, Alternate for the President, High Court of Suriname; Hon. Justice Louise E. Blenman, Chief Justice of the Senior Courts of Belize; Hon. Justice Margaret Ramsay-Hale, Chief Justice of Cayman Islands; Hon. Justice Leslie Haynes KA, Chief Justice of the Republic of Barbados; Hon. Justice Larry Mussenden, Chief Justice of Bermuda; Hon. Justice Yonette Cummings Edwards OR CCH, Acting Chancellor of the Republic of Guyana; and Hon. Justice Winston Anderson, President of the Caribbean Court of Justice.

I again express my gratitude to the local organizing committee comprising of Court Council Acting CEO Mildred Bodie and Registrar Renaldo Toote and their teams. To Justices of Appeal Smith and Turner and Justices Lewis-Johnson, Darville-Gomez and Card-Stubbs, who contributed significantly to the conference agenda and other important organizational logistics for the conference. To the team from the Cabinet office, our partners in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Royal Bahamas Police Force.

In 2025 we continued to make deliberate efforts to engage in Criminal Justice Reform. In August the Bahamas' Criminal Justice Board was formed. A Criminal Justice Board is a recognized multi-agency forum that brings together key stakeholders across the criminal justice system to improve strategic oversight, coordination, and system-wide performance. Precedents for Criminal Justice Boards exist in several jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom and Belize. The primary focus of the Criminal Justice Board is to ensure the implementation of key reforms and to resolve delays in the court system. Members of the Board are expected to work together in an effort to improve access to justice. Membership in the board includes myself as Chairman, the President of the Court of Appeal and other key members of the judiciary, the Commissioner of Police, the Director of Public Prosecutions, the President of the Bar Association and key members of the private bar, the Commissioner of Prisons, the Director of Social Services and the heads of the forensics/pathology units. Strategic committees have been established to focus on: (1) The Supreme Court; (2) the Court of Appeal; (3) the Magistrate Court; (4) the Police; (5) Prosecutions; (4) the Private/Defence Bar; (5) Forensics (including pathology); (6) Corrections (including centers for boys and girls); and (7) Training. The Board has been meeting regularly and collectively we are identifying challenges and finding solutions to long-standing problems.

The Sentencing Guidelines Commission is nearing the completion of its work, having released guidelines for consultation. The guidelines included general principles of sentencing and specific guidelines for violent offences, sexual offences, drug offences and firearm offences. The guidelines will go to wider consultation in January 2026 and will be followed up with comprehensive training for the entire stakeholder community. I wish to express my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the members of the Commission, led by its Chairman retired Chief Justice, Sir Michael Barnett. The other members of the Commission include Justice of Appeal Bernard Turner, Senior Justice Cheryl Grant Thompson, Chief Magistrate Roberto Reckley, Director of Public Prosecutions Cordell Frazier, Bar Representatives Miranda Adderley and Stanley Rolle, Rev. L Carla R Culmer and Ms. Sonia Saunders Assistant Director of the Department of Rehabilitative/Welfare Services.

Court of Appeal Registrars Wallace-Whitfield and Richards served as secretaries and research counsel to the Commission. I also wish to record my thanks to the UK Consultants Attorneys Parvais Jabbar and Richard Thomas KC who continue to assist with this project.

The long awaited Bahamian Criminal Bench Book was finally completed at the end of 2025. The 500 page electronic version (or E-Bench Book) was released to the judiciary in December and will be made available for wider circulation. The printed version is expected to be available in February 2026 and we hope to have a formal launch thereafter. The Bench book is designed for judicial officers presiding over criminal matters and distills procedural norms, evidentiary standards, and sentencing frameworks into a coherent and accessible reference. Much material in the Bench Book was contributed to by our own judicial officers and reflects the evolving jurisprudence of our courts, the constitutional imperatives, the statutory architecture of our criminal law, and the ethical considerations that underpin fair trial rights. Whether addressing bail applications, jury directions, or sentencing considerations, the Bench Book aims to support consistency, clarity, and judicial independence. Professional assistance in editing the publication was provided by the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO) under the able guidance of Justice Peter Jamadar of the Caribbean Court of Justice. I wish to formally extend my gratitude to the CAJO, to all of the contributors to the Bench Book and to Justice Renae McKay for her tireless efforts in shepherding this project to conclusion. It is a product with which we can all be proud.

In 2025 the Supreme Court (Trial by Judge Alone) Act 2024, The Supreme Court Amendment Act 2024 and the Supreme Court (Criminal Case Management) (Amendment) Rules 2024 came into effect. The latter rules promote more efficient and effective case management in criminal matters by providing for the Defense Statement and a mechanism for Pre-trial Evidentiary Hearings. The Rules Committee also passed:

- 1 ***Supreme Court (Provost Marshal Fee) Rules, 2025.*** These rules which came into effect on 3 March 2025 seek to prescribe the fees to be paid to the provost marshal by litigants who utilize these services for the execution of writs of execution.
- 2 ***Supreme Court (Enforcement of Orders and Awards of the Industrial Tribunal) (Amendment) Rules, 2025.*** These rules came into effect on 1 July 2025 and seek to facilitate awards of the industrial tribunal being seamlessly made into orders of the Supreme Court.
- 3 ***Matrimonial Causes (Amendment) Rules, 2025.*** The amendment to the Matrimonial Causes Rules seeks to update the existing Rules including to make the Supreme Court (Civil Procedure) Rules 2022 the default rules, in place of the now repealed Rules of the Supreme Court. The amendment came into effect on 1 July 2025. The amendment also enables for a more simplified process in the hearing of undefended matrimonial causes in Rule 25(1)(e). Rules 25(1)(e) is supplemented by Practice Direction No. 1 of 2025.
- 4 ***The Supreme Court (Fee) Rules 2025.*** Upon conducting a comprehensive review of Supreme Court fees, a sub-committee of the Court Services Council successfully recommended to the Rules Committee a proposal for the adjustment of Supreme Court fees. These new fees, which take effect on 1 January 2026, had not been adjusted in over 20 years.

On 5 November 2025 I issued Practice Direction # 3 of 2025 to provide a guide to the use of Generative AI in Court proceedings. The practice direction came into effect on 5 November 2025 and was drafted by a committee which included Justices of Appeal Gregory Smith and Bernard Turner, Justices Renae McKay and Justice Andrew Forbes and JRC Courtney Martin. The AI Committee considered international and regional models before settling on what we considered would be best suited for The Bahamas. I wish to thank each of them for their contribution to this project.

In September 2025 a second full daytime Civil Magistrates Court was introduced to complement the Civil Night Court. It is hoped that this will further streamline the civil litigation processes and alleviate the burden on Supreme Court schedules. This was facilitated by the relocation of the two magistrates engaged in family and domestic work from the Nassau Street Complex to the Bernard Road Family Court Complex. This movement also facilitated the conversion of the Firearms Court to a full-time court.

In 2025 we welcomed the following judicial officers to the judiciary – Justice Dale Fitzpatrick, Justice Leif Farquharson KC, Justice Cheryl Bazard KC, Magistrate Petrocilli Edwards, Magistrate Uel Johnson, Magistrate Abigail Farrington and Assistant Registrar Akeira Martin. We also said farewell to Justice Jon Isaacs, former President of the Court of Appeal, Justice Donna Newton and Assistant Chief Magistrate Subusola Lawanson-Swain. Justice Stella Maureen Crane-Scott, Senior Magistrate Samuel Mckinney, Senior Magistrate Sandradee Gardiner and Magistrate James Moxey all proceeded on pre-retirement leave during 2025.

In these pages we seek to provide: a statistical account of some of the work undertaken during 2025 in the Magistrates Courts, the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal: information of new staffing appointments and deployment; training undertaken both locally and abroad; and, other highlights of 2025. I wish to formally register my thanks and appreciation to the team responsible for preparing this Annual Report chaired jointly by Registrars Renaldo Tooté and Kristina Wallace Whitfield. That team included the CEO (Ag.) Mildred Bodie, Justice of Appeal Gregory Smith, Justices Camille Darville Gomez and Constance Delancy and Assistant Chief Magistrate Mrs. Kara Turnquest-Deveaux and Assistant Registrar Mrs. Sharonna Richards. The team has done an incredible job in collating the material to be found in these pages. I hope that you will find this Annual Report informative and uplifting.

FOREWORD

**President of the Court
of Appeal**



President of the Court of Appeal

The Honourable

**MR. JUSTICE MILTON
EVANS, MB.**

1st July, 2025 marked a significant milestone for our Judiciary with the formal establishment of the Court Services Council. After a year of transition from the Public Service, the Judiciary has obtained its independence. Although we recognise that the financial umbilical cord has been removed, and the umbilical stump is yet to fall, we are excited about this accomplishment.

The transitional year leading up to this July was an active one as the Council took its root. The vast majority of the staff at the Court of Appeal elected to remain with the Council, while a few chose to remain with the Public Service. I am pleased that we retain a group of diligent workers headed by a solid management team.

The establishment of the Council, headed by the Honourable Chief Justice, enables a more focused and hands-on approach to meeting the needs of the Judiciary. The presence of the President of the Court of Appeal and the Chief Magistrate on the Board of the Council allows for the main stakeholders to be engaged in the decision-making process.

As President of the Court of Appeal, I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Board of the Council to facilitate the improvement of the delivery of Justice in a fair and timely manner. In doing so, we seek to honour the traditions of the profession while embracing the changes available to us in this digital era.

For the last five years, the Court of Appeal has heard appeals virtually utilising the Zoom platform. This transition has been a smooth one and has found favour with both the Bench and Bar. However, so as not to lose the noble tradition of in-person court appearances, the Court has implemented a hybrid system as of June 2025. This hybrid system is facilitated by Practice Direction No. 1 of 2025 and enables attorneys practising throughout the archipelago to appear before the Court of Appeal at no additional expense to their clients. Similarly, clients who have instructed foreign counsel are not saddled with the expenses of an in-person appearance.

Additionally, we are moving towards e-filing, and our files are already stored online for ease of access. It is anticipated that files from the Magistrates Court and the Supreme Court would be easily accessible to us electronically, which should expedite the process by which matters are prepared for appeal.

New Rules for the Court of Appeal are being considered by a Rules Committee, which I appointed shortly after taking office at the end of January this year. It has been twenty years since the current Rules were issued, and with the changes over the years, new Rules are necessary. In the interim, several new Practice Directions have been issued to guide the effective progress of appeals.

This Annual Report, which marks the first combined Report of the Judiciary, is a pivotal step in harmonising our efforts to report to the public on our work, successes and our needs. I am grateful for the hard work of the Committee, who have laboured assiduously to provide a Report of which we can all be proud. I hope that this harmonisation will extend to our respective websites. In my view, a single judicial website which houses all of the cases heard in the Magistrates Court, Supreme Court and Court of Appeal would be beneficial to practitioners as well as the Judiciary.

As we complete this year, I look forward to the year to come, anticipating greater strides in our delivery of Justice.

JUDICIAL STRUCTURE



The Honourable
SIR IAN R. WINDER, KT.

CHIEF JUSTICE



The Honourable
**MR. JUSTICE MILTON EVANS,
MB.**

**PRESIDENT OF THE COURT
OF APPEAL**

JUSTICES OF THE COURT OF APPEAL



THE HON. MADAM JUSTICE
MAUREEN CRANE-SCOTT

Date of Appointment
1 MAY 2015

THE HON. MADAM JUSTICE
INDRA CHARLES

Date of Appointment
1 MAY 2023



THE HON. MR JUSTICE
GREGORY SMITH

Date of Appointment
1 OCTOBER 2023

JUSTICES OF THE COURT OF APPEAL



THE HON. MR JUSTICE
BERNARD TURNER

Date of Appointment
1 OCTOBER 2023

THE HON. MADAM JUSTICE
DEBORAH FRASER

Date of Appointment
16 JUNE 2025



THE HON. MR JUSTICE *(Acting)*
GREGORY HILTON

Date of Appointment
10 MARCH 2025

JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME COURT



THE HON. MADAM SENIOR JUSTICE
CHERYL GRANT-THOMPSON

Date of Appointment
1 MAY 2016

THE HON. MADAM JUSTICE
PETRA HANNA-ADDERLEY

Date of Appointment
1 FEBRUARY 2017



THE HONOURABLE MADAM JUSTICE
GUILLIMINA ARCHER-MINNS

Date of Appointment
1 AUGUST 2017

JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME COURT



THE HON. MADAM JUSTICE

DONNA D. NEWTON

Date of Appointment

1 FEBRUARY 2018

THE HON. MADAM JUSTICE

W. RENAE MCKAY

Date of Appointment

1 FEBRUARY 2018



THE HON. MR. JUSTICE

LOREN KLEIN

Date of Appointment

8 JANUARY 2020

JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME COURT



THE HON. MADAM JUSTICE

J. DENISE LEWIS-JOHNSON, MBE

Date of Appointment

31 MAY 2021

THE HON. MR. JUSTICE

ANDREW D. FORBES

Date of Appointment

31 MAY 2021



THE HON. MADAM JUSTICE

JEANINE WEECH-GOMEZ

Date of Appointment

31 MAY 2021

JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME COURT



THE HON. MR. JUSTICE
NEIL BRATHWAITE

Date of Appointment
14 JUNE 2021

THE HON. MADAM JUSTICE
CAMILLE DARVILLE-GOMEZ

Date of Appointment
18 SEPTEMBER 2021



THE HON. MADAM JUSTICE
SIMONE FITZCHARLES

Date of Appointment
1 FEBRUARY 2023

JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME COURT



THE HON. MADAM JUSTICE
CARLA CARD-STUBBS

Date of Appointment
1 FEBRUARY 2023

THE HON. MR. JUSTICE
FRANKLYN WILLIAMS, KC, M.B.

Date of Appointment
1 FEBRUARY 2023



THE HON. MADAM JUSTICE
C. V. HOPE STRACHAN

Date of Appointment
1 MARCH 2023

JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME COURT



THE HON. MADAM JUSTICE
JOYANN FERGUSON

Date of Appointment
25 MARCH 2024

THE HON. MR. JUSTICE
ANDREW MCKINNEY

Date of Appointment
2 SEPTEMBER 2024



THE HON. MR. JUSTICE
DARRON ELLIS

Date of Appointment
16 SEPTEMBER 2024

JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME COURT



THE HON. MADAM JUSTICE
CONSTANCE A. DELANCY

Date of Appointment
20 NOVEMBER 2024

THE HON. MR. JUSTICE
DALE FITZPATRICK

Date of Appointment
2 JANUARY 2025



THE HON. MR. JUSTICE
LEIF FARQUHARSON KC

Date of Appointment
2 JANUARY 2025



THE HON. MADAM JUSTICE
CHERYL BAZARD KC

Date of Appointment
20 DECEMBER 2025



COURT OF APPEAL REGISTRARS



REGISTRAR

KRISTINA WALLACE WHITFIELD

Date of Appointment

1ST JULY 2022

DEPUTY REGISTRAR *(Acting)*

EDMUND TURNER

Date of Appointment

10TH JUNE 2024



ASSISTANT REGISTRAR

SHARONNA JOHNSON-RICHARDS

Date of Appointment

1ST MARCH 2023



SUPREME COURT REGISTRARS



REGISTRAR

RENALDO J. TOOTE

Secretary to the Judicial & Legal Service Commission,
Secretary to the Court Services Council, Civil Registry,
Probate Registry and Wills Depository
Magistrates' Appeal Registry,
Listing Office, and Powers of Attorney Depository

Date of Appointment

1 DECEMBER 2025

DEPUTY REGISTRAR (Northern Region)

STEPHANA J. SAUNDERS

Probate Registry
Civil Registry
Listing Office

Date of Appointment

1 JANUARY 2005



DEPUTY REGISTRAR

JENNIFER STUART-BASTIAN

Criminal Registry, inclusive of the Bail Management System

Date of Appointment

1 JULY 2022



SUPREME COURT REGISTRARS



DEPUTY REGISTRAR (Northern Region)

OLIVIA BLATCH

Criminal Registry
Family Registry

Date of Appointment
1 JULY 2022

ASSISTANT REGISTRAR (Northern Region)

ROSANNE SWEETING

Family Registry and Integrated Case Management Filing

Date of Appointment
6 JANUARY 2024



ASSISTANT REGISTRAR

INDY HUNTER

Family Registry and Integrated Case Management Filing

Date of Appointment
6 JANUARY 2024

SUPREME COURT REGISTRARS



ASSISTANT REGISTRAR

JONATHAN DEAL

Probate Registry

Date of Appointment

21 JULY 2024

ASSISTANT REGISTRAR

AKEIRA MARTIN

Integrated Case Management Filing

Date of Appointment

2 JANUARY 2025



MAGISTRATES



CHIEF MAGISTRATE

ROBERTO RECKLEY

Date of Appointment

25 MARCH 2024

DEPUTY CHIEF MAGISTRATE

CHARLTON SMITH

Date of Appointment

20 NOVEMBER 2024



DEPUTY CHIEF MAGISTRATE *(Acting)*

CAROLYN VOGT-EVANS

Date of Appointment

1 SEPTEMBER 2025

MAGISTRATES



ASSISTANT CHIEF MAGISTRATE

ANCELLA EVANS

Date of Appointment

1 JULY 2023

ASSISTANT CHIEF MAGISTRATE

KARA TURNQUEST-DEVEAUX

Date of Appointment

1 JULY 2023



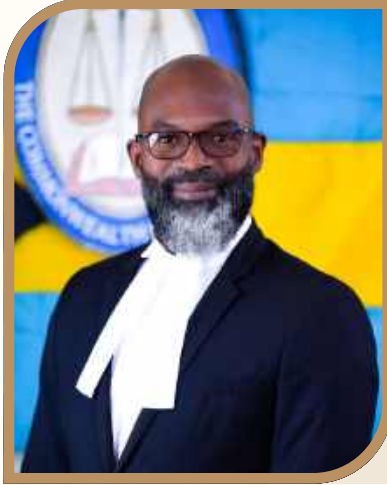
ASSISTANT CHIEF MAGISTRATE

DERENCE ROLLE DAVIS

Date of Appointment

1 SEPTEMBER 2025

MAGISTRATES



ASSISTANT CHIEF MAGISTRATE *(Acting)*

SHAKA SERVILLE

Date of Promotion
1 AUGUST 2023

SENIOR MAGISTRATE

LAQUAY LAING

Date of Promotion
1 AUGUST 2023



SENIOR MAGISTRATE

ALGERNON ALLEN, JR.

Date of Appointment
1 JUNE 2024

MAGISTRATES



SENIOR MAGISTRATE

KENDRA KELLY

Date of Appointment

1 DECEMBER 2025

SENIOR MAGISTRATE

RAQUEL WHYMS

Date of Appointment

1 JUNE 2024



SENIOR MAGISTRATE *(Acting)*

ANISKA ISAACS

Date of Appointment

10 JUNE 2024



MAGISTRATES



MAGISTRATE

IAN-MARIE DARVILLE-MILLER

Date of Appointment

1 JUNE 2021

MAGISTRATE (Northern Region)

SIMONE BROWN

Date of Appointment

10 JUNE 2024



MAGISTRATE

LENNOX COLEBY SR.

Date of Appointment

8 MAY 2023



MAGISTRATES



MAGISTRATE *(Acting)*

KEVIN FARRINGTON

Date of Appointment

16 SEPTEMBER 2024

MAGISTRATE *(Acting)*

K. MILES PARKER

Date of Appointment

1 NOVEMBER 2024



MAGISTRATE

PETROCELLI EDWARDS

Date of Appointment

20 NOVEMBER 2024

MAGISTRATES



MAGISTRATE (Northern Region)

UEL JOHNSON

Date of Appointment

31 MARCH 2025

MAGISTRATE

ABIGAIL FARRINGTON

Date of Appointment

1 SEPTEMBER 2025

COURT SERVICES COUNCIL BOARD



L-R: Kristina Wallace Whitfield, Roberto Reckley, Hon. Madam Justice Guillimina Archer-Minns, Hon. Mr. Justice Milton Evans MB, Sir Ian Winder Kt, Kahlil Parker KC, Khrystle Rutherford-Ferguson, Renaldo Toote, Herbert Cash



JUDICIARY
THE BAHAMAS

02

REPORTS



www.courts.bs
www.courtsofappeal.org.bs



@BAHJudiciary



BAHJudiciary



2025

Bahamas Judiciary
Annual Report

Report from the Office of the Registrar:

- **Court of Appeal**
- **Supreme Court**

Report from the Chief Magistrate

COURT OF APPEAL REGISTRAR REPORT

From Tradition to Transformation: Embracing Change in a Digital Era



Court of Appeal Registrar,

**Ms. Kristina
Wallace Whitfield**

It is with honour that I provide this report to outline the work of the Court of Appeal during the year 2025.

2025 was another year of change in the Court of Appeal; the most marked of which was the retirement of Justice Jon Isaacs, and the appointment of Justice Milton Evans, as President of the Court of Appeal. Justice Isaacs served in this Court for over ten years following his service in both the Supreme and Magistrates Courts. A Special Sitting was held in January 2025 to mark the occasion of Justice Isaacs' retirement, and to welcome Justice Evans, who sat in this Court since 2019 as a Justice of Appeal.

I wish to publicly thank Justice Isaacs for his service to the Court and his country. I also wish to publicly extend congratulatory remarks to Justice Evans and offer him my full support during his Presidency.

FULL COURT

As is well known, the Court of Appeal began remote operations consequent to the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020. Utilization of the Zoom platform to conduct remote hearings allowed the work of the Court to continue, uninterrupted. Remote hearings continued to May 2025 when, by virtue of Practice Direction No. 1 of 2025, the Court began hybrid operations in June 2025.

The said Practice Direction facilitates traditional in-person court appearances while maintaining the remote hearing of certain categories of applications and appeals. The hybrid system has worked seamlessly throughout the year and bodes well for continuity planning purposes. The productivity of the Court, notwithstanding its hybrid operation, is a demonstration of the ability to embrace change in the digital era. During the year, the Court delivered 72 oral judgments, heard and disposed of 67 applications, reserved 62 judgments and delivered 64 written judgments. The Court of Appeal continues to be guided by the now well accepted dicta of Justice Adrian Saunders, President of the Caribbean Court of Justice, in the case of *Reid v Reid* [2008] CCJ 8 (AJ). Justice Saunders stated “...as a general rule, no judgment should be outstanding for more than six months and unless a case is one of unusual difficulty or complexity, judgment should normally be delivered within three months at most.” A report on the Court’s productivity with respect to delivery of written judgments is outlined below:

Three months or less	50 judgments	78%
Four months or less	8 judgments	13%
Five months or less	2 judgments	3%
Six months or less	4 judgments	6%
Over six months	0 judgments	0%

With respect to oral judgments, as mentioned above, the Court delivered 72 oral judgments, an increase from the 45 oral judgments delivered during the year 2024. This increase is likely attributed to Practice Direction No. 2 of 2025 which replaced the requirement to file skeleton arguments four and two days, respectively, in advance of a hearing, to seven and five days, respectively, to file full written submissions. Thus, enabling the panel to have more time to familiarize themselves with the nature of the appeal / application.

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

In 2025, 232 appeals / applications were filed. The appeals / applications are classified as follows: Supreme Court (Civil) 85, Supreme Court (Criminal) 66, Industrial Tribunal 2 and Magistrates Court (Criminal) 79. The number of appeals / applications filed this year remains broadly consistent with the number of appeals filed in 2024 (233) and 2023 (213).

During 2025 we continued our work towards the implementation of electronic filing at the Court of Appeal. Presently, the Court’s active files are being transitioned to the electronic filing platform, while the archived files will be transitioned over time. It is anticipated that the system will go live in 2026. The platform is the same as the electronic filing platform utilized in the Supreme Court and should provide a seamless transition for attorneys who, by now, are familiar with the system. The combination of electronic filing and remote hearings undoubtedly increases access to justice, especially in an archipelagic nation.

Practice Direction No. 1 of 2025 did not impact the hearings of the Registrars which have continued remotely. In this vein, 100% of hearings conducted by Registrars are heard through the utilization of the Zoom platform. This practice will continue throughout 2026 as the past years have established its efficiency and increased productivity.

Relative to productivity, the Office of the Registrar continues to work conscientiously towards the efficient disposition of hearings in a timely manner. As such, the following outlines the work of the Office during the year: Settling of the Record (Completed) 60, Settling of the Record (In progress) 8, Taxations (Completed) 44, Taxations (In progress) 6, appeals dismissed for non-compliance with the Registrar's Order 6, written judgments 3, Form Nos. 1 & 2 98, correspondence received from inmates 68, Privy Council – Records prepared under the supervision of the Court 0.

The President has established a Rules Committee charged with reviewing the Court's current Rules which were implemented twenty years ago, in 2005. There is no doubt that court administration has advanced in the past twenty years and the review and revision of the Court's Rules seeks to capitalize on the advancements in technology and appellate systems. I can report that the Committee is making significant progress, and it is anticipated that the amended Rules will be introduced in 2026. The aim is to modernize the Court's procedures through case management and otherwise streamline processes and improve efficiency with the assistance of technological aids.

I wish to commend the President, Justices, Registrars and staff of the Court of Appeal for their dedication and hard work during 2025, and I look forward to their continued support during 2026 as we work towards upholding the Mission Statement of the Court of Appeal which is "To ensure that civil and criminal appeals are heard in a timely fashion by an independent and impartial court."

Court of Appeal Statistics

Figure 1 Substantive Appeals Disposed of by Oral Judgements, 2024 vs 2025

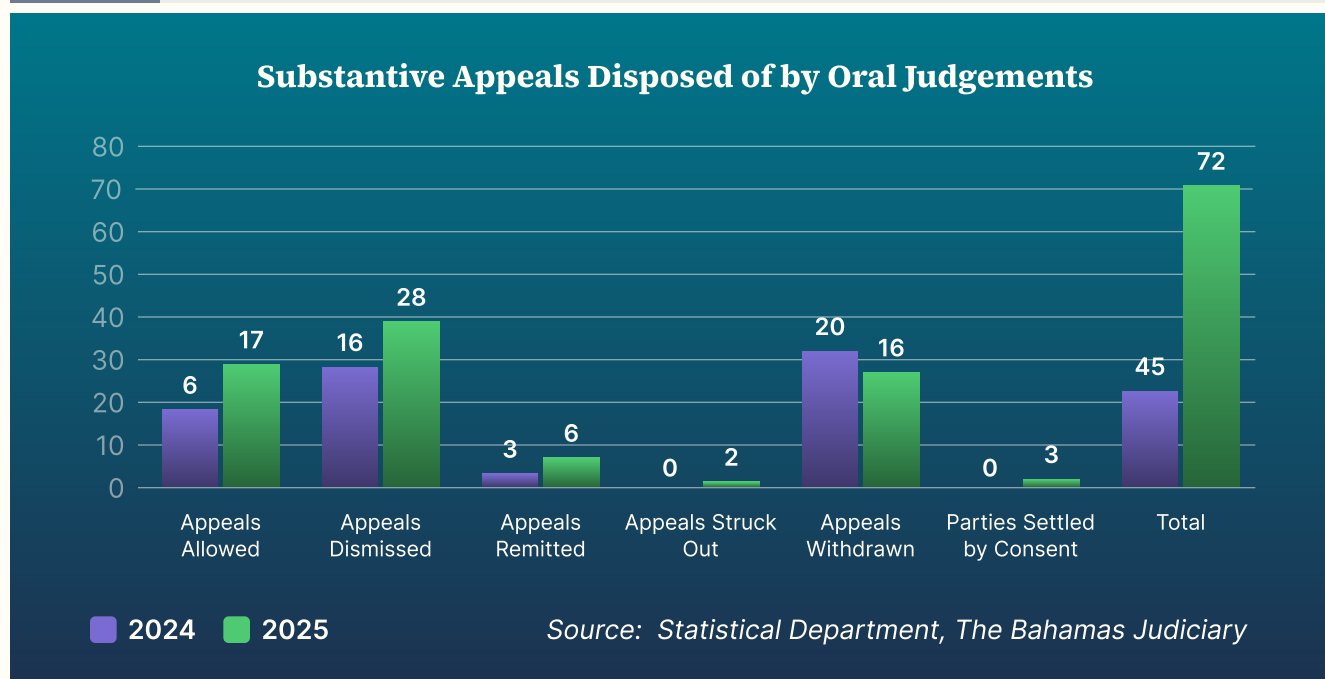


Table 1.0 Substantive Appeals Disposed of by Oral Judgements

CATEGORIES	2024	2025	OBSERVATION
Appeals Allowed	6	17	Increased by 11 or 183%. Suggests more successful appeals in 2025.
Appeals Dismissed	16	28	Increased by 12 or 75%. Indicates more dismissals.
Appeals Remitted	3	6	Increase by 3 (100%) in the number of appeals sent back for reconsideration.
Appeals Struck Out	-	2	None in 2024, 2 in 2025.
Appeals Withdrawn	20	16	A decrease of 20% in appeals that were voluntarily withdrawn.
Parties Settled by Consent	-	3	None in 2024 but 3 in 2025
TOTAL	45	72	Significant overall increase (+27) or 60%

A structured comparative analysis of Table 1.0 above shows that substantive appeals disposed of in 2025 **increased by 60%** compared to 2024. A visual depiction of the variances in Table 1.0 is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 2

Substantive Appeals Disposed of by Written Judgements, 2024 vs 2025

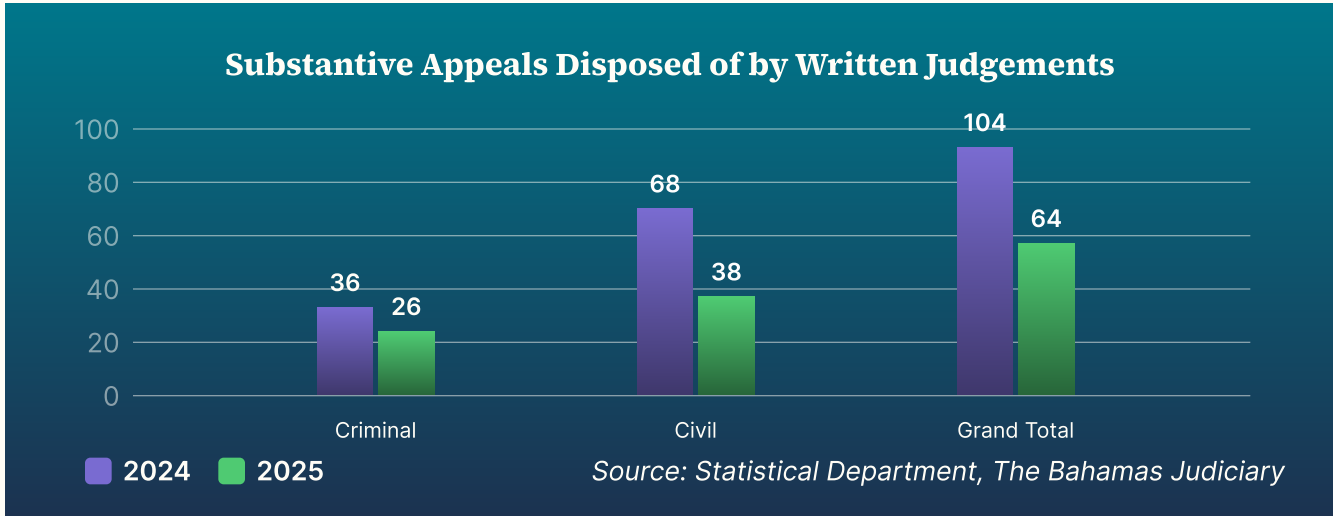


Table 1.1

Substantive Appeals Disposed of by Written Judgements

CATEGORIES	2024	2025	OBSERVATION
Criminal	36	26	There was a decrease of 10 matters from 2024 to 2025. This represented a 28% reduction in criminal case judgments.
Civil	68	38	There was a decrease of 30 matters from 2024 to 2025. This represented a 44% reduction in civil case judgments.
GRAND TOTAL	104	64	Overall written judgments decreased by 38%, from 104 in 2024 to 64 in 2025.

Figure 3

Breakdown of Substantive Appeals Disposed of by Written Judgements, 2024 vs 2025

Breakdown of Substantive Appeals Disposed of by Written Judgements

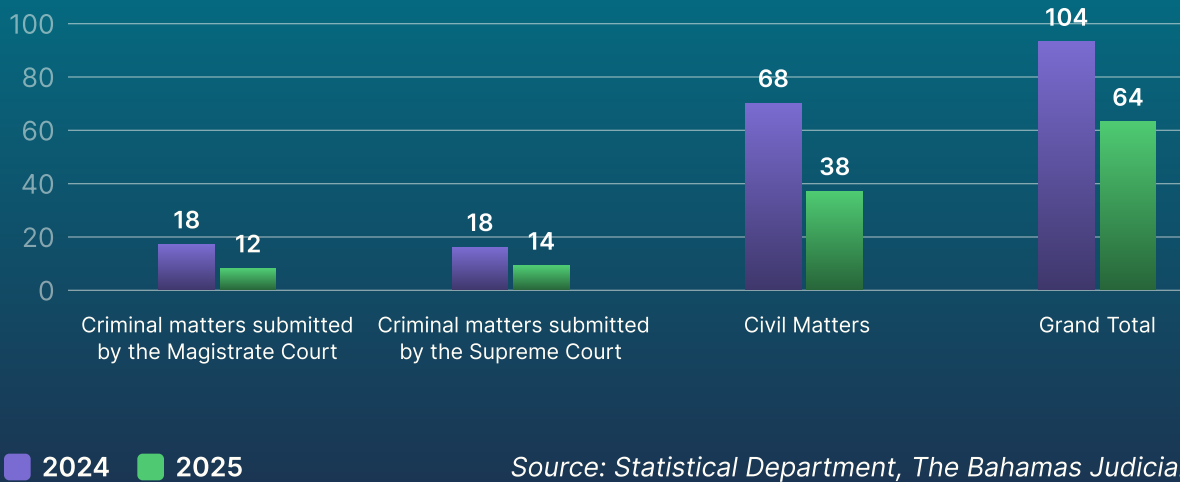


Figure 4

Applications Disposed of, 2024 vs 2025

Applications Disposed Of

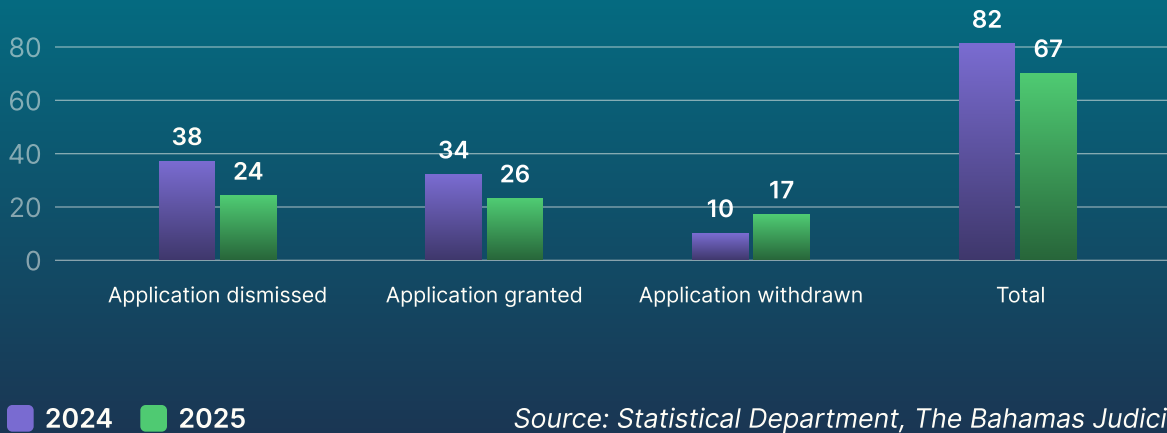


Table 1.2 Applications Disposed of 2024 vs 2025

CATEGORIES	2024	2025	OBSERVATION
Application dismissed	32	26	Fewer dismissals, 19% decline.
Application granted	34	32	A 6% decrease in applications granted.
Application withdrawn	18	19	A 6% increase in applications withdrawn voluntarily.
TOTAL	82	71	There was an overall 8% reduction in the volume of applications disposed of in 2025.

Figure 5 Decisions & Reasons Reserved, 2024 vs 2025

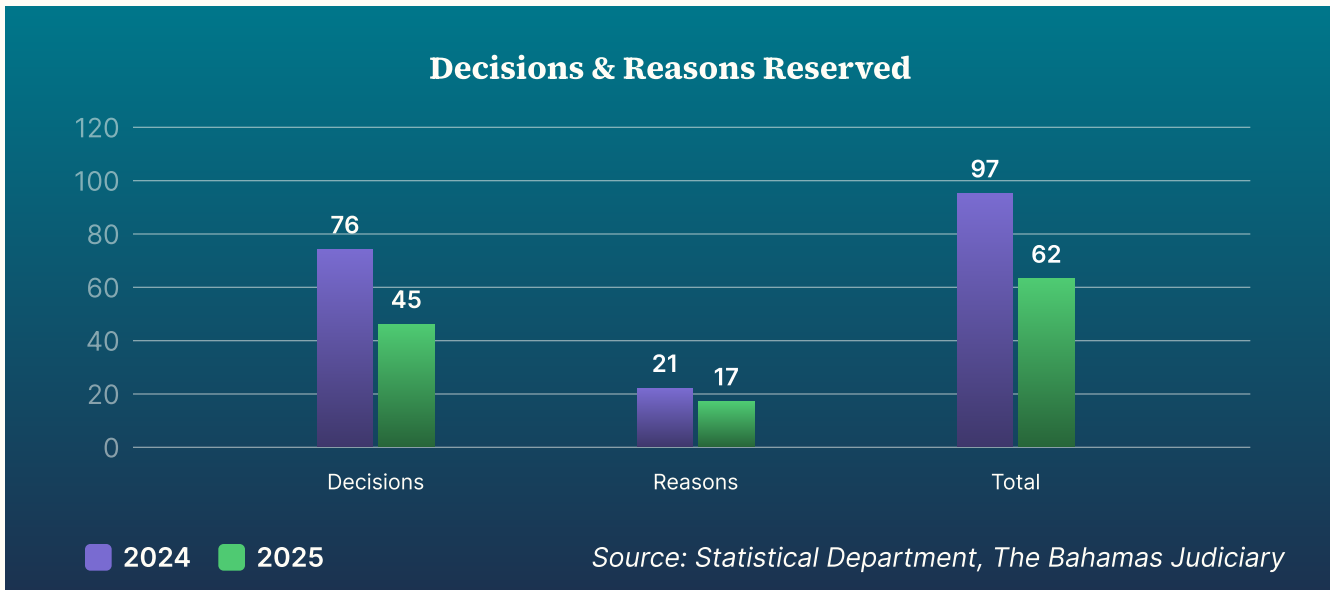


Table 1.3 Decisions and Reasons Reserved, 2024 vs 2025

CATEGORIES	2024	2025	OBSERVATION
Decisions reserved	76	45	Significant decline of 41% in decisions issued
Reasons reserved	21	17	General reasons declined moderately by 19%
TOTAL	97	62	Overall, there was a 36% decrease in decisions and reasons.

Table 1.4 Applications Filed in the Court of Appeals for the period 2024 vs 2025

CATEGORIES	2024	2025	OBSERVATION
Magistrates Court	77	79	Slight increase by 2 or 3%
Supreme Court (Criminal)	60	66	Increase by 6 or 10%
Industrial Tribunal	5	2	Moderate decrease by 3 or 60%
Supreme Court (Civil)	91	85	Decrease by 6 or 7%
TOTAL	233	232	This figure remained relatively constant with a slight change by 1 or 0.4%.

Table 1.5 Court of Appeals – Registrar’s Office Statistics, 2024 vs 2025

CATEGORIES	2024	2025	OBSERVATION
Taxations (Completed)	37	44	Increase by 7, or 19%
Settling of the Record (Completed)	54	60	Increase by 6, or 11%
Written Judgements	2	3	Slight increase by 1, or 50%
Dismissed for Non-Compliance	7	6	Slight decrease by 1, or 14%
FORM NOS. 1 & 2	50	98	Major increase by 48, or 96%

SUPREME COURT REGISTRAR REPORT

———— From Tradition to Transformation: Embracing Change in a Digital Era



Supreme Court Registrar
Renaldo J. Toote

I am pleased to present this overview of the significant advances achieved by our Judiciary in 2025. This year has been marked by unprecedented transformation as we embrace technological innovation while honouring the fundamental principles of justice that have guided our courts for generations. The theme "From Tradition to Transformation: Embracing Change in a Digital Era" captures the essence of our journey, one that respects our tradition while boldly stepping into the future of judicial administration.

This phase of institutional development is evident in the heightened judicial activity carried out by the Office of the Registrar, which has continued to perform its duties with diligence. From 1 January to 31 December 2025, Supreme Court Registrars were assigned 1,521 cases, up from 1,268 cases in 2024—an increase of approximately 20 percent. This upward trajectory reflects the growing demands on the Court and emphasizes the critical role of Registrars in facilitating the efficient administration of justice within an evolving judicial framework.

Figure 6

Count of Matters Assigned to Registrars, 1st January to 31st December, 2024 vs 2025

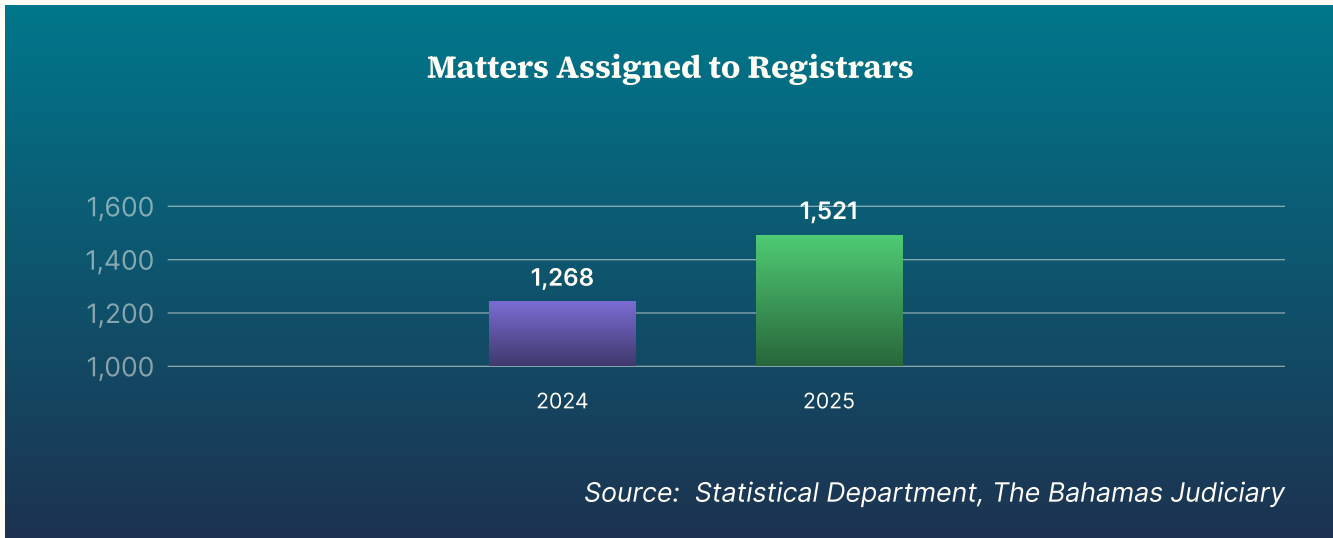


Table 1.6

Matters Assigned to Registrars, 1st January to 31st December 2024 vs. 2025

	2024	2025	OBSERVATION
Total Matters Assigned	1,268	1,521	20% Increase in matters assigned in 2025.

TRANSFORMATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE:

The New Family Court Complex

The relocation of the Family Courts to an independent, purpose-built complex stands as 2025's most transformative achievement. This facility has been designed to meet international standards and reflects a philosophical shift from adversarial proceedings to a mediation-centred environment that promotes settlements and assists in resolving family disputes with dignity and sensitivity.

PROBATE REGISTRY INTEGRATION

The relocation of the Probate Registry within the Family Court Complex is a strategic decision that complements the family law services offered in the facility. Estate matters are inherently intertwined with family relationships, and the proximity of these services facilitates coordination and encourages mediation of disputes that might otherwise result in protracted litigation. This integration reflects a holistic understanding of family law matters and improves efficiencies for practitioners and families alike.

STRENGTHENING OUR TEAM:

New Personnel

Assistant Registrar Akeira Martin

On January 2, 2025, the Judiciary welcomed Assistant Registrar Akeira Martin to its ranks, and she has proven to be a great addition to the Nassau team. Ms. Martin has been actively engaged in conducting judicial hearings and has played an instrumental role in the implementation and management of our e-filing platform. Her expertise and dedication have strengthened our capacity to deliver efficient, modern judicial services.

Judiciary Statistician

In another significant milestone, 2025 marked the first time in the Judiciary's history that we hired a dedicated statistician to collate and analyse data. This position represents a strategic investment in evidence-based decision-making and performance management. By systematically collecting and analyzing operational data, we aim to implement key performance indicators that will enable us to measure performance, identify areas for improvement, and ensure accountability in our service delivery. This data-driven approach will inform resource allocation, process optimization, and strategic planning as we continue to modernize our operations.

ENHANCING JUSTICE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Anonymous Witness Protection Systems

In December 2025, the Judiciary introduced cutting-edge equipment for the use of anonymous witnesses in criminal cases. This technology represents a critical advancement in witness protection, enabling vulnerable witnesses, whose identities are not disclosed to the defendant or general public, to provide testimony via secure video and audio channels, minimizing the risk of reprisal or intimidation. By safeguarding witness identities while maintaining the integrity of cross-examination and due process, this system strengthens both the safety of participants and the pursuit of justice in sensitive criminal matters.

Digital Court Recording and Transcription

Our continued partnership with For The Record (FTR) has proven invaluable in modernizing court proceedings. The digital court recording systems have been widely embraced, with the Magistrate Court continuously expressing gratitude for the efficiency and reliability these systems provide. Accurate, accessible court records form the foundation of appellate review and legal integrity.

To further enhance our transcription capabilities, we have introduced MaxScribe, associated with Stenograph, to support our Transcription Unit. By transcribing spoken words into written forms with advanced speech-to-text software, this sophisticated tool assists our transcriptionists in producing timely, accurate transcripts of court proceedings and reducing turnaround times. These investments in recording and transcription technology directly benefit the quality of litigation and ensure that the judicial record meets the highest standards of accuracy.

Virtual Hearing Infrastructure

Registrars have enthusiastically embraced virtual hearing tools, particularly Zoom, which has become integral to our case management approach. Remarkably, approximately 87% of Registrar cases are now conducted remotely. This represents a fundamental shift in access to justice, eliminating geographical barriers, reducing costs for litigants and practitioners, and increasing scheduling flexibility. Virtual hearings have proven particularly valuable for routine procedural matters, uncontested applications, and case management conferences, while preserving the option for in-person proceedings when the interests of justice require physical presence.

Guiding Responsible Innovation: AI in Litigation

Recognizing both the opportunities and challenges presented by artificial intelligence, the Chief Justice has implemented a Practice Guide for the Use of AI in Litigation. This forward-thinking initiative establishes clear parameters for the responsible deployment of AI tools in legal practice.

The Practice Guide serves several critical purposes:

- **Ethical Boundaries:** Establishes standards for AI use that preserve the integrity of legal representation and maintain attorney accountability.
- **Quality Assurance:** Requires practitioners to verify AI-generated content to prevent the submission of hallucinated cases or inaccurate legal authority.
- **Transparency:** Mandates disclosure when AI tools have been used in certain contexts, ensuring judges and opposing parties understand the provenance of submissions.
- **Professional Development:** Educates the bar about appropriate and inappropriate uses of AI technology.

This proactive approach highlights the ability of The Bahamas' Judiciary to manage emerging technologies, balancing innovation with the fundamental obligations of legal practice. The benefits include improved efficiency for routine tasks, enhanced legal research capabilities, and better document drafting, all while maintaining the human judgment, advocacy, and ethical responsibility that remain central to justice.

COMPREHENSIVE DIGITIZATION INITIATIVES

Regional Digitization: Grand Bahama Operations

To extend our modernization efforts beyond individual projects, the Judiciary has embarked on comprehensive digitization initiatives both regionally and historically.

Assistant Registrar Roseanne Sweeting in the Northern Region has been tasked with the critical mission of digitizing our Grand Bahama operations. This initiative extends the benefits of digital transformation beyond New Providence, ensuring that all Bahamians have access to modern, efficient judicial services regardless of location.

The digitization of Grand Bahama operations ensures that residents of the Northern Region receive the same quality of service and technological advantages as those in New Providence.

Further, we are obligated to establish proper business continuity plans in the face of natural disasters. By digitizing these records, we will establish proper digital redundancy that protects court records from physical damage due to hurricanes or other natural disasters, a particularly critical consideration for island jurisdictions.

The facilitation of digital filing ensures seamless case management and file sharing between courts, enabling better judicial coordination.

Assistant Registrar Sweeting's leadership in this endeavour demonstrates the judiciary's commitment to nationwide modernization and equitable access to justice.

Digitization of Historical Records

In Nassau, Mrs. Grace Bostwick and her dedicated Digitization Department have continued to work tirelessly throughout 2025 to digitize our archive files while simultaneously managing the ongoing operations of our Civil Registry. This dual responsibility represents a significant undertaking that balances historical preservation with current administrative demands.

The digitization of archival records provides numerous benefits:

- Protection of documents from deterioration, loss, or damage;
- Enables rapid retrieval of older files for legal research, appeals, and historical matters;
- Space Optimization: frees valuable physical space currently occupied by paper archives;

The Digitization Department exemplifies the dedication and professionalism that characterize our registry staff, managing present needs while securing the documentary legacy of our judicial system for future generations.

LOOKING FORWARD:

E-PROBATE PLATFORM INITIATIVE

As we look ahead to 2026, the Judiciary aims to introduce its E-Probate platform, which promises to revolutionize probate administration. This automated system will enable legal practitioners to submit applications electronically, eliminating the inefficiencies of paper filings and the repeated amendments and corrections that currently burden the process.

CONCLUSION:

THE DIGITAL ERA HAS ARRIVED

The transformation from tradition to the digital era of the courts is no longer a distant aspiration; it is here. The initiatives detailed in this report represent a comprehensive reimagining of how we deliver justice in The Bahamas. From the state-of-the-art Family Court Complex to anonymous witness protection, from virtual hearings to AI guidance, from regional digitization to E-Probate, every innovation has been designed with a singular purpose: to improve access to justice, enhance the quality of litigation, and serve practitioners and litigants more effectively.

Our embrace of digital tools does not diminish the essential human elements of justice or the careful consideration of evidence; rather, technology enables us to focus more intently on these core functions by eliminating administrative inefficiencies and removing barriers to access.

As we move into 2026, the Judiciary remains committed to continuous improvement, guided by the principle that innovation must always serve justice. I extend my sincere appreciation to the Chief Justice for visionary leadership, to my fellow Registrars and the entire Court Services Council and staff for their adaptability and dedication, and to the legal practitioners who have embraced these changes alongside us.

Together, we are building a judicial system that honours its traditions while courageously embracing the future.

LISTING OFFICE

Listing Officer

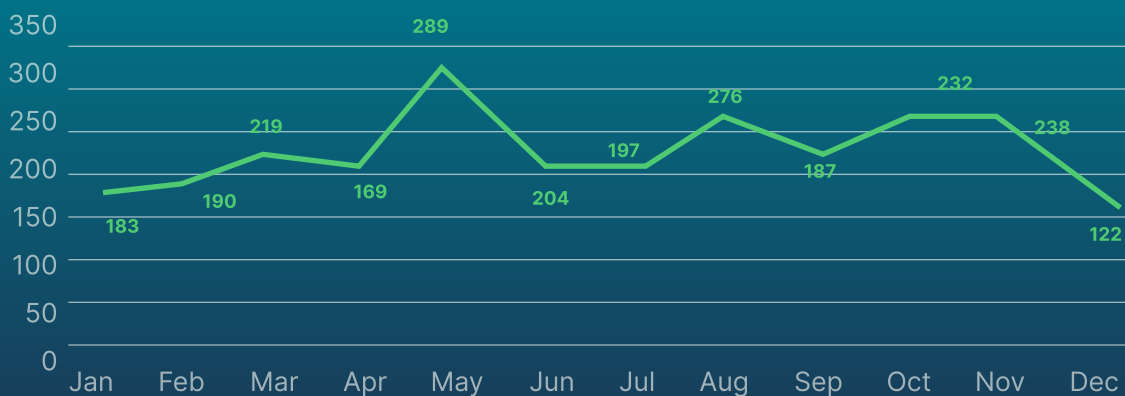
Ms. Ezranda Bodie

The Listing Office serves as the primary liaison between the Court and its users, coordinating the central calendar for the Supreme Court, with the exception of the Criminal Division. All initial hearing dates are processed through this office. Litigants have the option to request dates via the Judiciary online portal on the court's website (court.bs) or by submitting a request directly to the Listing Office, which is located in Supreme Court Annex 1. The Listing Office staff are responsible for retrieving the relevant files from the registries and forwarding them to a Supreme Court Justice or Registrar for the assignment of hearing dates.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF LISTING OFFICE'S DATA

For the period 1st January to 31st December 2025, the Listing Office processed 2,506 applications, as illustrated in the chart below.

Figure 7 Listing Office, Applications Assigned per month



Source: Statistical Department, The Bahamas Judiciary

CIVIL REGISTRY

Manager

Ms. Grace Bostwick

The Civil Registry serves as the principal repository for all civil matters before the courts, which excludes Family, Criminal, and Probate matters, which are maintained within their respective registries. The Civil Registry is responsible for assigning case numbers across various divisions, cataloguing filed documents, and creating comprehensive case files. Furthermore, the Civil Registry team collaborates closely with the Integrated Case Management System (ICMS) administrators to meticulously maintain the essential e-filing Cause Lists for the various divisions.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CIVIL REGISTRY DATA

Table 1.7

Civil statistical data for the period of 1st November 2023 - 31st October 2024 vs. 1st January - 31st December 2025.

CATEGORIES	2024	2025	VARIANCE	OBSERVATION
Common Law & Equity (CLE)	1269	1184	+85	7% reduction in CLE matters
Commercial (COM)	43	44	+1	2% increase in COM matters
Public Law (PUB)	32	32	0	No change. Constant between periods.
TOTAL	1,344	1260	-84	Overall, a 6% reduction in civil matters.

Below are the Civil statistical data for the period of 1st January - 31st December 2025. Comparative analysis of civil matters for the fiscal period 1 January - 31 December 2025 suggests that applications for Common Law and Equity matters decreased by 7% (85 matters) compared to the fiscal period 1 November to 31 October 2024, as illustrated in the table above. Additional analysis indicated that commercial law matters decreased by 2% (1 matter), while public law matters remained constant across both review periods.

Appeals Registry

The Appeals Registry functions as the central processing unit for all civil appeals originating from both the Registrars and the Magistrate's Courts. Additionally, it manages criminal appeals from the Magistrate's Courts involving custodial sentences of one year or less, as well as any other matters that may proceed to the Supreme Court. To ensure an orderly review and efficient appellate oversight, all such appeals are heard by a single Justice of the Supreme Court.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE APPEALS REGISTRY

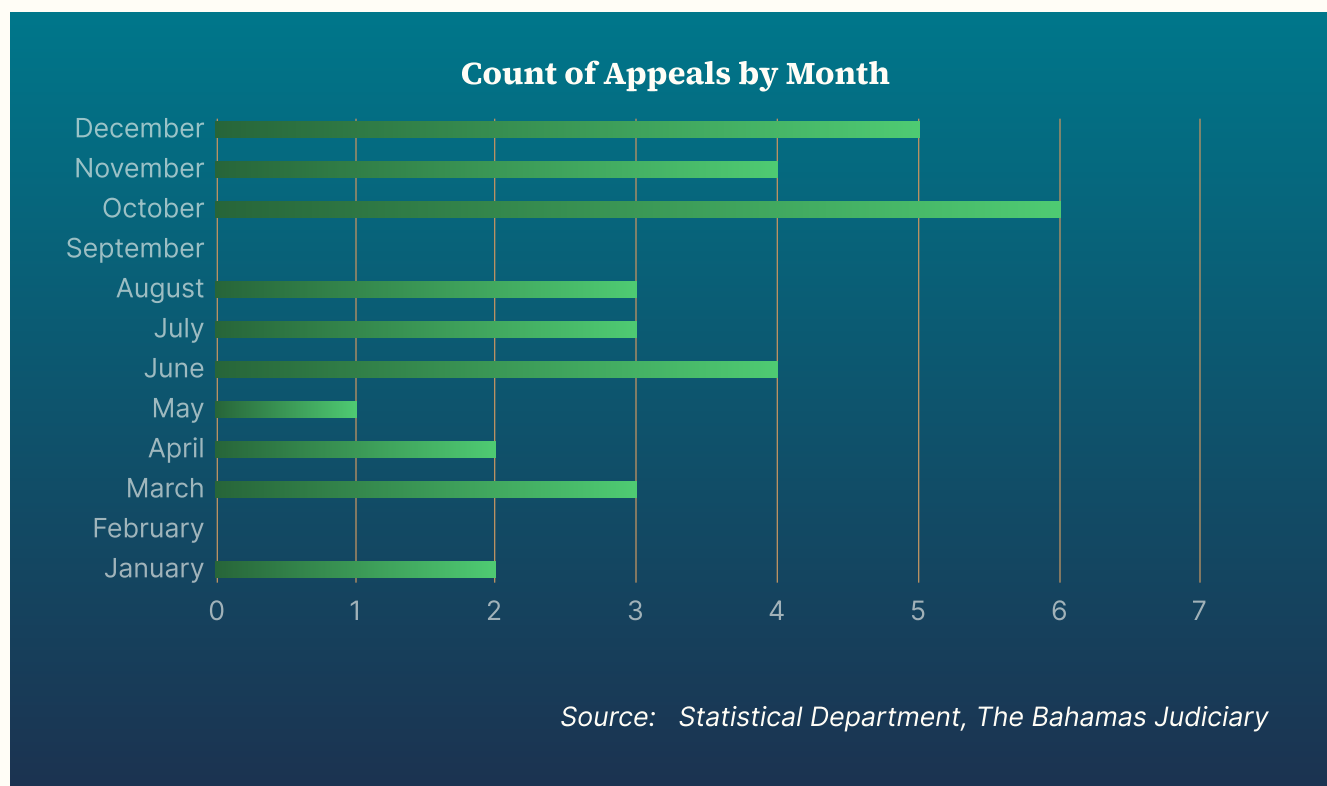
Table 1.8

Magistrate Court Appeals, 1st November 2023 - 31st October 2024 vs. 1st January - 31st December 2025.

MONTH	YEAR	DIVISION		TOTAL
		APP/STS	APP/MAG	
January	2025	2	0	2
February	2025	0	0	0
March	2025	0	3	3
April	2025	1	1	2
May	2025	0	1	1
June	2025	0	4	4
July	2025	0	3	3
August	2025	0	3	3
September	2025	0	0	0
October	2025	1	5	6
November	2025	1	3	4
December	2025	2	3	5
TOTAL				33

The statistical data above indicate that 33 Magistrate Court cases were appealed to the Supreme Court during the period 1 January - 31 December 2025. Appeals were higher in June (4), October (6), November (4), and December (5) 2025. See the bar chart below. Further analysis indicated that during the first six months (January to June) of 2025, appeals totalled 12, whilst in the second six months (July to December) of 2025, this figure increased by 75% to 21 appeals.

Figure 8 Count of Appeals for 2025



Appeals Registry

With the establishment of the Digitization Unit, the courts moved from paper-based filing to a digital filing system. This enabled information to be preserved, accessed, and efficiently managed. The process has significantly reduced the storage space required for physical documents and enhanced the efficiency of document retrieval through remote access on the e-filing platform. As of 31 December 2025, the Digitization Unit successfully scanned and uploaded 3,415 files to the Integrated Case Management System (ICMS). This figure represents a notable 60% increase compared to the total of 2,135 files processed during the same period in 2024, as detailed in the accompanying table.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DIGITIZATION UNIT DATA

Table 1.8

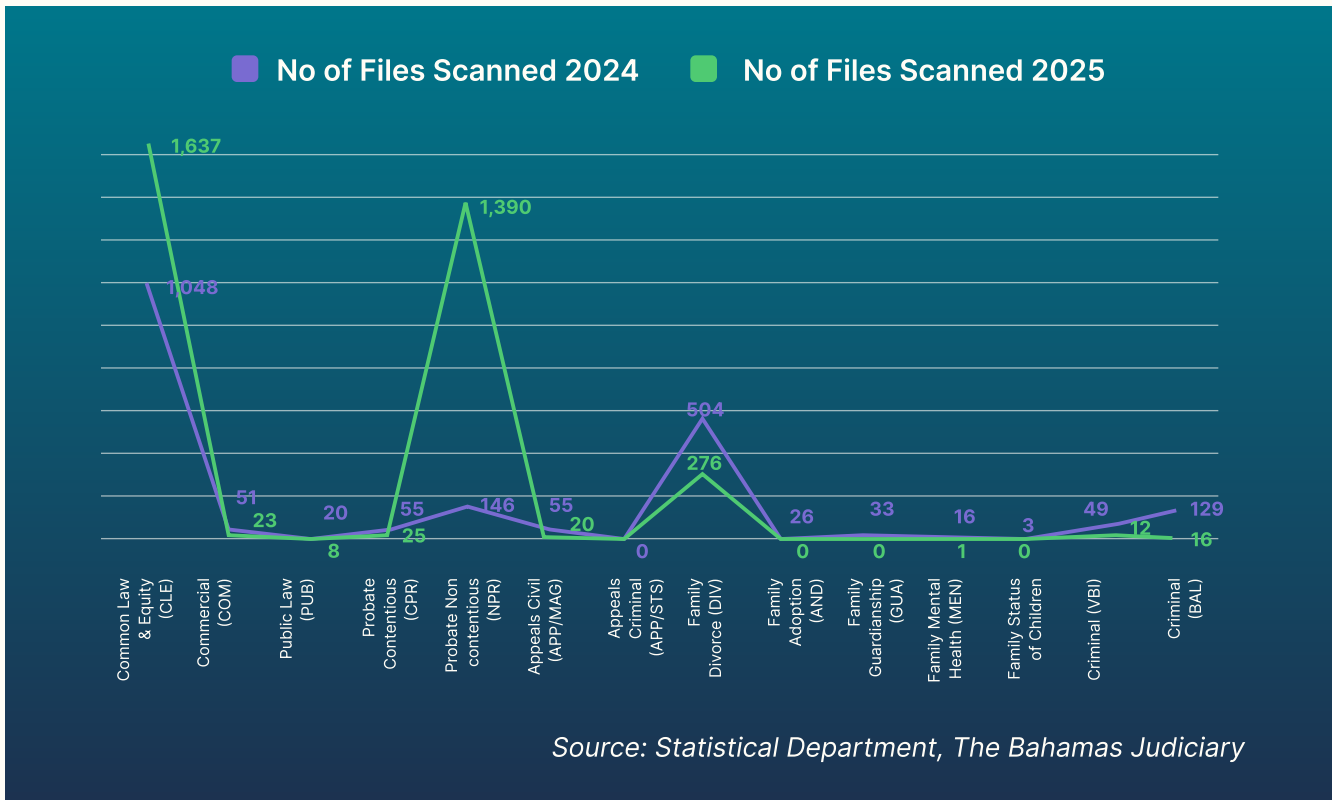
Total Combined files scanned, 1st November 2023 to 31st October 2024 vs 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025.

CATEGORIES	NO. OF FILES SCANNED IN 2024	NO. OF FILES SCANNED IN 2025	OBSERVATION
Common Law & Equity (CLE)	1,048	1,637	589 or 56% increase
Commercial (COM)	51	23	Decreased from 51 to 23, or a 55% decrease
Public Law (PUB)	20	8	Decreased from 20 to 8, or by 60%.
Probate Contentious (CPR)	55	25	Decreased by 54%.
Probate Non-contentious (NPR)	146	1,390	1244 or 852% increase, possibly reflecting a procedural shift or backlog clearance
Appeals Civil (APP/MAG)	55	20	Decreased by 54%, from 55 to 20.
Appeals Criminal (APP/STS)	0	7	Increased from 0 to 7, while small, this suggests new or resumed activity
Family Divorce (DIV)	504	276	Reduction of 228, or a 45% decrease.
Family Adoption (AND)	26	0	No new scans.
Family Guardianship (GUA)	33	0	No new scanning activity has occurred since 2024.
Family Mental Health (MEN)	16	1	94% reduction in files scanned
Family Status of Children	3	0	No scanning of these files occurred in 2025.
Criminal (VBI)	49	12	76% reduction.

Criminal (BAL)	129	16	Decreased from 129 to 16, or by 88%.
TOTAL SCANNED	2,135	3,415	There was an overall 60% increase in the volume of files scanned in 2025.

The trend and pattern analysis of the data above can be better understood in the chart shown below. The chart shows that the largest number of files scanned in both 2024 and 2025 were from the Commercial Division, the Probate Section, and the Family Registry.

Figure 9 Total Files Scanned, 1st November 2023 to 31st October 2024 vs 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025.



CRIMINAL REGISTRY

Deputy Registrar

Jennifer Stuart-Bastian

The Criminal Registry is charged with the administrative functions necessary for the effective and efficient processing of criminal matters in the Supreme Court. Its responsibilities include:

- Facilitating and managing Bail Applications
- Processing Voluntary Bills of Indictment (VBI)
- Handling Quasi-Criminal Applications
- Overseeing the Bahamas Bail Management System (BBMS)
- Managing the Jury Unit
- Managing the Bailiff Unit

Table 1.9 Criminal Registry Statistics

CATEGORIES	NUMBER
*Bail Applications Submitted in 2025	687
Bail Applications Granted	239 (inclusive of variation applications)
New VBI Applications Submitted	267
Conviction Certificates Issued	89
Discharge and Acquittal Certificates Issued	103
Probation Bonds Executed	42

**The number of applications does not reflect the total number of criminal offences in 2025*

Legislative Updates for the Reporting Period:

- Supreme Court (Criminal Case Management) (Amendment) Rules, 2024:

These rules came into effect on 2 January 2025, empowering the Courts to actively manage cases, thereby ensuring enhanced efficiency and fairness within the criminal justice process.

- Official reprints of the following foundational Acts were published in the Extraordinary Gazette:

- Bail Act, Chapter 103 – Published 24 March 2025
- Juries Act, Chapter 103 – Published 23 June 2025

These reprints consolidate amendments post-2016, improving accessibility for clients.

Procedural Enhancements:

The BBMS continues to advance, providing an integrated framework for managing bail applicants. It currently operates in coordination with the Electronic Monitoring Unit and the Automatic Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS). All kiosks are scheduled to be upgraded with facial recognition technology. Defendants whose photographs are not yet stored in the system will be unable to check in; instead, they will be required to visit the Bail Management Offices at either the Magistrates' Court or the Supreme Court to have their photos captured.

Additionally, the Magistrates' Court dashboard now delivers comprehensive statistical reporting. This includes data on the number of cases heard by each Magistrate, the top ten offences, demographic insights such as the oldest and youngest offenders, and year-by-year trend analysis. The dashboard also features an AI Companion, a case progression timeline, and reporting on the top ten bail amounts.

New applicants/registrants entered into AFIS for the period are 2,407, and a total of 16,816 check-in reports were logged in at kiosks.

The digitization of archival records provides numerous benefits:

- Efficiency in Bail Processing:

In 2025, strategic efforts were made to streamline bail applications in compliance with:

- Bail Act, Chapter 59
- Approved Surety Requirements on Applications for Bail Practice Direction (6th February 2024) Applicants and sureties are now provided with clear guidelines to ensure compliance and transparency in the approval process.

The Criminal Registry has achieved significant strides in enhancing case management efficiency, streamlining bail processes, and improving legislative accessibility during the reporting period. The Registry continues to play a pivotal role in the administration of justice within the Supreme Court. Through its dedicated personnel support and the strategic embrace of technological advancements, the Registry has clearly demonstrated its unwavering commitment to efficiency, fairness, and modernisation. Looking forward, the anticipated increase in staffing and the integration of biometric innovations promise to further strengthen the integrity and oversight of the bail and reporting systems.

COURT REPORTING UNIT AND THE TRANSCRIPTION UNIT

Director of the Court Reporting Section

Dr. Royanne Morrison

Manager of the Transcription Unit

Ms. Darrenique Smith

The Court Reporting Unit and Transcription Unit are essential for ensuring that all spoken words during court proceedings are documented for future reference and legal integrity. The primary responsibility of court reporters and transcribers is to create accurate, verbatim records of legal proceedings. Their meticulous work not only provides crucial support to the legal community but also ensures that all individuals involved in legal matters have access to an accurate record of what transpired in their cases.

Table 1.10

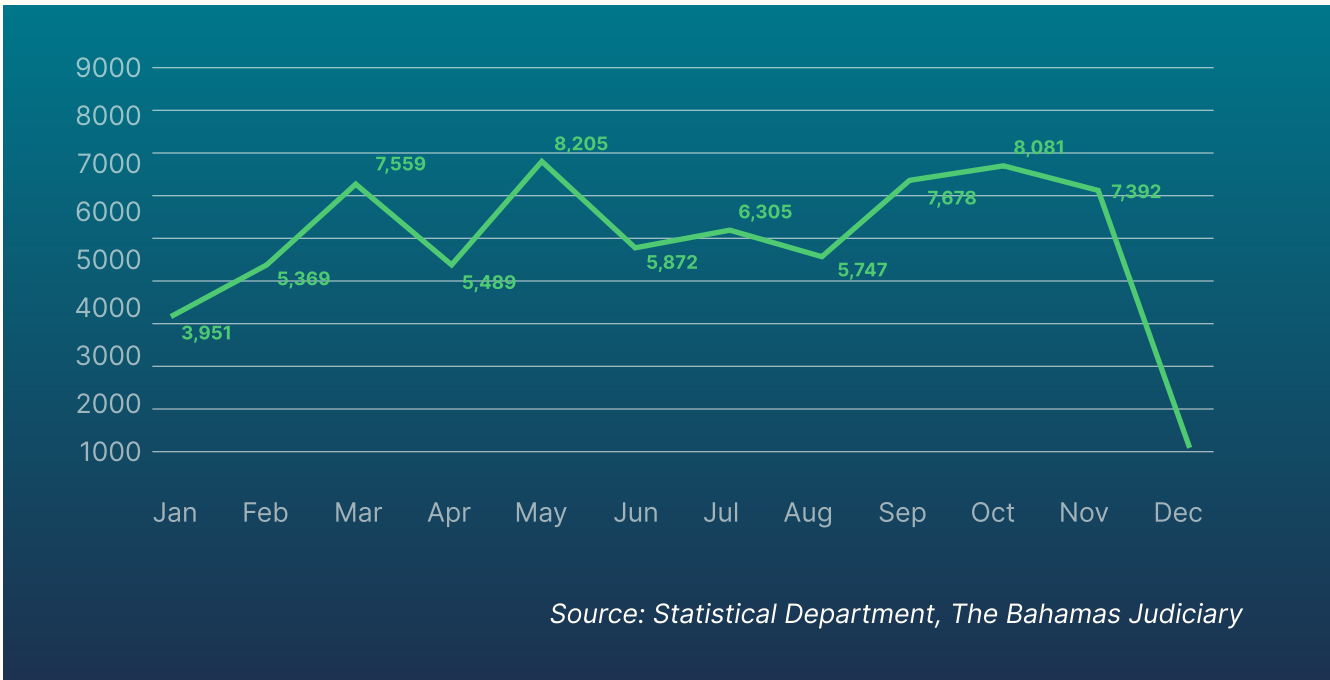
Key Responsibilities of the court reporter or transcriber are listed in the table below.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES	
Record Legal Proceedings	Court reporters record everything said during court hearings, depositions, trials, and other legal proceedings. They utilise specialised equipment, such as stenographic machines or voice recording technology, to ensure that every word is accurately captured.
Creating Transcripts	After recording, court reporters prepare official written transcripts of the proceedings. These serve as legal records that can be used in appeals or case analysis.
Maintaining Official Records	Court reporters are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the legal record. Their transcripts become part of the official court documentation, which is essential for the judicial process.

<p>Providing real-time transcription</p>	<p>In some instances, court reporters provide real-time transcription services, allowing judges and attorneys to view a written record as the proceedings unfold. This is especially useful in fast-paced legal settings.</p>
<p>Ensuring accuracy and confidentiality</p>	<p>Court reporters must follow strict ethical standards, maintaining impartiality and confidentiality when handling sensitive information. This helps ensure that the legal process stays fair and just.</p>

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE COURT REPORTING SECTION AND TRANSCRIPTION UNIT DATA

Figure 10 Count of Pages Transcribed, 1st January to 31st December 2025



It is important to note that for the period 1 January to 31 December 2025, the Court Reporting Section and the Transcription Unit processed a combined total of 72,106 pages of transcriptions.

This substantial output covered both criminal and civil matters heard before The Bahamas Judiciary during the reporting period, underpinning the Judiciary's commitment to transparency, accuracy, and the timely administration of justice.

Goal of the Court Reporting and Transcription Unit

The Judiciary's overarching goal is to ensure that the Court Reporting Section and Transcription Unit consistently operate at or exceed internationally recognised standards for transcribing legal documentation. As part of this commitment, several strategic initiatives are being implemented to enhance efficiency and quality:

- 1 **Improving Audio Quality:** Efforts are underway to upgrade the recording infrastructure, directly mitigating delays caused by poor clarity and ensuring a more efficient transcription process.

MAXScribe, an all-in-one digital court reporting solution designed to capture multi-channel audio, perform automated transcription, and facilitate rapid editing, was procured. Once fully implemented, MAXScribe is expected to significantly improve the Transcription Unit's turnaround times, thereby enhancing both overall accuracy and operational efficiency within the judiciary.

- 2 **The Court Reporters' Product Key Codes (PKCs)** were upgraded, accompanied by a comprehensive two-day training exercise. These initiatives are designed to ensure that staff can fully leverage the benefits of these technological tools, thereby optimising efficiency and accuracy in court documentation.

To effectively manage the rigorous demands of complex cases, including those involving multiple fast-speaking participants, extensive technical jargon, and frequent legal objections, the units rely on advanced integrated technology. The adoption of MAXScribe, combined with the integration of its speech-to-text software into the FTR digital recording system, significantly enhances transcription quality, accelerates turnaround times, and captures comprehensive, multi-channel audio recordings to ensure accuracy under any circumstances. Ongoing efforts to streamline the processing of both criminal and civil matters further reduce delivery times (Turnaround Time, or TAT), guaranteeing that all stakeholders receive timely access to verbatim records essential for legal review and appeals. Collectively, these initiatives drive continuous improvement, ensuring the unit's operations remain efficient, precise, and aligned with global best practices in court administration.

Building on this foundation, these initiatives are designed to foster continuous improvement, ensuring the unit's operations remain highly efficient, accurate, and fully aligned with global best practices in court administration.

PROBATE REGISTRY



Assistant Registrar

Jonathan Deal

The Probate Registry processes applications related to the probate and administration of deceased persons' estates. Whether an estate needs to be probated depends on how the deceased person's property was owned at the time of their death. The Registry also serves as a depository for original wills.

The laws and procedures for obtaining grants of representation regarding the estates of deceased persons and related matters are outlined in the Probate and Administration of Estates Act (Ch. 108) and the Probate and Administration of Estates Rules. Part 63 of the Supreme Court Civil Procedure Rules, 2022, covers contentious probate proceedings.

The Registry is defined under the Probate and Administration of Estates Rules as the registry of the Probate Division situate in New Providence, and the sub-registries situate elsewhere than in New Providence (Grand Bahama). In 2025, the registry in New Providence relocated from Ansbacher House to the Family Court Complex, assimilating into a space proximate to the Family Division staff, consistent with trends and practices seen in other jurisdictions.

The main probate applications that the Probate Registry processes include:

- Applications for Grants of Probate
- Applications for Letters of Administration
- Applications for Letters of Administration with Will Annexed
- Resealing of Foreign Grants

Between 1 January 2025 and 15 December 2025, the Probate Registry received 1,015 new applications for a grant of representation or the resealing of a foreign grant. 893 applications were received in New Providence, and 122 new applications were received in Grand Bahama (See Table 1.11). This figure reflects an increase compared to the applications reported during the previous reporting period (1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024). During the reporting period, 878 new grants and resealings were issued. 778 grants and resealings were issued in New Providence, and 100 grants and resealings were issued in Grand Bahama (See Table 1.12). An additional 118 Wills were securely received for safe deposit in New Providence.

Table 1.11 New Probate Applications Filed

NEW PROBATE APPLICATIONS FILLED					
01.01.2025 - 31.12.2025					
MONTH	PB	LA	LAW	RS	TOTAL
JAN	20	17	7	4	48
FEB	22	27	3	7	59
MAR	22	34	1	6	63
APR	33	43	2	7	85
MAY	46	33	10	6	95
JUN	37	44	10	6	97
JUL	48	45	9	4	106
AUG	28	42	5	1	76
SEP	19	42	4	8	73
OCT	21	37	3	9	70
NOV	28	36	2	9	75
DEC	9	24	3	10	46
TOTAL	333	424	59	77	893

Table 1.12 Grants Approved

GRANTS APPROVED					
01.01.2025 - 31.12.2025					
MONTH	PB	LA	R/S	LAWA	TOTAL
JAN	5	16	5	1	27
FEB	33	32	10	5	80

Note: These grants were filed in previous years but approved in 2025.

MAR	13	29	9	9	60
APR	19	19	4	3	85
MAY	38	48	8	2	95
JUN	12	16	0	1	97
JUL	34	40	11	11	106
AUG	13	19	3	5	76
SEP	41	32	4	6	73
OCT	36	40	7	15	70
NOV	18	38	4	5	75
DEC	17	35	3	3	46
TOTAL	280	364	68	66	778

As demonstrated by the statistics, the Court continued to receive a large volume of applications for new grants and resealings over the reporting period. A number of applications received and considered during the period required corrections due to drafting errors and failures to adhere to the requirements of the Probate and Administration of Estates Act and Rules. Common errors observed in the applications received included:

- 1 Applying for an incorrect grant of representation (e.g., probate versus letters of administration with the Will annexed).
- 2 Filing the incorrect supporting documents for the type of grant of representation applied for, according to the Probate and Administration of Estate Rules.
- 3 The submission of incomplete documents, documents with internal inconsistencies, or documents with particulars unrelated to the estate at hand, such as the name of a different deceased, a date of death, or address, or a domicile for a different deceased.
- 4 Applying for a grant of representation where there was no jurisdiction to make a grant under Section 4 of the Probate and Administration of Estates Act.
- 5 Applying for a grant of administration where there was a minority or life interest without addressing Section 37 of the Probate and Administration of Estates Act.
- 6 Applying for a grant of representation on the basis that the Inheritance Act 2002 applied when the deceased died prior to 1 February 2002.
- 7 Failing to mark the will in accordance with Rule 16 of the Probate and Administration of Estates Rules.

- 8 Failing to provide an administration bond in the correct amount and with the correct number of sureties in accordance with Section 21 of the Probate and Administration of Estates Act and Rules 8, 10, and 12 of the Probate and Administration of Estates Rules.
- 9 Failing to provide a proper description of and the value of the personal estate and effects, which matches the return submitted and the supporting evidence, and failing to provide a proper description of the real estate and evidence of ownership.
- 10 Swearing the value of the estate at “nil” or “unknown” or at a de minimis value without any explanation as to why a grant of representation is required.
- 11 Failing to include an affidavit of search in support of the application.
- 12 Failing to include an affidavit of delay in support of the application where more than 12 months have passed since the death of the deceased.
- 13 Failing to state and substantiate how the applicant is entitled to apply for the grant of representation applied for.
- 14 Failing to state and substantiate how all persons with better or equal entitlement to apply for a grant of representation have been cleared off.
- 15 Failing to ensure that, where the applicant is an attorney appointed by a person entitled under a power of attorney, the power of attorney is in order and is lodged for recording.

The fee structure in Probate matters will be updated by the upcoming Supreme Court (Fees) Rules 2025, which have been Gazetted to come into operation on the 1st day of January, 2026.

It is anticipated that in 2026 progress will be made towards the digitization of the probate process and the establishment of an online probate platform, in line with the Judiciaries continued programme of modernization and enhancement of access to justice through the use of technology.

The benefits of “E-Probate” are substantial and include:

- Streamlined applications
- Reduced processing times
- Lower risk of human error
- Enhanced monitoring and tracking

Once established, an online probate platform will eliminate manual data entry and paper-based bottlenecks. We anticipate that the online probate platform will significantly reduce the delays and backlogs that have historically plagued probate applications.

Once the relevant software comes on stream, we expect to see dramatic improvements in probate efficiency, benefiting executors, beneficiaries, and legal practitioners throughout The Bahamas. This initiative builds upon the successful relocation of the Probate Registry to the Family Court Complex and represents a next step forward in modernizing the probate process.

FAMILY REGISTRY

Assistant Registrar

Indy Hunter

The Family Registry manages highly confidential matters, including divorces, adoptions, guardianship applications, and mental health applications. It is important to note that Family matters are rarely resolved within a single filing year or twelve-month period, as these cases often require extended timelines for proper adjudication.

Historic Milestone: Opening of the New Family Court Complex

2025 marked a transformative year for family law administration in The Bahamas with the opening of the new Family Court Complex in New Providence. This state-of-the-art facility represents a major advancement in the delivery of family justice services and reflects a modern, integrated approach to family law matters.

◆ FACILITY DESIGN AND CAPACITY

The complex has been purposefully designed to accommodate comprehensive services under one roof. There is dedicated capacity for 3 Supreme Court Justices, 3 Magistrates, and a Registrar.

Three distinct registries serving specialized functions:

- Family Registry for the Supreme Court
- Family Registry for the Magistrate Court
- Probate Registry for the Supreme Court

Integral to the complex's design and operation is a mediation-based style of adjudication. This philosophy recognises that many family disputes are best resolved through collaborative problem-solving rather than adversarial litigation. The physical infrastructure of the complex supports this approach, facilitating both formal court proceedings and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

◆ THE COMPLEX HAS BEEN DESIGNED WITH GROWTH AND ENHANCED SERVICE INTEGRATION IN MIND

Space has been allocated for the Department of Social Services to move into the complex, enabling seamless coordination between judicial and social support services for families.

At the official opening of the new Family Court Complex, the Prime Minister underscored the national significance of this milestone, describing it as more than a building, but as a symbol of the Government's commitment to strengthening the administration of justice, protecting the most vulnerable, and ensuring that the justice system evolves in step with societal change. The Prime Minister emphasized that strong families are the foundation of a strong nation, and that a modern, responsive Family Court is essential to preserving social stability, dignity, and fairness for all.

Echoing these sentiments, the Chief Justice emphasized the relocation as a landmark judicial achievement in 2025. This facility, built to international standards, embodies the move from adversarial to mediation-centred proceedings, prioritizing collaboration, reconciliation, and humane resolution of family disputes.

The complex's design facilitates collaborative problem-solving, recognizing that families navigating divorce, custody, guardianship, and related matters often benefit more from mediated resolution than from contested litigation. This approach aligns with global best practices and positions The Bahamas for regional leadership in progressive family justice.

Plans are in place to establish a dedicated Juvenile Court within the complex, and construction is well underway for a specialized Mediation Center for dispute resolution, which will formalize and expand mediation services.

This integrated model positions The Bahamas at the forefront of progressive family law administration, bringing together judicial officers, administrative support, social services, and alternative dispute resolution under one roof to better serve families navigating complex legal matters.

Practice Direction 1 of 2025

A significant development in 2025 to the Family Division was the Chief Justice's issuance of Practice Direction 1 of 2025, which introduced streamlined procedures for undefended divorce matters. Under this directive:

- Undefended divorces may now be heard on the papers when applicable
- The physical attendance of the Petitioner or Respondent is no longer required in cases where;
 - Affidavit evidence is properly filed and available, and
 - The respondent does not intend to defend the claims.

This reform represents a meaningful step toward improved efficiency and reduced burden on parties in undefended divorce matters, while maintaining judicial oversight and the integrity of the process.

Strategic Priorities for 2026

The Family Registry Division has identified several key objectives to enhance service delivery and data-driven decision-making in 2026:

Enhanced Statistical Analysis

The division commits to implementing more sophisticated metrics, including:

- 1 Average dispensation periods across all case types, enabling identification of bottlenecks and measurement of improvement over time
- 2 Defended versus undefended divorce ratios provide insight into resource allocation and the effectiveness of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.
- 3 Year-over-year trend analysis to better understand caseload dynamics and predict future resource needs.

Jurisdictional Benchmarking

The division intends to continue benchmarking practices and outcomes with other progressive jurisdictions. This comparative approach will inform best practices in:

- 1 Case management protocols
- 2 Technological integration for filing and document management
- 3 Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms
- 4 Timelines for various stages of proceedings

Operational Integration

With the anticipated arrival of the Department of Social Services in 2026 and the completion of the Mediation Center, the division will focus on:

- Developing collaborative protocols between judicial and social services
- Training staff in mediation-assisted case management
- Establishing referral pathways for families who may benefit from mediation or social support services
- Maximizing the potential of the Juvenile Court once operational

Through these evidence-based improvements and the enhanced infrastructure of the new Family Court Complex, the Family Registry aims to balance efficiency with the sensitivity and thoroughness required in family matters.

The 2025 performance of the Family Registry reflects both the ongoing demand for family services and continued institutional development. The opening of the new Family Court Complex in New Providence represents a watershed moment for family justice in The Bahamas, establishing a modern, integrated facility that supports both traditional adjudication and innovative mediation-based approaches. The implementation of Practice Direction 1 of 2025 marks an important procedural advancement, while the commitment to enhanced data collection and jurisdictional benchmarking positions the division for continued improvement in the coming year. As we move forward with the integration of the Department of Social Services, the establishment of the Juvenile Court, and the completion of the Mediation Center, the Registry remains dedicated to serving families with efficiency, fairness, and appropriate attention to the unique circumstances of each case.

FAMILY REGISTRY STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Table 1.13

Comparative statistics for the Family Registry, for the calendar year ending 31 December 2025 and the previous fiscal year are shown below.

APPLICATIONS FILED UNDER THE FOUR DIVISIONS	11.01.2023 - 10.31.2024	01.01.2025 - 12.31.2025	OBSERVATIONS
Divorce (MCA. Ch. 125)	544	544	Divorce applications remained constant across both reporting periods.
Adoption (Ch. 131)	21	16	A significant 23% decline in adoption filings.
Guardianship (Ch. 132)	34	46	Guardianship applications increased by 35%.
Mental Health Act (Ch. 230)	23	30	Mental Health Act Applications increased by seven applications or 30%.
Total Applications	622	636	Overall, there was a 2.2% increase in the number of applications filed.

Table 1.14

Comparative statistics for Decree Absolutes for the calendar year ending 31 December 2024 and 31 December 2025.

DECREE ABSOLUTES ISSUED		
YEAR	2024	2025
TOTAL	359	423

Table 1.15

Comparative statistics for Decree Nisi for the calendar year ending 31 December 2024 and 31 December 2025.

SIGNED DECREE NISI		
YEAR	2024	2025
TOTAL	403	397

KEY OBSERVATIONS (TABLE 1.15):

- **Older years (1999–2014):** Almost all were eliminated in 2025, indicating that the backlog of the decree nisi was cleared earlier.
- **Recent years (2018–2023):** Sharp declines across the board, especially in 2023 (-158) and 2022 (-53).
- **2025 filings:** 66 finalized within the same year, showing current-year efficiency.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SUPREME COURT'S PUBLISHED DECISIONS

Figure 10

Civil Division - Count of Published Decisions, 1st January to 31st December 2024 vs. 2025

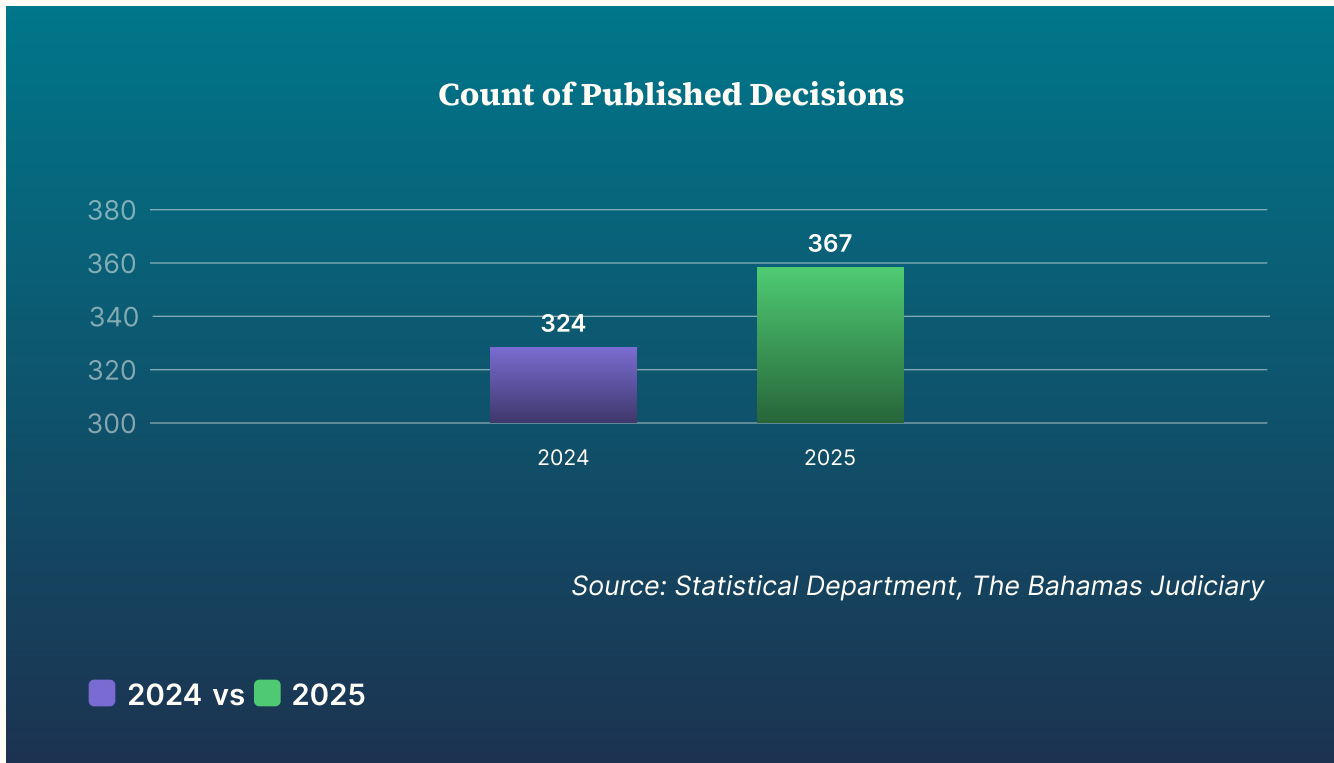


Table 1.17

Civil Division - Count of Published Decisions, 1st January to 31st December 2024 vs. 2025

	2024	2025	VARIANCE	CHANGE (%)
JAN	14	25	+11	↑ 78 %
FEB	35	47	+12	↑ 34 %
MAR	44	43	-1	↓ 2 %
APR	27	36	+9	↑ 33 %
MAY	36	33	-3	↓ 8 %
JUN	18	28	+10	↑ 55 %
JUL	22	29	+7	↑ 32 %
AUG	27	22	-5	↓ 19 %
SEP	25	34	+9	↑ 36 %
OCT	46	25	-21	↓ 46 %
NOV	15	29	+14	↑ 93 %
DEC	15	16	-1	↑ 7 %
TOTAL	324	424	+43	↑ 13 %

The table above shows that civil published decisions increased for 9 of the 12 months under review when compared to 2024 figures.

Figure 11 Civil Division - Published Line Chart

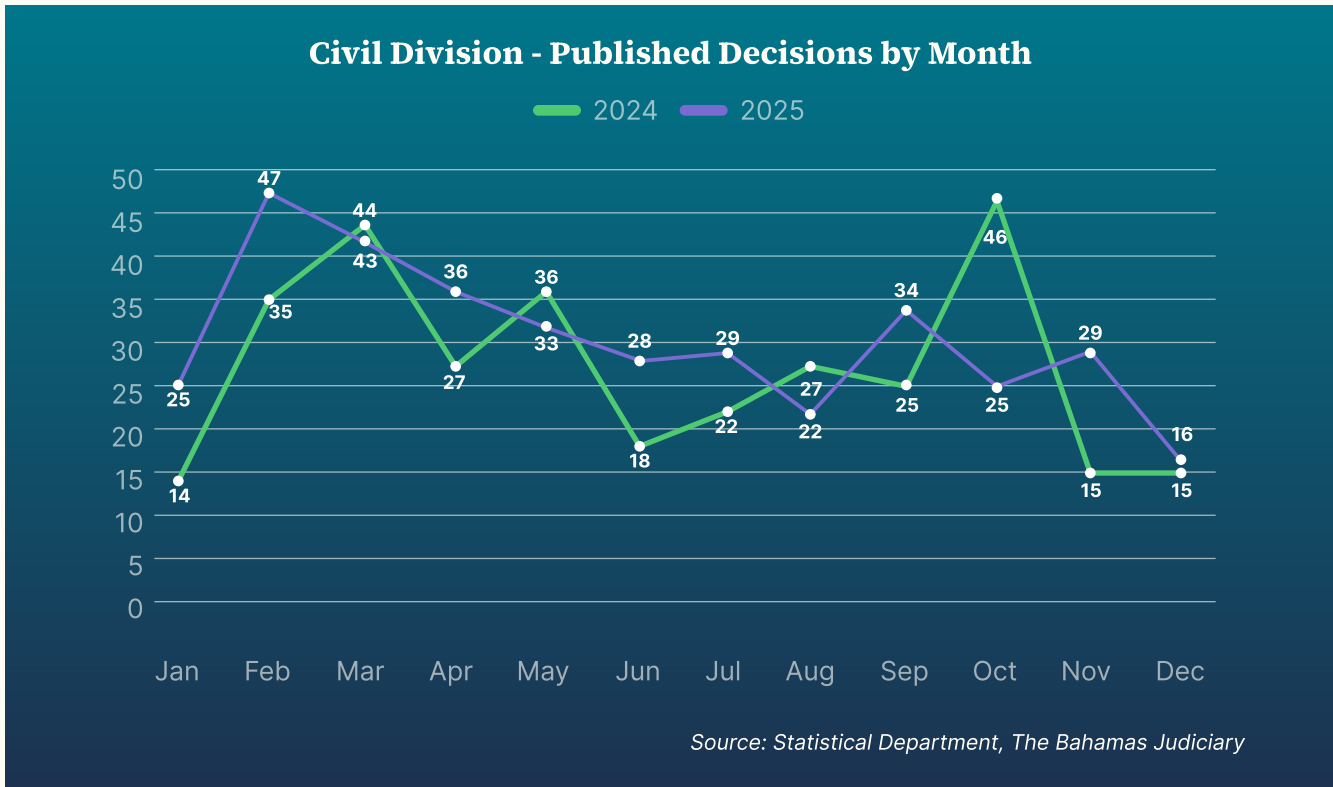


Figure 12 Criminal Division - Count of Published Decisions, 1st January to 31st December 2024 vs. 2025

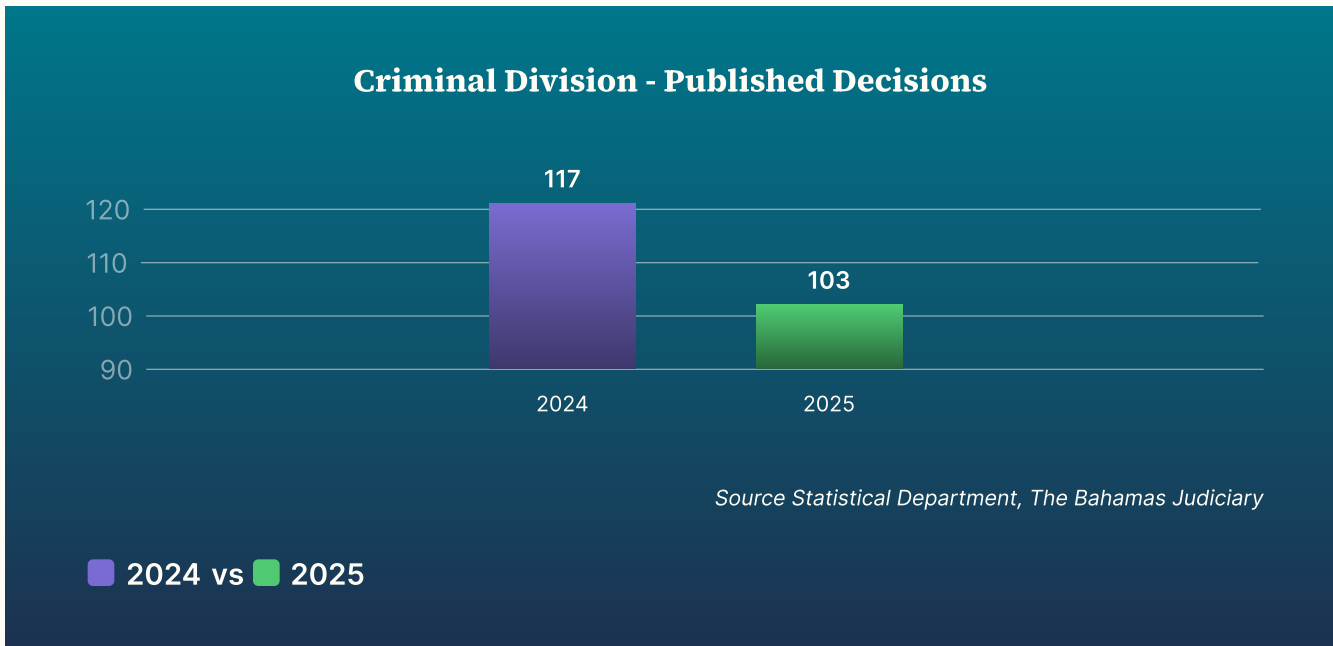


Table 1.18

Criminal Published Decision Statistics

	2024	2025	OBSERVATIONS
Published Decisions	121	103	Overall decrease of 18 decisions or 15%.

This represented a 15% decrease in the number of published criminal cases in 2025.

Table 1.19

Criminal Division - Monthly Breakdown of Published Decisions, 1st January to 31st December 2024 vs. 2025

	2024	2025	VARIANCE	CHANGE (%)
JAN	14	11	7	↑ 175 %
FEB	18	14	-4	↓ 22 %
MAR	17	19	2	↓ 12 %
APR	12	8	-4	↓ 33 %
MAY	8	4	-4	↓ 50 %
JUN	8	3	-5	↓ 63 %
JUL	6	10	4	↑ 67 %
AUG	12	4	-8	↓ 67 %
SEP	9	7	-2	↓ 22 %
OCT	23	8	-15	↓ 65 %
NOV	3	9	6	↑ 200 %
DEC	1	6	5	↑ 500 %
TOTAL	121	103	-18	↓ 15 %

Figure 13

Monthly Breakdown of Criminal Decisions, 1st January to 31st December 2024 vs. 2025

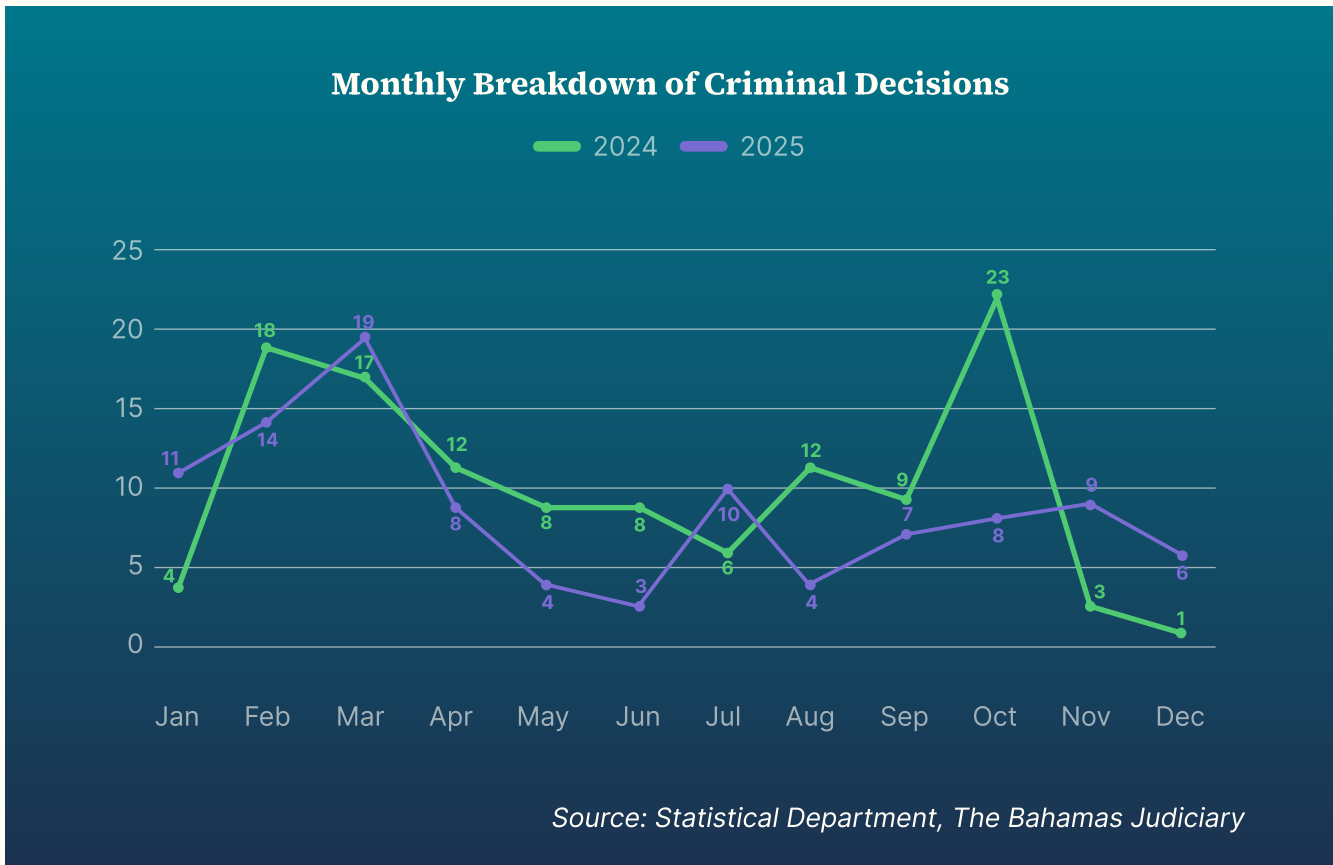


Table 1.20

Criminal Cases Outcome, 1st January to 31st December 2025

MONTH	CONVICTIONS	ACQUITTALS	PLEAS	NOLLE	DEATH CERTIFICATE	TOTAL
JAN	0	2	3	2	0	7
FEB	1	4	5	13	0	23
MAR	2	7	1	4	0	14
APR	0	1	3	6	0	10
MAY	2	4	13	8	0	27
JUN	3	2	7	4	0	16
JUL	3	1	4	7	0	15
AUG	6	2	8	4	1	20
SEP	4	4	9	9	0	26
OCT	1	4	7	7	3	22
NOV	2	2	3	8	0	15
DEC	3	4	0	1	1	9
TOTAL	27	37	63	73	5	204

MAGISTRATE COURT REPORT



Chief Magistrate

Roberto Reckley

Often referred to as the court of first instance, the Magistrate's Court of The Bahamas proudly serves as the front line of the Judiciary. Most cases within the Judiciary are adjudicated in the Magistrates' Court, as all criminal cases start here, and most civil cases both start and end here. For many Bahamians, these courts are the first and, in most cases, the only courts they will ever encounter. We recognize the role we play and our importance within the judicial system, and as such, we strive to provide quality service to persons who come to our doorsteps and enter our halls seeking justice. The Magistrate Court's responsibility is to maintain the community's confidence, which we achieve through accessibility, transparency, efficiency, and competency.

The range of matters overseen in the Magistrates Court includes criminal offences such as crimes against the person, crimes against property, dangerous drugs, firearm offences, financial crimes, sexual offences, extradition matters, juvenile matters, immigration matters, National Insurance Board matters, and traffic offences. Additionally, domestic and family matters, civil claims, and Coroner's Inquests are routinely adjudicated in the Magistrate's Court. This list is by no means exhaustive, but it provides insight into the volume and diversity of matters litigated every day in the Magistrate's Courts.

New Hires

In the past year, we welcomed new employees across various departments. These hires were essential to maintaining operational efficiency and enhancing the quality of service to the public. We welcomed Magistrate Uel Johnson in the northern region and Abigail Farrington, who joined the Magistracy Financial Crimes Division.

We look forward to the valuable contributions they will make in strengthening the administration of justice and improving public service.

Promotions

As we welcomed new Magistrates, we are also pleased to announce the promotion of sitting Magistrates, Assistant Chief Magistrate Charlton Smith who was promoted to Deputy Chief Magistrate, sitting in Grand Bahama. Senior Magistrate Darence Rolle-Davis was promoted to Assistant Chief Magistrate, while Assistant Chief Magistrate Carolyn Vogt-Evans was appointed Acting Deputy Chief Magistrate, and Senior Magistrate Shaka Serville was appointed Acting Assistant Chief Magistrate. We celebrate their advancement with enthusiasm.

Training

We continue to train members of our team at all levels to ensure they provide high-quality service to those who use the Magistrate Court. Such training focused on raising our team members' competency in the various software programs routinely used to perform duties within the Magistrates' Court.

Recognizing the importance of mental well-being, we also focused on ensuring that our team members were aware of the mechanisms and resources available to help them cope with stressful situations.

New Courts

In November 2024, the Bernard Road Family Court complex was opened for the adjudication of family matters in both the Supreme Court and Magistrates' Court.

The Family Magistrates Court symbolizes a commitment to addressing domestic issues with dignity, sensitivity, and compassion. Its structure and function are designed to provide a space that is less combative and more conducive to reconciliation and conflict resolution, values that are crucial when dealing with matters so deeply personal and impactful.

The Family Court is staffed by two full-time Magistrates and has been successful in servicing the needs of our citizens in an environment that fosters care and harmony. The Court has been well-received by the community and is yielding impressive results as expected.

The Amendment to the Magistrate Act, which was gazetted in August 2023, increased the civil claim jurisdiction in the Magistrate Court from \$5,000.00 to \$20,000.00. To effectively handle the high volume of civil claims, the Chief Justice established two full-time civil courts to hear civil matters exclusively, which has been highly productive.

The increase in the Magistrate's jurisdiction is now balanced by the two daytime civil courts, which serve not only the existing number of matters but also the increased number of claims that accompany the expanded jurisdiction. The combination of increased jurisdiction and two full-time civil courts has provided enhanced judicial services and access to justice that meet the community's needs.

Family Island Courts

For much of the past year, our Family Island Magistrate Courts continued to receive the attention of a single Magistrate dedicated to sitting in each district for a prolonged period, allowing more matters to be completed more frequently. This system provided improved access to the courts for the residents of those communities. This role was filled by Senior Magistrate Samuel McKinney and subsequently by Assistant Chief Magistrate Darence Rolle-Davis. Both executed these responsibilities until recently, when our Family Island Administrators began adjudicating some of the less serious criminal offences throughout the Family Islands.

In 2025, a lot of focus was placed on training Island Administrators to equip them with the skills needed to adjudicate matters within their remit.

Building Upgrades and New Developments

Over the past year, the Magistrate Court Complex in New Providence benefited from upgrades and regularly scheduled maintenance to ensure the building's longevity. Contemporary computer hardware and software, along with photocopiers and printers, were also added to the Complex's resources to sustain efficient productivity.

The Bahamas Bail Management System remains an integral component of the administration of justice. The system is designed to facilitate the management of information regarding bail applications and individuals who have been granted bail. One of the many benefits of the system is the electronic kiosks that allow persons on bail to report to a Police Station with a kiosk. The specific credentials required to sign in are unique to each person, ensuring accurate tracking and reporting of conditions. The Bail Management Office, located in the Magistrate Court complex, serves as the central hub for bail management operations and is equipped with the necessary technology and staff to implement the system effectively. The office has benefited from numerous upgrades in terms of aesthetics, electronic resources, and computer hardware and software.

Environmental Matters

This year, the first Environmental Planning and Protection case was heard in the Magistrates' Court. In keeping with the intention of the legislation, the Attorney General, in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection, has taken an aggressive approach to enforcing contraventions of the Environmental Planning and Protection Act to safeguard the future of the environment. As a result, numerous individuals have been brought before the courts and prosecuted for breaches of the Act. This is another example of different arms of the community, government, and the Judiciary acting in unison to effect change and improve our nation.

International Conferences

In furtherance of the Chief Justice's vision of providing training and education for judicial officers, several Magistrates had the opportunity to travel and participate in various international conferences to gain experience, increase exposure, and better serve the Magistracy.

Countries visited included Trinidad and Tobago, Gambia, and Grenada. The areas of expertise discussed were wide-ranging, including, but not limited to: the adjudication and prosecution of synthetic opioid and other dangerous drug offences; innovations in judicial practice; and embracing digital change for a better future.

These conferences provided valuable networking opportunities and facilitated the exchange of knowledge, thereby broadening the legal lens of our Magistrates towards the application of the law.

Looking Forward

We look forward to the opening of a new Remand Court, located near the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services. A groundbreaking ceremony was held for the construction of the new Remand Court, which, when completed, we are confident will be another enhancement to the services that the Judiciary provides.

Without a doubt, the upcoming year will see the growth of the warrant task force, which is now in its infancy. The purpose of this specialized unit within the Magistrate's Court is to execute and enforce outstanding arrest warrants. While there is a significant focus on traffic warrants, which account for the most substantial number of outstanding warrants, the task force is responsible for executing all warrants across all disciplines. We hope to codify our warrant policies and procedures throughout Grand Bahama and the other Family Islands. The unit has been operational for a brief time and is already yielding meaningful results.

Farewell

This year, we say farewell to former Assistant Chief Magistrate Subusola Swain, who, after many years of dedicated service to the Magistracy, was confirmed as a Vice-President of the Industrial Tribunal. A small number of our Magistrates are also approaching that time when, after years of meaningful contribution to the Magistracy, we will be bidding them farewell. Senior Magistrate Samuel McKinney, Senior Magistrate Sandradee Gardiner, and Acting S&C Magistrate James Moxey are all persons to whom we will forever be indebted for the positive impact they have had on the Judiciary and the significant influence they have had among their colleagues. Thank you all, and we wish you every success in your future endeavours.

Conclusion

2025 has been a year of significant accomplishments and notable improvements. We are grateful to those who collaborated diligently with us to serve this nation. Our Magistrates, along with administrative support and custodial staff, are worthy of our gratitude. The cooperation of the Royal Bahamas Police Force, the Bahamas Department of Correctional Services, members of the Bahamas Bar Association, and numerous other government and private agencies has been instrumental in helping us fulfill our obligations to the public, and for that, we are grateful. To the people of The Bahamas, we thank you for your continued confidence in us and look forward to serving you.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF MAGISTRATES' COURT DATA

Table 1.21 Magistrate Court Data for New Providence, 1st January to 31st December 2025

CATEGORY	COUNT OF CASES HEARD (01.01.2025 -12.31.2025)	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Bound Over To Keep The Peace	348	1 %
Beyond Parental Control	87	0.4 %
Civil	6,024	25 %
Criminal	10,212	42 %
Family	801	3 %
Protection Orders	290	1.2 %
Immigration	953	4 %
Juvenile	720	3 %
National Insurance Board	218	0.9 %
Traffic	4,753	19 %
TOTAL	24,406	100 %

Analysis of the data in Table 1.21 above suggested that for the period 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025, the Magistrate Court dealt with a total of 24,406 court matters.

- **Criminal cases** the Magistrate Court's caseload, making up nearly **42%** of all hearings.
- **Civil cases**, the second-largest category at **25%**.
- **Traffic cases** were also substantial, accounting for **20%** of the total — almost as many as civil cases.
- Smaller but notable categories included Immigration (**4%**), Family (**3%**), and Juvenile (**3%**).
- National Insurance Board, Protection Orders, Bound Over To Keep The Peace, and Beyond Parental Control together make up the remaining 4% of the caseload.

Table 1.22

Magistrate Court Data for Freeport, Grand Bahama (FPGB), 1st January to 31st December 2025

CATEGORY	COUNT OF CASES HEARD (01.01.2025 -12.31.2025)	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Corner's Inquest	1	0.01 %
Bound Over to Keep the Peace	37	0.35 %
Civil	1,428	13.7 %
Criminal	4,397	42.1 %
Family	282	2.7 %
Immigration	120	1.1 %
Juvenile	149	1.4 %
National Insurance Board	61	0.6 %
Traffic	3,969	38 %
TOTAL	10,444	100 %



JUDICIARY
THE BAHAMAS

03

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



www.courts.bs
www.courtsofappeal.org.bs



@BAHJudiciary



BAHJudiciary



2025

Bahamas Judiciary
Annual Report

- Chief Executive Officer's Report
- Human Resources Unit
- Court Services Report

Chief Executive Officer's Report

On 1 November 2024, I joined the Court Services Council as Director of Court Services and was later appointed Acting Chief Executive Officer in February 2025 during a pivotal period of judicial reform in The Bahamas, following the enactment of the Court Services Act on 1 July 2024. This legislation established the Court Services Council as an autonomous administrative body, entrusted with the transparent and accountable management of the Judiciary's administrative and financial affairs. The Act represents a significant advancement in judicial governance and positions The Bahamas as a regional leader in judicial reform.

Key milestones during the reporting period include the following:

- 1 **January 2025: The Opening of the Legal Year 2025** provided an important platform to reaffirm the Judiciary's ongoing programme of reform, with particular emphasis on the modernisation of court operations, the strengthening of physical and technological infrastructure, and the expanded deployment of digital solutions to enhance operational efficiency and access to justice. The observance reflected a Judiciary actively responding to evolving societal and institutional demands, while remaining anchored in its constitutional mandate. Together, these developments underscored the Judiciary's commitment to honouring its traditions while adapting to meet the demands of a modern, digital justice system.
- 2 On **January 27, 2025**, Justice Milton Evans was sworn in as the President of the Court of Appeal, succeeding Justice Jon Isaacs, who had served with distinction in this role for several years. Upon stepping down, Justice Isaacs expressed pride in his contributions as a member of the Court Services Council, highlighting his commitment to improving judicial administration. Justice Evans' appointment continues this legacy of leadership, supporting the Council's mission to strengthen judicial oversight, enhance operational efficiency, and advance the administration of justice at the appellate level.
- 3 **June 18–20, 2025:** *The Bahamas successfully hosted the Conference of Caribbean Chief Justices and Heads of Judiciaries in New Providence. The conference provided a high-level forum for regional dialogue on judicial administration, independence, digital transformation, and access to justice. Hosting this event reinforced The Bahamas' standing as a leader in judicial reform within the Caribbean and facilitated the exchange of best practices among regional judiciaries, contributing to strengthened cooperation and shared institutional learning.*
- 4 To further modernise court operations and enhance the work of the Court Reporting Unit, the Judiciary procured MAXScribe, an integrated digital court reporting solution capable of multi-channel audio capture, automated transcription, and expedited editing. Once fully implemented, this system is expected to substantially improve transcription turnaround times while enhancing accuracy and operational efficiency.

- 5 In addition, the acquisition of the Curia Court Management Suite for the Court of Appeal represents a major advancement in the Judiciary's e-filing and case management capabilities, bringing the institution closer to a fully integrated digital court environment. Upgrades to Court Reporters' Product Key Codes (PKCs), along with enhanced staff training, are also underway to ensure optimal use of these technological tools.
- 6 Further institutional development is ongoing. Among the most notable initiatives is the establishment of the Warrants Enforcement Unit, created to address more than 100,000 outstanding warrants within the system. Since its inception, the unit has made measurable progress in enforcing compliance, collecting outstanding fines and fees, and improving overall accountability.
- 7 The Court Services Council strengthened its organisational capacity by appointing a Statistician, Ms. Daniella Mohammed. Her role focuses on standardising the collection, analysis, and reporting of court data; supporting performance measurement and strategic planning; and reinforcing accountability through the production of accurate and timely statistical outputs.
- 8 The Court Services Council strengthened its organisational capacity by appointing a Statistician, Ms. Daniella Mohammed. Her role focuses on standardising the collection, analysis, and reporting of court data; supporting performance measurement and strategic planning; and reinforcing accountability through the production of accurate and timely statistical outputs.

In advancing this mandate, Ms. Mohammed engaged with the Bahamas National Statistical Institute (BNSI) and undertook an observational visit to Trinidad and Tobago, where she held discussions with the Judiciary of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (JORTT), the Central Statistical Office (CSO), and the Crime and Problem Analysis (CAPA) Branch of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS). These engagements examined organisational structures, database architecture, and supporting digital systems, and contributed directly to the Judiciary's efforts to align statistical reporting with modern court management systems while advancing its broader digital transformation agenda.

- 9 Further administrative enhancements were introduced by appointing a Court Administrator for each of the following divisions: the Family Court, the Court of Appeal, and the Grand Bahama Division. By strengthening administrative capacity across these key divisions, the Judiciary is better positioned to deliver justice services that are efficient, transparent, and accessible.

Collectively, these initiatives represent not merely incremental improvements to systems and structures, but a meaningful transformation in how justice is managed, reported, and experienced by the public.

During the same period, new officers were welcomed, bringing renewed energy, expertise, and a shared commitment to institutional progress.

As of the end of the reporting period, the Court Services Council maintained a staff complement of 295 administrative and support officers, all of whom play a critical role in advancing the Judiciary's mission and strategic objectives.

Throughout this period of transformation, one principal theme seems to emerge that we are one Judiciary, moving forward together. The past year has been both demanding and inspiring; it has also been a testament to the dedication, adaptability, and professionalism of our entire team.

Our unity is demonstrated in practice through the collaboration between the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal, which now produces a single Annual Report. This isn't just administrative efficiency; it's a declaration that we face the digital age together, as one institution with one purpose.

The transition from traditional systems to innovative solutions has been guided by enduring judicial principles of independence, integrity, accessibility, and fairness. While the tools and methods have evolved, these foundational values remain unchanged. Digital technologies now enable searchable records, expedited transcription, secure and resilient data storage, and expanded access to justice beyond physical court locations. These advancements serve to strengthen, rather than replace, the Judiciary's longstanding traditions.

Digital transformation continues to be a central pillar of the Judiciary's modernisation strategy. During 2025, the Digitisation Unit made substantial progress, scanning and uploading 2,673 files comprising 164,148 pages into the Attaché software platform. This initiative has significantly improved document accessibility, records preservation, and archival efficiency.

Operational efficiency has also been enhanced through the strategic reconfiguration of physical space. The relocation of the Bail Unit to Annex II, Court Services Administration to Annex I, and the Digitisation Unit to the Civil Registry resulted in the termination of several rental agreements, generating cost savings while promoting improved collaboration among departments. Renovation works were completed at Annex II courts and chambers to create modern, functional workspaces at Annex II, Hansard, and the Criminal Registry.

Court safety and security remain a priority. During the reporting period, the Security Department upgraded surveillance systems across judicial facilities, improving coverage and monitoring capabilities. Additional security personnel were engaged to strengthen operational capacity and ensure a safe environment for judicial officers, staff, and the public. Concurrently, the Information Technology Department continued implementing system upgrades to improve performance, reliability, and resilience.

The IT Department advanced the judiciary's digital transformation by deploying and configuring new systems across various court locations. Key initiatives included the successful migration of the Magistrate's Court and Court of Appeal to Windows 11 ahead of the October 2025 deadline, the procurement of a number of HP desktops to strengthen infrastructure. These efforts reflect a strong commitment to modernizing court operations, enhancing efficiency, and supporting staff through reliable technology solutions.

The progress achieved during 2025 represents a strong foundation for continued reform and institutional strengthening. As the Court Services Council moves forward, it remains guided by principles of excellence, transparency, and service to the Bahamian people, with a clear focus on building a Judiciary equipped to meet the demands of the future.

COURT SERVICES COUNCIL EXECUTIVE AND MANAGEMENT TEAM:



LERON NEELY

Director of Court
Services



STEVEN SEYMOUR

Director of Court
Security



ALPHANETTE GRANT

Court Administrator -
Magistrate's Court



MARILYN BASTIAN

Court Administrator -
Grand Bahama



CLAUDINA COOPER

Court Administrator
Family Court



MICHELLE MCPHEE

Court Administrator
Court of Appeal



MILDRED BODIE

Chief Executive Officer
(Acting)



**CHARMAINE
DELEVEAUX**

Chief Financial Officer



ANNAMAE NEELY

Director of Human
Resources



**NICOYA
NEILLY**

Executive
Administrator
Office of the
Chief Justice



**DR. ROYANNE
MORRISON**

Director of Court
Reporting Unit



**EZRANDA
BODIE**

Listing Officer



**DANIELLA
MOHAMMED**

Statistician
Manager

HUMAN RESOURCES UNIT

From Tradition to Transformation: Embracing Change in a Digital Era

Director of Human Resources

Annamae Neely

Introduction

July 2025 marked the successful completion of the Court Services Council's (CSC) first year as an autonomous body. This milestone represents the culmination of a year-long journey of preparation, institutional restructuring, and strategic planning. The transition from the Office of the Judiciary into the CSC under the Court Services Act, 2023, was not merely administrative, it signaled the realization of the Judiciary's long-standing vision to establish a modernized, accountable and well-resourced framework for court administration.

Institutional Transition and Staffing

Charged with the mandate to build out and staff the CSC, the Chief Executive Officer and the Human Resources team undertook the critical task of producing an overarching staff policy manual, career paths, and salary scales for administrative and support positions. Upon completion and ratification of these instruments, staff were formally offered permanent and pensionable employment, with all rights and benefits duly recognized.

On 1 July 2025, the Office of the Judiciary officially transitioned into the CSC. Staff members were presented with official offers to join the Council, thereby transferring from the Public Service into the new quasi-system. This movement brought to fruition the Judiciary's long-standing desire to adequately remunerate dedicated staff, while ensuring that financial affairs are managed transparently, accountably, and efficiently.

As of 31 October 2025, the CSC employed a complement of 295 administrative and support officers, distributed across three main divisions:

- Magistrates Courts
- Supreme Courts
- Court of Appeal

Operations extend beyond New Providence to include the Magistrate and Supreme Courts in Grand Bahama, as well as the Magistrate Court in Marsh Harbour, Abaco.

Financial Oversight and Governance

The transition to a quasi-system was a deliberate choice, designed to provide the necessary structure and flexibility to strengthen oversight, improve accountability, and ensure responsible resource allocation. Sound financial management remains central to the CSC's mission, as it is essential for maintaining public trust, ensuring regulatory compliance, and supporting the effective delivery of justice.

Staff Welfare and Recognition

Beyond its operational responsibilities, the CSC has placed strong emphasis on staff welfare and recognition. On 31 March 2025, the Council launched its Work & Wellness initiative, themed “Bridging the Gap.” This program was designed to promote health, balance, and community among staff, emphasizing both physical wellness and workplace unity.

Group Walks: We are proud of our group walks. Staff were encouraged to participate in walks on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, journeying to and from the Paradise Island bridge starting at Bank Lane. These activities provided opportunities for exercise, stress relief, and camaraderie, reinforcing the idea that small, consistent steps can lead to greater overall wellness.

The initiative symbolized the Council’s dedication to closing the gap between professional responsibilities and personal well-being, ensuring that staff thrive in all dimensions of life.

Building on this foundation, the CSC hosted its first Annual Staff Appreciation and Wellness Day on 16 August 2025. Held simultaneously at Super Club Breezes in Nassau and Pirates Cove in Grand Bahama, the event recognized employees’ dedication and service.

- **Attendance:** 152 staff members participated.
- **Activities:** Full-day access to Hotel amenities.
- **Purpose:** To provide relaxation, team building, and rejuvenation in a positive environment.

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing appreciation for the Council’s investment in staff morale and well-being. The event was considered a resounding success, reinforcing the CSC’s commitment to fostering a motivated and resilient workforce.

Court Services-Key Milestone Timeline

Timeline: July 2024 to October 2025



Conclusion

The first year of the Court Services Council has been marked by significant achievements: the successful institutional transition, the establishment of a comprehensive staffing framework, the strengthening of financial oversight, and the prioritization of staff welfare. Together, these accomplishments lay a strong foundation for the Council's future growth and effectiveness.

As the CSC moves forward, its dual focus on operational excellence and employee well-being will remain central to its mission. By combining sound governance with a culture of recognition and care, the Council is well-positioned to enhance the administration of justice and build lasting public confidence in the Judiciary.

Court Services Council Staff Compliment Breakdown

SUPREME COURT BANK LANE COMPLIMENT	
TYPE OF WORKERS	COUNT
Contract Officers	81
Permanent Officers	27
Temporary month-to-month	31
TOTAL STAFF	139

FAMILY COURT STAFF COMPLIMENT	
TYPE OF WORKERS	COUNT
Contract Officers	16
Permanent Officers	11
Temporary month-to-month	7
TOTAL STAFF	34

COURT OF APPEAL STAFF COMPLIMENT	
TYPE OF WORKERS	COUNT
Contract Officers	15
Permanent Officers	2
Temporary month-to-month	3
TOTAL STAFF	20

NEW PROVIDENCE MAGISTRATE COURT STAFF COMPLIMENT

TYPE OF WORKERS	COUNT
Contract Officers	19
Permanent Officers	19
Temporary month-to-month	19
TOTAL STAFF	57

GRAND BAHAMA STAFF COMPLIMENT

TYPE OF WORKERS	COUNT
Contract Officers	25
Permanent Officers	10
Temporary month-to-month	6
TOTAL STAFF	41

ABACO STAFF COMPLIMENT

TYPE OF WORKERS	COUNT
Contract Officers	3
Permanent Officers	0
Temporary month-to-month	1
TOTAL STAFF	4

TOTAL STAFF COMPLIMENT	COUNT
CONTRACT OFFICERS	159
PERMANENT OFFICERS	69
TEMPORARY MONTH-TO-MONTH	67
TOTAL STAFF COMPLIMENT	295

COURT SERVICES REPORT



Director of Court Services (Acting)

Leron Neely

I am pleased to present the 2025 Annual Report for Court Services. This year marked a significant chapter in our ongoing journey to modernise the administration of justice throughout the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. Our team demonstrated resilience, innovation, and a shared commitment to service excellence as we continued to strengthen institutional capacity, upgrade infrastructure, and advance the digital transformation.

Court Services is the operational backbone of the Judiciary, and I am proud of the strides we have made to improve efficiency, accountability, and accessibility. The success we achieved in 2025 was not the result of individual effort, but the collective determination of dedicated staff, partners, and the broader judicial community. Together, we have laid a strong foundation for the next phase of transformation, one that places people, technology, and sustainable development at the core of justice delivery.

The year 2025 marked significant progress for Court Services. In alignment with the strategic priorities of the Judiciary, the department remained focused on strengthening administrative systems while ensuring equitable access to justice throughout the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. Notable advancements were achieved in institutional efficiency, accountability, and service delivery.

Court Services acknowledges with appreciation the continued guidance and support of the Court Services Council, the Chief Justice, members of the Judiciary, and the Ministry of Finance. The efforts of these individuals and agencies, through collaboration and coordination, were instrumental in advancing the department's overarching goals.

During the reporting period, Court Services successfully coordinated a series of facility upgrades and maintenance projects across major court locations.

Among the notable achievements were the successful relocation of the Family Court Judges to the Family Court Complex. The Bailiff Unit was also relocated to the Swift Justice Building. In addition to these relocations, extensive repairs and upgrades were completed to improve functionality and safety within key judicial facilities. The Annex I (Ansbacher) Building underwent major plumbing and electrical upgrades, including replacing service pumps and storage tanks. Mold remediation was completed at the Criminal Registry, termite treatment was carried out at Swift Justice and the Bahamas Judicial Education Institute (BJEI) in Charlotte House, and major air conditioning replacements were finalised at the Garnet Levarity Justice Centre in Grand Bahama. Elevator assessments also commenced to improve accessibility within the courts.

Renovations at Annex II and the Supreme Court were complemented by the construction of new security walls, guard booths, and the installation of electronic access systems at the Magistrates' Courts to strengthen safety and control. The Family Court Complex additionally benefited from new telecommunications and security systems to support the Judiciary's long-term digitisation goals.

Other notable achievements for the department included hosting the Caribbean Chief Justices and Heads of Judiciary Conference in June 2025, which brought together regional leaders to discuss and collaborate on judicial best practices. This event highlighted The Bahamas' role in regional judicial affairs and demonstrated the effectiveness of Court Services' logistical and operational management.

Operational Highlights and Strategic Initiatives

In addition to infrastructure modernisation, 2025 was marked by several operational milestones that reinforced the department's role as a driver of judicial efficiency and innovation.

The Practice Guide serves several critical purposes:

- **Enhanced Surveillance and Security:**
Expanded monitored surveillance across all court locations, supported by upgraded access control systems to strengthen safety and accountability.
- **Swift Justice Enhancements:**
Continued improvement of the Swift Justice initiative, streamlining communication and coordination across judicial units.
- **Revenue and Enforcement Capacity:**
Renovation of the Warrant Unit to expand operational capacity and strengthen revenue collection mechanisms.
- **Security Augmentation:**
Increased security presence at the Magistrates' Courts to safeguard judicial officers, staff, and members of the public.
- **Policy Development:**
Identification of the need for comprehensive Fleet Management and Travel Policies to guide accountability in resource allocation and governance.
- **Access to Justice:**
Continued facilitation of Circuit Magistrates across the Family Islands, ensuring that justice remains accessible to all Bahamians.
- **Operational Efficiency:**
Introduction of cell phone allowances for key operational staff, such as Aides, to enhance responsiveness and communication.
- **Centralisation of Services:**
Strategic relocation of the Court Services Unit, Library, Bailiff Unit, and Civil Registry to streamline operations and improve service delivery.
- **Technological Upgrades:**
Modernisation of software and hardware infrastructure through the Microsoft Office Suite upgrade and CPU enhancements to align with international best practices.

- **Digital Transformation:**

Implementation of the Maxscribe transcription tool and AP network upgrades to enhance case documentation and connectivity reliability.

- **Infrastructure Expansion:**

Renovation of the existing Remand Court and the commencement of new Remand Court construction to accommodate increased caseloads.

Despite the ongoing challenges posed by aging infrastructure, the department has maintained operational continuity through proactive planning, coordination with the Ministry of Works, other governmental agencies, and strong vendor partnerships. These collective efforts have ensured that the courts remain functional, safe, and service-oriented throughout the year.

As we approach 2026, Court Services will continue to focus on infrastructure renewal, introducing energy-efficient buildings, staff additions and training, and implementing technology solutions that drive process and operational efficiency. The Court Services Department remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting the Judiciary’s vision of having an “accessible, efficient, and modern justice system” that upholds the rule of law and delivers excellent services across the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.



JUDICIARY
THE BAHAMAS

04

**JUDICIAL
APPOINTMENTS**



www.courts.bs
www.courtsofappeal.org.bs



[@BAHJudiciary](https://twitter.com/BAHJudiciary)



[BAHJudiciary](https://www.facebook.com/BAHJudiciary)



2025

Bahamas Judiciary
Annual Report

Supreme Court

— **Ms. Nicoya Neilly**

THE JUDICIAL AND LEGAL SERVICE COMMISSION



The Judicial and Legal Service Commission was established under Articles 116 and 117 of the Constitution and the Judicial and Legal Service Regulations (Article 125) of the Statute Law of The Bahamas. Under the Constitution of The Bahamas, the Judicial and Legal Service Commission is one of only three Commissions within the Public Service, the other two being the Public Service Commission and the Police Service Commission.

Central to the Commission's mandate is the responsibility of recommending qualified Judicial and Legal Officers to the Governor-General. These officers, endowed with the requisite legal qualifications as stipulated by Parliament, are vital for the administration of justice within our society. Furthermore, the Commission diligently evaluates matters related to the removal of officers and recommends disciplinary measures when necessary, thereby ensuring a just and professional legal environment.

The members of the Commission, as prescribed by the Constitution, are comprised of the following:

- 1 The Chief Justice as Chairman of the Commission;
- 2 A Justice of the Supreme Court or Court of Appeal, appointed by the Governor-General upon the recommendation of the Chief Justice;
- 3 The Chairman of the Public Service Commission, and
- 4 Two persons, appointed by the Governor-General, upon the advice of the Prime Minister, after consultation with the leader of the opposition.

Members, except for the Chairman of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission and the Chairman of the Public Service Commission, are appointed for a maximum of three (3) years; however, they may be re-appointed, subject to the relevant recommendations being made to the Governor-General.

In addition to its primary role of recommending appointments, the Commission actively supports the development and advancement of legal personnel by advising the Governor-General on:

- Promotions
- Reclassifications
- Transfers
- Secondments
- Resignations
- Retirements

To uphold high standards throughout these processes, the Commission rigorously reviews supporting documentation. It may conduct interviews, seek expert legal opinions, and consider evidence from public officers to ensure well-informed decision-making. When necessary, the Commission also undertakes security vetting to maintain the robustness and trustworthiness of our legal framework.

The dedicated administrative team, led by the Secretary of the Commission, plays an essential role in this process. Appointed by the Governor-General based on the Commission's recommendation, the Secretary is responsible for managing the daily operations and administrative tasks pivotal to the Commission's success.

The Secretary to the Commission fulfils a vital role in overseeing the Commission's office through the Secretariat. The responsibilities of the Secretariat are extensive and critical, encompassing but not limited to:

- Maintaining comprehensive physical and electronic registries of Commission files.
- Addressing inquiries from the public and stakeholders.
- Preparing for meetings with attention to detail, including notifying members, drafting agendas and supporting documents, and organising meeting spaces.
- Executing the Commission's decisions by preparing recommendations for the Governor-General and forwarding approved Orders to the Ministry of Public Service.
- Scheduling interviews and creating advertisements and notices for public awareness.

From 1 November 2024 to 31 October 2025, the Commission demonstrated its commitment to excellence by convening six (6) meetings and rendering one hundred and thirty (130) significant decisions. The Commission's collaborative efforts ensure the continued integrity of our legal system and positively influence our community.

A Judicial Appointments

◆ JUDGES



Dale Fitzpatrick

| 2 January 2025



Leif Farquharson, KC

| 2 January 2025



G. Gregory Hilton

10 March 2025



Cheryl Bazard, KC

19 December 2025

◆ REGISTRARS



Akeira Martin, Assistant Registrar

w.e.f 2 January 2025

◆ MAGISTRATES



Uel Johnson

w.e.f 31 March 2025



Abigail Farrington

w.e.f 1 March 2025

JUDICIAL RESEARCH COUNSEL	CONTRACTUAL APPOINTMENTS
Diana Ferreira	2 January 2025
Takera Perigord	10 February 2025
Delano Horton	17 February 2025
Spenser Plakaris	17 February 2025
Patricia Roberts	3 March 2025
Debra Thompson	Seconded w.e.f. 13 November 2024
Amy Rahming	Seconded w.e.f. 11 November 2025
Amber Bethel	15 December 2025
Lashan Martin	15 December 2025
Carla Brown-Stuart	15 December 2025

B Judicial Promotions

JUDGES



Milton Evans promoted to President of the Court of Appeal w.e.f. 27 January 2025



Sr. Justice Deborah Fraser promoted 16 June 2025 as Justice of Appeal

◆ REGISTRARS



Renaldo Tote promoted to Registrar of the Supreme Court w.e.f. 1 December 2025

◆ MAGISTRATES

Derence Rolle Davis	Promoted Assistant Chief Magistrate – w.e.f. 1 September 2025
Charlton Smith	Promoted Deputy Chief Magistrate w.e.f 19 November 2025
Carolyn Vogt-Evans	Appointed Acting Deputy Chief Magistrate w.e.f. 1 September 2025
Shaka Serville	Appointed Acting Assistant Chief Magistrate w.e.f 1 December 2025

C Retirements

JUDGES

Justice Jon Issacs	Retired - 26 January 2025
Justice Donna Newton	Retired - 28 February 2025
Sr. Justice Deborah Fraser	Retired - 15 June 2025
Justice G. Gregory Hilton	Retired - 31 December 2025

D Reassignments | Secondments | Transfers/Reclassifications

MAGISTRATES

Subusola Lawanson-Swain	Appointed as Vice President of the Industrial Tribunal w.e.f. 22 May 2025
-------------------------	---

Commemorative Sitting

Below is the list of former active members of the Bahamas Bar Association, presented in order of call, who passed away in 2024, in whose honour a commemorative sitting was held on 7 March 2025.

ATTORNEY:	CALL DATE:	ADMISSION TO THE INNER BAR	DATE OF DEATH
Thomas A.E. Evans, KC	6 October 1976	19 July 1996	5 June 2024
Cedric L. Parker, KC	21 August 1981	30 January 2020	18 May 2024
Carlson H. Shurland, KC	21 December 2001	25 February 2022	15 July 2024
A Loftus Roker	29 May 1962		13 May 2024
Sir Cyril S.S. Fountain	26 February 1963		19 May 2024
Hartis Pinder	1 September 1972		21 September 2024
Joan Ferguson	22 September 1989		12 December 2024
Debbye L. Ferguson	11 November 1994		12 August 2024
Donald Saunders	14 September 2001		27 March 2024
Milton R. Cox, Jr.	26 September 2003		14 November 2024
Dennis G. Williams	9 December 2011		1 March 2024

Admissions to the Bar – 1 January to 31 December 2025

NAME	PRESENTER	EFFECTIVE DATE
Patricia Davette Roberts	Cathleen Hassan	3 February 2025
Hellen Mukiri-Smith	Gail Lockhart Charles, KC	25 June 2025
Orquia Donasha Damianos	Carey G. Leonard	
Ivory Jade Hadaway	Obafemia Pindling	19 September 2025
Sharnette Tameco Davis	Michaela Barnett-Ellis	
Lashan Nicoldia Martin	Krysta Mason-Smith	
Tamica Evette McPhee	Hon. Wayne R. Munroe, KC	
Pamela Pheuna Jones	Krystal D.Z. Rolle, KC	
Mona Boyer	Raynard Rigby, KC	
Chavaz Kaurel W. Cassar	Hon. Perry G. Christie	
Barbara Jane E. Ferguson	Felicity Johnson	
Ronique Terrel Brown	Sidney S. Collie	
Patrea Helena Gardiner	Garvin Gaskin	
Paulette Melissa Burrows	Rhonda L.C. Hull	
Amber Deborah Bethel	Cheryl T. Whyms	31 October 2025
Louisiene Louissaint	Cassietta Z. McIntosh	
Valentino Jamine Bowe	David Cash	
Carla E. Brown	Sharada Humes-Ferguson	
Ian Toussaint Archer	Jomo Campbell	
Sasha Wallace-Whitfield	Simone A. Morgan-Gomez	
Khaula Felice Reid	Basil Cumberbatch	
Chaquita Vernita Taylor	Wence M.J. Martin	
Cierra Deandra Carey	Owen C. B. Wells	
Shammah Jarius J. Johnson	Keenan Johnson	
Amy Nanina R. Rahming	Desiree A. Ferguson	
Tyler Gregory L. Demeritte	Palincia I. Hunter	

Hercude Estime	Perry McHardy	
Crystal Martina R. Forbes	Tamika Roberts	
Rhyan Alayna Campbell	Rigby Raynard Rigby, KC	12 December 2025
Ingeria Helena Miller	Hon. Perry G. Christie	
Jerry Christopher Butler	Georgette Dahl Butler	
Regan MacKenzie	April N. Turner	
Eryan Victoria Wilmott	Eric Wilmott	
Anthaya Michelle Dominique Rolle	Romona Farquharson-Seymour	
G'Ann Gilissa Hepburn	Nadia Wright	

Special Admissions to the Bar

NAME	LAW FIRM	DATE
David Brownbill, KC	Amicus Chambers	7 February 2025
Anneliese M. Day, KC	Dion D. Smith & Co.	21 March 2025
Jeron Luke O'Brien	Office of the Attorney General & Ministry of Legal Affairs	23 June 2025
Elsbeth Talbot Rice, KC	Alexiou, Knowles & Co.	7 October 2025
Edward Fitzgerald	Office of the Attorney General & Ministry of Legal Affairs	15 December 2025

Registered Associates

NAME	LAW FIRM	DATE
Chia-yi Chua	Graham Thompson	28 July 2025

Power of Attorney Registry – New Providence

ENDURING POWER OF ATTORNEY	STANDARD POWER OF ATTORNEY
1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025 - 130	1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025 - 34
Total Filed 163	

SPECIAL SITTING OF THE COURT OF APPEAL 20 JANUARY 2025

To mark the retirement of the Honourable Mr. Justice Jon Isaacs as President of the Court of Appeal & to welcome the Honourable Mr. Justice Milton Evans as President of the Court of Appeal.



A LEGACY OF SERVICE: THE TRANSITION FROM JUSTICE JON ISAACS TO JUSTICE MILTON EVANS AS PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF APPEAL

On January 20, 2025, the Court of Appeal held a Special Sitting at the British Colonial Hotel to mark a significant moment in the history of The Bahamas' Judiciary. The Honourable Justice Jon Isaacs demitted office as President of the Court of Appeal after serving as a jurist for over 28 years in various capacities, making way for Justice Milton Evans, who was appointed as the new President.

The ceremony drew distinguished attendees from across the legal profession and government, including Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Honourable Philip Davis; Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Senator the Honourable Ryan Pinder; Chief Justice Sir Ian Winder; President of the Bahamas Bar Association Kahlil Parker; justices of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal, magistrates, lawyers and other senior officials in the judiciary and legal sector.



Honouring Justice Jon Isaacs: A Distinguished Career

Attorney General Ryan Pinder delivered remarks celebrating the remarkable career of Justice Isaacs, noting that his contributions to the legal profession are worthy of praise and that his career encapsulates a commitment to service and contribution to The Bahamas.

Justice Isaacs was called to the Bar of The Bahamas on 6 October 1984 and immediately joined the Chambers of the Attorney General, where his public service included serving as Prosecutor, Advisor, and Civil Litigation Attorney for thirteen years. He rose to the post of Assistant Director of Legal Affairs until his appointment as Chief Magistrate in January 1997. After serving as Chief Magistrate for three years, he was appointed to act as a Justice of the Supreme Court in 2002, and in 2009, he was appointed Honourable Senior Justice of the Supreme Court. In 2014, Senior Justice Jon Isaacs was appointed Justice of the Court of Appeal and, in 2024, President of the Court of Appeal.

Attorney General Pinder emphasized that for 28 years, Justice Isaacs has been an integral and important part of the Judiciary of The Bahamas. One of the most significant aspects of Justice Isaacs' tenure was his exemplary approach to judicial decision-making. The Attorney General praised Justice Isaacs as someone who has never been the subject of public or private criticism regarding the length of time it took to deliver his judgments. The Attorney General described Justice Isaacs' work as commendable and as an example for current judges to emulate.

Beyond his distinguished judicial career, Justice Isaacs expressed pride in being a member of the Court Services Council and took pleasure in many of the initiatives he was able to implement during his tenure, including the monthly digest, which is available to all judicial officers.

In his farewell remarks, Justice Isaacs reflected on the difficulty of saying goodbye after almost three decades as a jurist. He said he had led a blissful existence during his career and expressed gratitude to his staff, secretaries, clerks, colleagues, and lawyers with whom he had worked over the decades. Justice Isaacs acknowledged the bittersweet nature of his retirement, noting that while part of him was excited to embark on a new chapter in life, another part would miss the repertoire of engaging in legal discussions with the justices of the court.

Welcome to Justice Milton Evans: Maintaining Excellence

On 27 January 2025, Governor General Her Excellency the Most Honourable Dame Cynthia Pratt administered the swearing-in ceremony for the Honourable Justice Milton Evans as President of the Court of Appeal at Government House. The ceremony was attended by Chief Justice Sir Ian Winder, Attorney General Ryan Pinder, and other senior members of the judiciary.

Justice Evans has had a respected legal career, having worked in the Office of the Attorney General and served as a judge since 2011, spending the last seven years in the Court of Appeal.

In his inaugural remarks during the Special Sitting on 20 January 2025, Justice Evans pledged to maintain the high standards and efficiency for which the Court of Appeal has become known. He emphasized the collaborative nature of judicial work, stating that the delivery of justice requires all hands on deck and is most effective when everyone is working together.

Justice Evans highlighted that there is no backlog in the Court of Appeal and emphasized the plan to maintain that standard, sounding a warning that casual adjournments will not be tolerated. He made it clear that appeals set for trial are expected to proceed unless there are legitimate reasons as to why they cannot be heard. Justice Evans characterized delay as a cancer that can eat away at the effectiveness of the judicial system if allowed to take root, signaling his commitment to swift and efficient justice.

A Seamless Transition

The transition from Justice Isaacs to Justice Evans represents continuity in excellence for the Court of Appeal. Both jurists share a commitment to timely decision-making, efficiency, and the highest standards of judicial conduct.

The Attorney General aptly summarized the significance of this transition when he noted that while The Bahamas Judiciary loses a wealth of experience and knowledge that cannot easily be replaced with Justice Isaacs' retirement, Justice Isaacs stands as an example to many young lawyers that public service can be a rewarding and fulfilling career.

As The Bahamas continues its journey of judicial modernization and transformation, the Court of Appeal stands poised to continue delivering justice efficiently and effectively under the leadership of Justice Milton Evans, building upon the strong foundation established by his predecessor.

The Special Sitting on 20 January 2025, and the subsequent swearing-in ceremony on 27 January 2025, mark an important chapter in the history of The Bahamas' appellate court, honoring past excellence while embracing future promise.



BAHAMIAN JUDGES CONTINUE TO SERVE WITH DISTINCTION IN REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Bahamian judges have continued to serve with distinction not only domestically, but also within regional judicial institutions across the Commonwealth Caribbean. Notably, the Court of Appeal of The Turks and Caicos Islands has benefitted from the service of several eminent Bahamian jurists. In 2017, Ret. Justice K. Neville Adderley was appointed a non-resident Justice of Appeal to the Court of Appeal of the Turks and Caicos Islands and later promoted President the Court of Appeal in 2021.

Sir Ian Winder also served as a Justice of Appeal in The Turks and Caicos, prior to his elevation to Chief Justice of The Bahamas. Justice of Appeal Bernard Turner and Justice of Appeal Indra Charles currently serve in that court.

On 16 October 2025, Justice Indra Charles was appointed Justice of Appeal of the Court of Appeal of The Turks and Caicos Islands by Her Excellency Daniel Selvaratnam, Governor General of The Turks and Caicos Islands.



Justice Bernard Turner was appointed Chairman of The Turks and Caicos Integrity Commission.



In Bermuda, President Milton Evans serves on the Bermuda Ethics Committee, and Justice Loren Klein serves on Bermuda's Boundaries Commission.

These appointments reflect the high esteem in which Bahamian jurists are held and underscore their sustained contributions to the administration of justice and ethical governance throughout the region.



JUDICIARY
THE BAHAMAS

05

BJEI REPORT



www.courts.bs
www.courtsofappeal.org.bs



[@BAHJudiciary](https://twitter.com/BAHJudiciary)



[BAHJudiciary](https://www.facebook.com/BAHJudiciary)



2025

Bahamas Judiciary
Annual Report

THE BAHAMAS JUDICIAL EDUCATION INSTITUTE

THE BAHAMAS JUDICIAL EDUCATION INSTITUTE



Vice President (Operations)

Justice Camille Darville Gomez

The Bahamas Judicial Education Institute (BJEI) remains steadfast in its vision of “Enhancing the delivery of justice through education and training.” As we reflect on the past year, we acknowledge that not all of our anticipated objectives were realized. The hiring of a full-time training officer and the establishment of a dedicated website, both identified in last year’s report as strategic priorities, remain outstanding. Yet, this reality underscores the dynamic nature of institutional growth: while some goals require more time and resources, others have been successfully advanced.

In 2025, the BJEI proudly highlights several landmark accomplishments. Chief among them is the publication of two significant works: Courts of The Bahamas and the Criminal Bench Book. These publications represent enduring contributions to the body of judicial resources and provide practical guidance for the Judiciary. Complementing these scholarly achievements, the Institute also delivered a training calendar, ensuring that judicial officers and non-judicial staff continued to benefit from structured, relevant, and impactful educational opportunities throughout the year.

HIGHLIGHTS OF TRAINING AND ACTIVITIES IN 2025

Judicial Officers

Annual Judicial Officers’ Training Seminar, held on 6-7 January 2025 at the Paul H. Farquharson Conference Centre. The theme, “Equipped to Dispense Justice – Judicial Competencies and Wellbeing,” was explored by dynamic speakers both in person and virtually over two days. Attendance was strong, with approximately 90% of Judicial Officers participating across both days.

Day One Highlights

- **Keynote:** Hon. Mr. Justice Peter Jamadar, Caribbean Court of Justice
“Justice 360: Wellbeing at the Centre.”

○ **Presentations:**

- Hon. Sir Ian Winder Kt., Chief Justice – “Legislative & Rules Update.”
- Hon. Mr. Justice Francis Belle, Justice of Appeal, Court of Appeal, Barbados – “Court Mandated Mediation – An Effective Tool in Resolving Disputes and Clearing Backlogs.”

○ **Breakout Sessions:**

- “Assessing Costs” – Mr. Jonathan Deal, Assistant Registrar.
- “Plea Discussions – Judicial Input” – Hon. Madam Justice Maxine Jackson, Supreme Court of Jamaica.

○ **Innovation & Technology:**

- Mr. Bevil Wooding, Executive Director, Caribbean Agency for Justice Solutions – “AI – A Tool in the Justice System.”
- Mr. Andre Rojas, Sr. Account Executive of Stenograph – Demonstration of MAXScribe software.

Day Two Highlights

○ **Presentations:**

- Hon. Madam Justice Maxine Jackson, Supreme Court of Jamaica – “Digital Forensic Evidence – Civil & Criminal Trials.”
- Hon. Madam Justice Marva McDonald Bishop, OJ CD, President, Court of Appeal of Jamaica – “Judicial Ethics” and “Expert Evidence – Civil & Criminal Trials.”
- Hon. Mr. Justice Jon Isaacs, MB, President, Court of Appeal (as he then was) – “Criminal & Civil Contempt.”

○ **Public Health & Law:**

- Dr. Phillip Swann, Acting Director of Public Health, Ministry of Health and Wellness – “The New Mental Health Act (2022).”
- Dr. Michael Darville, Minister of Health and Wellness, joined discussions.

○ **Closing Session:**

- Mr. Craig Walkine, Outdoor Fitness Bahamas – “Judicial Wellness – Physical Wellbeing” with interactive movement exercises “Lunch and learn with Vlex Justis March 2025”

Lunch and Learn with Vlex Justis

March, 2025

Judges were introduced to Vincent AI, a powerful legal research tool developed by vLex to support tasks such as advanced research and document analysis. It can assist judicial officers in preparing judgments by streamlining research and efficiently organizing case law. The Chief Justice had foreshadowed its acquisition as part of a broader vision to strengthen judgment

“Gender Equality & Justice Training” – conducted by UN CEDAW, June 2025

The **United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** is an international treaty adopted in 1979 and often described as the international bill of rights for women. It requires countries to eliminate discrimination and promote gender equality in law, policy, and practice. By hosting **UN CEDAW training in 2025**, the BJEI ensured that judicial officers are equipped with the knowledge and best practices to align Bahamian jurisprudence with international standards on gender equality and justice.

The objective of the training was to strengthen judges' capacity to apply a gender perspective in decision-making and to interpret domestic laws in line with CEDAW and other human rights principles. The program addressed gender stereotypes and cultural norms that affect the delivery of justice, reviewed national laws and standards on equality, developed indicators for monitoring gender mainstreaming, and equipped judges to use international legal instruments to eliminate bias and promote substantive gender equality in the Judiciary.

Conference of Caribbean Chief Justices and Heads of Judiciary

June 2025

The Bahamas played host to the annual conference of the Caribbean Chief Justices and Heads of Judiciary under the theme “Judiciaries in Transition.” The conference convened leaders directly responsible for implementing policies, rules, and procedures that sustain the rule of law across the region.

The Institute played a key role in coordinating the educational program of the Conference, ensuring that the sessions were structured to maximize learning and engagement. In addition, the Institute was directly responsible for the creation and publication of the official Program, further reinforcing its central contribution to the success of the event.

Genes and Justice – DNA Evidence Training

November 2025

A groundbreaking training session was convened on the use of DNA evidence in criminal and civil trials, underscoring its growing importance in modern adjudication. The program explored diverse themes, including:

- The Science behind the Swab: Scientific truths about DNA testing
- Guilt by Genetics: Admissibility and standards of DNA evidence in criminal adjudication
- Genetic Betrayal: Paternity fraud claims and their impact on justice
- Two local case studies, including the high-profile matter involving Anna Nicole

The session was enriched by contributions from a laboratory professional and a member of the Royal Bahamas Police Force, alongside judges from the Bench and a senior attorney from the Office of the Attorney General. Together, they provided valuable insight into the evolving role DNA evidence will continue to play in judicial proceedings, bridging science and law to ensure fairness and accuracy in the administration of justice.

NON-JUDICIAL OFFICERS

Support Sessions for Criminal Division Clerks

April 2025

A dedicated session was introduced for clerks in the Criminal Division in recognition of the emotional impact of judicial work. These clerks are routinely exposed to difficult and emotionally charged testimony, often containing graphic and distressing details. The initiative was designed to provide a safe and supportive space where clerks could openly share their experiences and feelings.

These sessions are expected to continue in 2026, further reinforcing the support systems available to non-judicial staff and promoting their overall well-being.

New Staff Orientation Training

August 2025

The week-long new staff Orientation Training program provided an introduction to the various court areas and offered practical training on the duties associated with each category of new staff, including court clerks, registry staff, and secretaries. This initiative ensured that new employees were equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their roles effectively, while also fostering a deeper understanding of the court's operations and institutional culture.

Court Reporter Upskilling Training

November 2025

Case CATalyst—the industry-standard software used by court reporters for real-time transcription—had been upgraded, but not all of the reporters had received training on its new features. To address this, an upskilling program was introduced to ensure that all court reporters could fully benefit from the system's advancements.

The training emphasized enhancing transcription skills and streamlining the editing process, with the goal of improving both efficiency and accuracy in court reporting.

OTHER INITIATIVES

International Day for Judicial Wellbeing

July 2025

On 25 July 2025, in observance of the inaugural International Day for Judicial Well-Being, the Institute organized health checks across the various courts in Abaco, Grand Bahama, and New Providence. In addition, 30-minute movement sessions were offered, tailored to beginners, intermediate, and advanced participants, encouraging physical activity as a complement to mental wellness. This initiative, delivered in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Wellness, marked a significant step in normalizing judicial wellness and is expected to continue annually.



JUSTConnect

JUSTConnect is a regional online judicial education platform launched in 2023 to strengthen collaboration among Caribbean judiciaries. The Bahamas joined in 2024, following Barbados, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago, and has since been onboarding its judicial officers to access self-paced courses and recorded training developed by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). Other judiciaries across the region have also contributed their own training materials, creating a shared library of best practices.

Once every judicial officer has been onboarded, the platform will, in effect, replace or at least reduce the immediate need for a dedicated website. Through JUSTConnect, The Bahamas can host programs tailored specifically to its Judiciary while also benefiting from and contributing to the wider regional library. It is envisioned that non-judicial staff will also gain access, in the future, ensuring their participation in programs designed to deliver mutual benefit across the Judiciary.

A regional seminar, originally planned for 2025, is now scheduled for March 27, 2026, and is expected to further deepen engagement among participating jurisdictions. This initiative represents a sustainable, technology-driven solution for ongoing professional development in the region.

PUBLICATIONS

“Courts in The Bahamas”

June 2025

Published in June to coincide with the Judiciary’s hosting of the Conference of Caribbean Chief Justices and Heads of Judiciary. This concise volume (under 100 pages) offers a glimpse into the rich history and traditions of The Bahamas’ Judiciary. It provides valuable insight into the evolution of the courts and their current role within the nation’s system of governance.

“The Bahamas Criminal Bench Book”

December 2025 (online version with hard copies available in February 2026). In collaboration with the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO), the BJEI produced the Bahamas Criminal Bench Book in December — a milestone achievement for the Judiciary. Scheduled for rollout in 2026, this resource will serve as a foundation for consistency and clarity in criminal jurisprudence in The Bahamas.

Key Partnerships and Support

The Bahamas Judicial Education Institute (BJEI) acknowledges the invaluable contributions of partner organizations and agencies whose support strengthened training and development initiatives in 2025:

Regional and International Partners

- Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO)
- National Center for State Courts (NCSC)
- U.S. Embassy
- Other partner organizations providing virtual access and underwriting in-person attendance

Regional and International Partners

- Governmental Partners
- Ministry of Health
- Royal Bahamas Police Force
- Royal Bahamas Defence Force
- Other governmental agencies providing logistical and operational support

International Day for Judicial Well-Being Donors

Organizations and businesses whose generous donations supported the successful observance of the International Day for Judicial Well-Being.

These partnerships and donations ensured the success of the Institute's programs and reinforced its mission to advance judicial education, professional development, and institutional well-being.

Looking Ahead

As the BJEI looks toward 2026, our focus is on building on the achievements of the past year while advancing the goals ahead. The appointment of a full-time Training Officer remains a priority, representing a critical step toward sustainability and accessibility. However, since the Institute stands to benefit significantly from its integration into JUSTConnect, greater emphasis will be placed on onboarding judicial officers and providing the necessary support to ensure that, once registered, they can access the site and fully participate in the diverse training programs available.

Another key priority is the design of a year-round training calendar for both judicial and non-judicial staff, ensuring continuous professional development across all levels of the Judiciary. Together, these initiatives reflect the Institute's commitment to strengthening capacity, fostering resilience, and advancing judicial education in The Bahamas.



JUDICIARY
THE BAHAMAS

06

**JUDICIAL
HIGHLIGHTS**



www.courts.bs
www.courtsofappeal.org.bs



@BAHJudiciary



BAHJudiciary



2025

Bahamas Judiciary
Annual Report

- **Courtesy Visits**
- **Opening of The Legal Year Speech 2025**
- **Judicial Historical Nuggets!**

COURTESY VISITS

British High Commissioner Smita Rossetti's courtesy visit to Chief Justice Sir Ian Winder, Kt.



US Ambassador Herschell Walker's courtesy visit to Chief Justice Sir Ian Winder, Kt., and President of the Court of Appeal Justice Milton Evans.



OPENING OF THE LEGAL YEAR SPEECH 2025

Hon. Chief Justice Ian Winder



My Lords, My Ladies, other Judicial Officers, Mr. Attorney, President of The Bahamas Bar Association, and members of Bar Council, Counsel and Attorneys, guests, ladies and gentlemen. Under the Supreme Court Act, the sittings of the Court commence on the second Wednesday in January. The growing size of our bench and bar has caused the statutory sittings of the Court to continue to take place in meeting spaces such as this one rather than our traditional accommodation in the main Supreme Court. We await the construction of the new Supreme Complex and the opportunity to return to a more traditional setting. Today is the third occasion on which, as Head of the Judiciary, I have the pleasure and duty to welcome you and thank you for taking the time to share this occasion. It is always appropriate to begin such an address by expressing thanks to the Almighty God for His abundant mercies. I continue to be both humbled and honoured to have been given the opportunity to serve The Bahamas as her Chief Justice. I remain ever thankful for the support of my family, colleagues, and friends.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The week began with the Annual Red Mass Service at St Francis Xavier Cathedral on Sunday past, where we received the prayers and fellowship of His Grace, the Most Reverend Patrick Pinder, Archbishop of the Catholic Diocese of Nassau, invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit on the work of the courts. This morning, we gratefully received the spirited charge of the Anglican Bishop, the Rt. Rev'd Laish Boyd, who challenged us to aim high and be our best selves. I thank him and the Dean of Christ Church Cathedral for so graciously accommodating us for our annual official service.

I wish to welcome the new Commissioner of Police, Ms Shanta Knowles, and to congratulate her on her historic appointment as the first female Commissioner of Police. We have worked very well in the past and look forward to working with her in this new role. She takes over an organization that is not experiencing its strongest days, but an organization that we, as a people, cannot allow to fail. There are so many talented, honest, decent men and women in the Royal Bahamas Police Force whose hard work and efforts have been overshadowed by recent events. Commissioner Knowles is the embodiment of these fine men and women. As she rebuilds the trust of the Bahamian people, I pledge to her the full support of my office and of the judiciary as we carry out our mutual mandates. The Commissioner of Police is the Provost Marshal for the Court, and for this reason, we welcome her presence sitting with us in these ceremonies. I wish to thank her for the usual excellent presentation of the guard of honour by the Internal Security Division, accompanied by the Police Force Band. I also wish to express our appreciation for the facilitation of our procession by the Traffic Division this morning. Permit me to recognize the presence of the President of the Court of Appeal of Jamaica, the Hon Justice Marva McDonald Bishop OJ CD, and her delegation.

Justice McDonald Bishop, a special friend to the judiciary of The Bahamas, provided training support at our recently concluded annual Judicial Training Conference.

In 2024, in the Court of Appeal, we said farewell to former President Sir Michael Barnett, who had reached the constitutionally mandated retirement age. In June, a special sitting was convened to provide a fitting farewell for an exceptional jurist. The Hon. Mr. Justice Jon Isaacs succeeded Sir Michael as President. Justice Isaacs is expected to demit office at the end of this month and, as the Court of Appeal will convene a special sitting to honour Mr Justice Isaacs, I will not preempt what I hope to say during that sitting. I will nonetheless use this occasion to publicly recognize his commitment and long service to the people of The Bahamas in so many diverse roles: as a law officer of the Crown, Chief Magistrate, Senior Justice of the Supreme Court, Justice of Appeal, and President of the Court of Appeal. I wish him well in the next chapters of his life and look forward to working with his successor in office.

Since last year's opening, we welcomed to the Supreme Court bench Justices Joyann Ferguson, Andrew McKinney, Darron Ellis, Constance Delancy, Dale Fitzpatrick, and Leif Farquharson KC. Justice Delancy and Ferguson are well known to you. Justice Delancy is the former Registrar of the Supreme Court, and Justice Ferguson, who had previously acted in the post, joined the Supreme Court bench from the Magistracy, having been the longest serving Chief Magistrate.

Justices McKinney and Farquharson join the bench after distinguished careers at the private bar. Justice Farquharson, who began his practice at the public bar, had been elevated to membership in the exclusive inner bar. Justice Ellis joined the bench following a diverse career that included service at the private bar, in academia, and in the magistracy. Justice Fitzpatrick, a Canadian, joins The Bahamas' bench following a stint on the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. He had previously spent 12 years on the Superior Court of Ontario, Canada. In February 2025, we will bid farewell to Madam Justice Donna Newton, who will achieve the constitutionally mandated retirement age. Justice Newton was appointed to the Supreme Court bench in 2018 but had previously served as Assistant Registrar, Deputy Registrar, and Registrar in the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal. Justice Newton found her niche in the Family Division of the Court and was the first Hague Network judge for The Bahamas. We thank her for her contribution to the judiciary and wish her well in her retirement. I wish to thank Industrial Tribunal President Indira Demeritte Francis for agreeing to serve as an Acting Justice of the Supreme Court during 2024 in the Civil Divisions of the Court in Grand Bahama.

We also welcome to the Supreme Court new Assistant Registrars Rosanne Sweeting, Indy Hunter, Jonathan Deal, and Akiera Martin. On the elevation of Registrar Delancy to the Supreme Court bench, Deputy Registrar Renaldo Tooté was appointed to act as the Registrar of the Supreme Court. We wish him well in this new role and look forward to his continued service.

In the Magistracy during 2024, Attorney Roberto Reckley was confirmed as the Chief Magistrate on the elevation of Justice Ferguson. Subusola Swain and Charlton Smith were appointed as acting Deputy Chief Magistrates. Magistrates Algenon Allen Jr., Kendra Kelly, and Raquel Whyms were promoted to Senior Magistrates, Aniska Isaacs was seconded from the Court of Appeal as an acting Senior Magistrate. Kevin Farrington, Myles Parker, and Petrocelli Edwards were appointed as Acting Magistrates. We congratulate them all on their appointments. The JLSC will advertise in an effort to fill two vacancies for Magistrates within the coming months.

I also wish to thank Viola Major and Jonathan Deal, who both acted for short stints in the Magistracy during 2024. We also said farewell to Judicial Counsels RaSean Longley and Glen Curry, who have moved to the private sector. We thank them for their contributions and wish them well in their new careers at the private bar. On that note, I make a special appeal to young lawyers to consider a stint as a judicial research counsel, whether in the Court of Appeal or the Supreme Court. It is an excellent initial exposure for young lawyers to the practice of law, without the pressure of firm life or of clients. The training and insights gained have been described as invaluable.

In 2024, several judicial officers and former judicial officers were recognized with National Honours. Retired Senior Justice Estelle Gray Evans, Justice Franklyn Williams, and Industrial Tribunal President Indira Demeritte Francis were each awarded the Order of The Bahamas in ceremonies held in October 2024.

On 12 August 2024, the Judiciary was saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Deputy Chief Magistrate Debbye Ferguson, who died in office. DCM Ferguson, a treasured member of the Judiciary team, had served as a Magistrate for over 20 years, all of which was in Grand Bahama. She will be sorely missed, and we continue to keep her family and friends in our prayers.

CRIMINAL COURTS

The Criminal Courts continue to receive focused attention. Since our last opening ceremony, we have introduced two additional Criminal Supreme Courts to provide additional capacity. One additional court in Grand Bahama and another in New Providence.

In 2024, deliberate efforts were taken to engage in Criminal Justice Reform in the Supreme Court. Most notable of these efforts was the passage of the Supreme Court Amendment Act 2024. The Supreme Court Amendment Act 2024 has permitted the Supreme Court Rules Committee to pass the Supreme Court (Criminal Case Management) (Amendment) Rules 2024. These new rules, which came into force on 2 January 2025, are intended to promote more efficient and effective case management in criminal matters by providing for the Defence Statement and a mechanism for Pre-trial Evidentiary Hearings.

The Defence Statement, along with the full disclosure obligations of the prosecution, allows for early identification of the issues in the case by the trial judge and therefore provides for more meaningful case management. Pre-trial evidentiary hearings would allow evidentiary and admissibility challenges to take place before having to empanel a jury. These hearings could even obviate the need for a jury to be ultimately empaneled in circumstances where the determination of the issue may decide the entire case, resulting in a withdrawal or a plea agreement. At the very least, it shortens the length of a jury empaneled trial.

In advance of the bringing into force of the new rules, a period of sensitization and meaningful engagement took place amongst criminal justice stakeholders. That engagement included a 2-day training seminar, facilitated by the leading UK Counsel, which involved the judiciary, prosecutors, and the defence bar. In 2024, we established a dedicated Bail Court to hear all new bail applications in the Supreme Court. To support the establishment of the Bail Court and the registry functions, I issued a Practice Direction for Approved Surety Requirements on Applications for Bail. Justice Brathwaite is the first judge to sit in that court. The purpose of the dedicated Bail court was not only to bring focused attention to the bail process but to ensure consistency in bail decisions.

In order to support the established system of legal aid in criminal matters and to encourage practitioners to pursue criminal law as a practice area, we increased the fees paid for criminal legal briefs. A practice guidance note was issued in May 2024 to provide a more structured system for payment to lawyers who engage in this most important work. Now that criminal case management rules have been passed, evidentiary hearings would attract the same fees as trial days.

BENCH BOOK

A draft bench book for the criminal courts had been prepared by the Criminal Division. A decision was taken to enlist professional editing and publication services for the production of the work. Justice Peter Jamadar of the CCJ and Elron Elahie of the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers, who spearheaded the joint bench book for Guyana, Belize, and Barbados, have agreed to assist in this project. We look forward to receiving a professionally edited document, complete with hyperlinks, cross-references, and additional chapters on criminal case management by the summer of this year. Justice Renae McKay continues to be the judiciary's liaison person for this project.

SENTENCING GUIDELINES

The Sentencing Guidelines Commission was established in April 2024 and is being chaired by Sir Michael Barnett. The members of the Commission include Senior Justice Cheryl Grant Thompson as Deputy Chairman, Justice of Appeal Bernard Turner. Director of Public Prosecutions Cordell Frazier, Chief Magistrate. Roberto Reckley, Mr. Stanley Rolle of the Public Defender's Office, Miss Miranda Adderley as the nominee of the Bahamas Bar Association, Rev Carla Culmer of the religious community, and Assistant Director of Social Services, Mrs. Sonia Saunders. The Secretary and research counsel to the Commission are Miss Kristina Wallace Whitfield and Shona Richards, respectively. The Commission is presently considering a first draft of the guidelines and is expected to report soon.

CIVIL DIVISIONS

In addition to the Supreme Court (Criminal Case Management) (Amendment) Rules 2024, the Rules Committee passed The Supreme Court (Provost Marshal Fees) Rules 2024 and The Supreme Court (Enforcement of Orders and Awards of the Industrial Tribunal) Rules, 2024. They are both expected to be brought into force this month. Practice Directions have also been issued for Fixed Dates Claims, and for a further allocation of work of the Court between Judges and Registrars.

THE FAMILY COURT

On 19 December 2024, the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister officially opened the Family Court Complex on Bernard Road. The Supreme Court Family and Probate Registries were relocated to the Complex in November 2024 in advance of the complete relocation of the Magistrate's Family and Domestic Courts and the Family and Probate Divisions of the Supreme Court later this month. In addition to modern, fit-for-purpose court spaces and registries, provision in the complex is made for all of the attendant wrap-around services, such as the Department of Social Services, the Police, and Daycare/Nursery facilities. The complex will also house a juvenile court and a Mediation Center, which we expect will be completed by the summer of 2025. The judiciary is extremely grateful to the executive for the considerable infrastructural investment in this complex.

During 2025, I propose to establish a separate listing office for the Family Court to provide for greater efficiencies across all civil divisions. The completion of the Mediation Center will pave the way for the introduction of the long-awaited Court-connected mediation component of the CPR in 2025. This will allow us to advance mediation as a viable means to help relieve the stress on the court system. The mediation center will provide a space for the mediation of disputes of both a civil and family nature. The issuance of a practice direction will allow for the appointment of a Mediation Coordinator to manage the court-connected mediation process for the Courts. We intend to capitalize on the many talented, trained mediation professionals in the jurisdiction.

COURT TECHNOLOGY

Another significant milestone in 2024 was the bringing into force of The Electronic Case Management Rules 2023 on 1 February 2024. On 1 February 2024, the Supreme Court commenced the electronic filing of court documents remotely onto the Judiciary's CURIA E-Filing platform for the first time. The electronic platform provides a myriad of advantages: reduces paper usage and manual processing of case files; improves security by eliminating the incidents of lost or misplaced files; eliminates the need to physically transport files between judicial officers; improves accessibility by giving 24 hours access to the registry and the court files by judicial officers and lawyers; convenience as attorneys can immediately file documents directly into the portal from their chambers; instant updating as electronic filing means that files are immediately updated and the updates immediately available to all relevant parties; and strengthens financial accountability. The system is being configured for the Court of Appeal, and we expect to extend the platform to the Court of Appeal by the end of the first quarter of 2025. I wish to express my gratitude to Assistant Registrars Rosanne Sweeting and Indy Hunter, who have been managing the newly created E-Filing Registry and providing hands-on support in helping users access and utilize the platform.

The year 2025 will mark a new phase in the recording of proceedings before the courts. The magistrates are now completely dependent on the recording of court proceedings digitally. Except in limited circumstances, the use of stenographers will only be a requirement in criminal trials and evidentiary hearings. The civil and family divisions of the Supreme Court, bail applications, and criminal case management hearings will become completely dependent on the use of digital recording apparatus. We have been steadily building our transcription capacity and have acquired new software to be able to provide substantial assistance to our existing cadre of stenographers.

MAGISTRATES COURTS

Firearms Court

In 2023, a dedicated Firearms Court was established on a part-time basis on similar terms to the Traffic Court. The Court has proven to be extremely effective and will be established on a full-time basis with effect from 20 January 2025, as the courtroom space becomes available due to the establishment of the Family Court.

Magistrates Civil Claims Court

In 2024, Magistrates began to hear civil disputes of up to \$20,000. This empowered Magistrates to preside over a broader spectrum of civil matters, facilitating swifter and more accessible resolution for individuals and businesses alike. With the enhanced jurisdiction, the Magistrates' Court emerged as a vital avenue for seeking justice and resolving disputes efficiently. In an effort towards enhancing accessibility and efficiency in legal proceedings, we established the first full-time day court dedicated exclusively to civil disputes. We also added, as of 1 November 2024, an additional night in the civil court. It is hoped that this will streamline the civil litigation processes and alleviate some of the burden on Supreme Court schedules.

Family Island Magistrates

The year 2024 saw the completion of the first full year of the return of Family Island Administrators hearing criminal and family cases in their jurisdictions as Magistrates once again. In September 2024, we began a more intensive focus on family island communities by having the Magistrate spend a longer period in the islands. Senior Magistrate McKinney spent three months across the island of Eleuthera during the last quarter of 2024. He also spent a month on the island of Andros, and a complete schedule has been developed for 2025. In 2025, we intend to leverage virtual technology to augment the hearing of criminal matters in the family islands.

Judicial Education

The Bahamas Judicial Education Institute conducted several key training initiatives during the course of the year. A four-day training program for judicial officers and judicial research counsel, facilitated by the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO), was held on January 15-18, 2024, under the theme, “Strengthening the Judicial Office”. The two-day training program for judicial officers and criminal practitioners on the new Criminal Case Management Rules. In September 2024, a Family Division Workshop was conducted on Domestic Violence Orders. In December 2024, a two-day orientation program was conducted for newly appointed Judges and Magistrates. Orientation sessions and training sessions on the digital court reporting and the electronic case management systems were conducted throughout the course of the year. I wish to thank Justices Darville Gomez and Card Stubbs for their leadership of the Institute.

Judicial officers were afforded the opportunity to attend several training programs and conferences overseas in 2024. These included the IP Caselaw Conference in Kingston, Jamaica; the ILEA training course in El Salvador; UWI, Caribbean Commercial Law Workshop, in Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago; Training on Civil Forfeiture by the National Center for State Courts in Miami, Florida; and the Commonwealth Magistrates and Judges Association Annual Conference in Kigali, Rwanda; International Association for Court Administrators Conference, Singapore; International Association of Judicial Trainers Conference in Seoul, Korea; Global Programme on Criminal Network Disruption, in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago; and the E-courts Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. While some of the training was funded by the judiciary, regional and international agencies, a considerable number of the overseas training courses were undertaken at the expense and support of the US Embassy here in Nassau.

Without that support, our attendance and participation in these valuable training opportunities would not have been possible, considering our budgetary constraints. I again wish to publicly express our thanks and gratitude to Charge d’Affairs Ms Kimberly Furnish and her team on behalf of the judiciary for the continued assistance of the US Embassy in these initiatives, which continue to deepen an already strong partnership. As Chief Justice, I attended the annual Conference of Caribbean Heads of Judiciaries in Kingston, Jamaica, in June 2024. The Head of Judiciaries conference was attended by nine other heads of judiciaries from across the Caribbean. The theme of the conference was “Judicial Leadership in a Changing Environment. It provided an important forum for the Heads of Judiciaries to consult and collaborate towards the improvement of access to justice for citizens of the Region. The 2025 conference will be hosted by The Bahamas Judiciary, and we look forward to welcoming the regional heads to our shores.

The Judicial Plant

The Honourable Attorney General has spoken to the developments relative to the proposed Supreme Court Complex. I will only say that we look forward with great anticipation to the benefits which a modern court facility, outfitted with adequate technology and facilities to support the work of the judiciary. A modern Court complex will centralize services and permit greater and more efficient use of resources, and harness the benefits of technology. He has also spoken of the new facilities for a commercial court, and we look forward to working with him on this project. Other capital works in the Judiciary included significant upgrades at the Supreme Court Annex 1, to which the Office of the Chief Justice has been relocated. This has permitted the utilization of an additional criminal court in the Hansard Building. The internal renovations to Annex I, which involved each floor, have been substantially completed. Work on the basement and the roof continues. It is hoped that some work on Annex II could progress thereafter.

The Court Services Act

Undoubtedly, the most significant event of 2024 was the bringing into force of the Court Services Act 2023. The Act came into effect on 1 July 2024. This landmark and transformative legislation represents a significant step forward in modernizing and improving the efficiency of our judicial system. The objectives of the Act include: enhancing the independence of the judiciary by placing the courts under the administration of an autonomous body; conferring on such body the power to provide courts with administrative facilities and services necessary for the proper administration of justice; to enable the judiciary to manage its administrative and financial affairs and to promote transparency and accountability in the administration of justice. The Act established the Court Services Council, which is responsible for providing administration and support services for the courts for the management of all matters related to the administration of the courts.

The first members of the Board of Directors of the Council were myself, as Chairman, President of the Court of Appeal, Mr. Justice Jon Isaacs, Madam Justice Guillimina Archer-Minns, the Supreme Court Registrar, Mrs. Constance Delancy, Chief Magistrate, Mr. Roberto Reckley, Mr. Herbert Cash, CPA, Mrs. Khrystle Rutherford-Ferguson, President of The Bahamas Bar Association, Mr. Kahlil Parker KC and Court of Appeal Registrar, Miss Kristina Wallace Whitfield. The Board of Directors of the Council is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Act and has been busy developing the initial infrastructure of the Council and managing the transition process.

I publicly express my thanks and gratitude to the Board of Directors for their work in 2024 and for their dedication to this process. The Board appointed Delgado Forbes, Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister, to be the Chief Executive Officer, on secondment. We have agreed to the appointment of a new CFO who is expected to take office on 13 January, on secondment from the Ministry of Finance. The Board has approved the new HR Policies and is finalizing the new posts and salary scales. This will permit the Council to begin making offers of employment to staff.

The transition to the Council has not been without its challenges, the most notable of which has been the loss of some of our most valued and cherished team members who have chosen to remain in the Public Service. We respect their decision and wish them well in their new career paths. I also wish to publicly thank them all for their contributions over the years in the development of the Judiciary.

Annual Report

I commend to you the 2024 Annual Report, which covers the work of the Courts during the past year. It also contains important information and statistics about the work and operations of the Courts. As usual, it will be available in a digital format on the Court's Website and in hard copy. I wish to formally register my thanks and appreciation to the team responsible for preparing the Annual Report, spearheaded by Justice Lewis Johnson, Justices Delancy, and Registrar Tooté. I should also extend my thanks to the Director of Court Services, Ms. Mildred Bodie, the Registrars and their teams, including the staff in my chambers, for the enormous work done in bringing off today's proceedings.

Conclusion

As I conclude, I will pause to express my gratitude and thanks to the Minister of Finance, the Rt Hon. Prime Minister, and to the Financial Secretary, Mr. Simon Wilson, for the provision of significant needed capital expenditure for the judiciary during the course of the year and for the expenditure required in the transition to the Court Services Council.

I wish to thank my colleagues in the Judicial and Legal Services Commission, Justice of Appeal Turner, Father James Moultrie, Mrs. Christel Sands-Feaste, and Mr. Andre Rahming for their service in 2024. I also wish to express my gratitude to my colleagues on the Rules Committee, Justice Indra Charles, Mr. Kahlil Parker KC, Miss Tleca Rolle, and Mr. Terry North for their work in 2024. I wish to thank the President of the Bar, Mr. Khalil Parker KC, and his hardworking Bar Council for partnering with us during the course of 2024. I look forward to continuing our partnership in 2025. Last year required significant engagement between us across a range of areas of mutual interest. Mr. Parker, as President, sits on the Rules Committee and the Court Services Council. I always value the President's valuable contribution and wise counsel in moving the judiciary forward.

I wish to express my thanks and gratitude to the Hon. Attorney General, the leader of the Bar, and his team at OAG, including the law reform team. The Hon. Attorney General continues to be extremely supportive of all of our initiatives and projects. His ideas are progressive, and his desire for the advancement of the judiciary and the justice system remains steadfast. In the transition to the Court Services Council, there was considerable engagement with the AG to ensure that the process would move as smoothly as possible. We look forward to working with the OAG in 2025 to achieve our shared goals of enhancing the administration of justice. I wish to publicly extend congratulations to the new Director of Public Prosecutions, Miss Cordell Frazier, and the new Director of Legal Affairs, Mrs. Danya Parker. Miss Frazier and Mrs. Parker are both well prepared for their new roles, and I have every confidence that the ODPP and the Legal Department will continue to thrive under their leadership. I remain privileged to have been afforded the opportunity to lead the talented judicial officers and staff that make up the judiciary across The Bahamas. I again publicly express my thanks for all that they do to ensure that we live up to the constitutional mandate of an independent, impartial, and fearless judiciary. Finally, I give special thanks to the senior management team of the judiciary, comprising Senior Justices Fraser and Grant Thompson, Registrars Delancy and Tooté, Chief Magistrate Reckley, the Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Delgado Forbes, and their teams. With these words, then, I declare the 2025 Legal Year officially open.

JUDICIAL HISTORICAL NUGGETS!

— Nicoya Neilly



◆ DID YOU KNOW THAT “TWENTY YEARS AGO” -

- ◆ The 7th Annual Conference of CARICOM Heads of Judiciary was held at the Our Lucaya Resort in Grand Bahama from 24 to 27 February 2005, under the chairmanship of the Hon. Sir Burton Hall.





- ◆ That the Hon. Madam Justice Anita Allen was conferred with the title of Senior Justice of the Supreme Court with effect from 1 October 2005.
- ◆ Mr. Norris Rexford Carroll was appointed to act as Justice of the Supreme Court with effect from 3 October 2005.

Participants included: the Right Hon. Michael de la Bastide, President of the Caribbean Court of Justice; the Hon. Sir David Simmons, Chief Justice of Barbados; the Hon. Madam Justice Desiree Bernard, Chancellor of the Judiciary of Guyana; the Hon. Mr. Justice Carl Singh, Chief Justice of Guyana; the Hon. Mr. Justice Lensley Wolfe, Chief Justice of Jamaica; the Hon. Dr. Abdulai Conteh, Chief Justice of Belize; the Hon. Mr. Justice Adrian Saunders, Acting Chief Justice of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States; the Hon. Mr. Justice Christopher Gardner, Chief Justice of the Turks and Caicos Islands and the Hon. Mr. Justice Anthony Smellie, Chief Justice of the Cayman Islands.

- ◆ The Maxwell J. Thompson Award for Excellence, an award sponsored by the Judges of the Supreme Court and named in honour of the late Mr. Maxwell J. Thompson OBE, was presented at the Judiciary's Annual Luncheon to staff members, being:

Mr. Nolan Scavella – Supreme Court, New Providence

Mrs. Gwendolyn Lewis – Supreme Court, Grand Bahama

Mr. Hesley Rolle- Magistrates' Court, Grand Bahama



- ◆ That on 7 June 2005, the Attorney General signed the contract to commence building the new Magistrates' Court Complex at South Street, and that ground had been broken, and building had begun.



- ◆ In 2005, Practice Direction 1 of 2005, designated colours for file folders and jackets for each division of the Court as indicated:

➤ Appeals (APP)	• White
➤ Commercial (COM)	• Yellow
➤ Commercial- Labour (COM/lab)	• Purple
➤ Common Law & Equity (CLE)	• Green
➤ Criminal (CRI)	• Red
➤ Family (FAM)	• Blue
➤ Probate (PRO)	• Brown
➤ Public Law (PUB)	• Orange



JUDICIARY
THE BAHAMAS

07

2025
CONFERENCES
AND TRAININGS



www.courts.bs
www.courtsofappeal.org.bs



[@BAHJudiciary](https://twitter.com/BAHJudiciary)



[BAHJudiciary](https://www.facebook.com/BAHJudiciary)



2025

Bahamas Judiciary
Annual Report

Conferences and Training

2025 CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS

DATE	DESCRIPTION	NAME OF ATTENDEE
27-30 January, 2025	Strengthening the Judicial Office: A Judicial Officer and Research Assistant Programme, Guyana. This aimed to enhance the skills and knowledge of Judicial Officers and Judicial Research Assistants in the Judiciary of Guyana.	Justice of Appeal, Gregory Smith
January 2025	Justice Smith conducted training for the Bar Association in January on Oral Submissions for Judicial Tribunals and Juries.	Justice of Appeal, Gregory Smith
6-10 April, 2025	The Chief Justice represented The Bahamas Judiciary at the 24th Commonwealth Law Conference in Malta (2025), participating in discussions on judicial dissent, court innovation, and contemporary legal challenges. The engagement strengthened international judicial networks and informed strategic development, including in areas of maritime and specialized law.	Chief Justice Sir Ian Winder
9-12 April, 2025	The 17th International Association of Women Judges Biennial Conference was held in Cape Town, South Africa. The conference focused on the theme "Resilience: Women in Leadership to End Gender-Based Violence & Femicide". The conference was a worldwide event that brought together approximately 900 judges, magistrates, legal professionals, and policymakers. This was done to address critical issues related to gender-based violence and femicide.	Justice of Appeal, Indra Charles; Justice Denise Lewis-Johnson; Justice Camille Darville-Gomez; Justice Jeanine Weech-Gomez
19-21 May, 2025	The Fourth Global Meeting of the International Hague Network of Judges (IHNJ), held at the Peace Palace in The Hague, Singapore, focused on strengthening international judicial cooperation in cross-border family law matters under the Hague Conventions. Justice Lewis Johnson represented the jurisdiction, engaging in discussions on direct judicial communications, case management, and emerging challenges in international child protection and abduction cases.	Justice Denise Lewis-Johnson
June 18 - 21, 2025	Conference of the Heads of Judiciary of the Caribbean was held in The Bahamas. The conference brought together 11 judiciaries in the Caribbean.	11 Judiciaries in the Caribbean.
21 July, 2025	The International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) Anti-Corruption for Judges and Prosecutors Training. The Anti-Corruption course focused on the Investigation and Prosecution of complex corruption cases.	Justice Joyann Ferguson

21 – 26 September, 2025	Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association Triennial Conference, Banjul, The Gambia. The theme of the conference was "Innovations in Judicial Practice: Embracing Change for a Better Future." The event brought together 25 Chief Justices, 150 Supreme Court and High Court Judges, Magistrates, and legal scholars from across the Commonwealth to discuss crucial legal issues and innovations in judicial practice.	Chief Justice Sir Ian Winder, Justice of Appeal, Bernard Turner And Assistant Chief Magistrate, Mrs. Kara Turnquest-Deveaux
29 – 30 September, 2025	The 14th Edition Fraud, Asset Tracing and Recovery Conference was observed in Miami, Florida. This conference focused on the challenges and developments in asset recovery, with discussions on cross-border complexities and geopolitical risks.	Justice of Appeal, Indra Charles
23 - 26 October, 2025	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States 19th Regional Law Conference, Grenada. This event brought together members from various bar associations throughout the Caribbean and beyond. It featured a range of sessions on topics such as AI in the Caribbean workplace, regulatory compliance, and the challenges of Caribbean Citizenship-by-Investment (CBI) programs. The conference aimed to provide continuing legal education and foster professional development for the legal profession, judiciary, and the public.	Assistant Registrar, Sharonna Johnson-Richards; Acting Sr. Magistrate Anishka Isaacs; Assistant Registrar Jonathan Deal; and Deputy Chief Magistrate Charlton Smith
21 November, 2025	The Inaugural Florida Black Lawyers Summit was held on 21 November 2025 at the Marriott Orlando Downtown Hotel under the theme "Strengthening Our Power Through Unity." The Summit brought together Black attorneys, judges, law students, and community leaders to promote collaboration, professional development, and collective advancement within the legal profession.	Eilyah Johnson, Ezranda Bodie, Patricia Roberts, and Debra Thompson
26 - 28 November, 2025	The 8th Biennial Conference of the CCJ Academy for Law, Trinidad & Tobago was held in Port of Spain, themed "The CCJ at 20: Reflections on Caribbean Jurisprudence," and explored key developments and future directions in Caribbean law.	Justice Andrew McKinney
8 - 12 December, 2025	Observational visit to the Judiciary of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Gained valuable insight into the history of statistics. Delved into systems, procedures, and best practices within the statistics department of the JORTT.	Head of the Statistics Department, Ms. Daniella Mohammed

STRENGTHENING THE JUDICIAL OFFICE: A JUDICIAL OFFICER AND RESEARCH ASSISTANT PROGRAMME, GUYANA

In January 2025, the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO) conducted a four-day training programme for Judicial Officers and Judicial Research Assistants in Guyana. The initiative, Strengthening the Judicial Office, focused on enhancing judicial efficiency and professionalism through modules on case flow management, legal research, judgment writing, constitutional interpretation, and ethics. The programme underscored the importance of equipping both judges and their research staff with practical tools to improve the administration of justice.



24TH COMMONWEALTH LAW CONFERENCE 2025, MALTA

The Commonwealth Law Conference stands as the premier gathering of legal professionals across the Commonwealth, convening judges, lawyers, academics, and policymakers to advance the rule of law and strengthen legal systems throughout member nations. The 24th iteration of this distinguished conference took place in Malta in 2025, addressing pressing contemporary legal challenges, including digital transformation of court processes, access to justice, environmental law, and the evolving relationship between technology and fundamental rights. The Bahamas Judiciary was represented by the Chief Justice, who participated as a panelist on the topic "Judicial Dissent: A Pillar of Democracy," contributing valuable perspectives on the critical role of dissenting opinions in maintaining judicial independence, fostering legal development, and upholding democratic principles within Commonwealth jurisprudence.



The conference facilitated vital exchanges on judicial administration, case management innovations, and emerging jurisprudence across Commonwealth jurisdictions. For a small jurisdiction like The Bahamas, these interactions provided critical insights into scalable innovations and adaptive strategies employed by peer institutions, while strengthening professional networks that support ongoing judicial cooperation. Beyond formal sessions, the Chief Justice's participation fostered relationships that facilitate future dialogue, comparative legal research, and capacity building across Commonwealth judicial systems.

During his visit to Malta, the Chief Justice also toured the International Maritime Law Institute, an institution of particular relevance given The Bahamas' status as a major maritime nation and flag state. This engagement reflects the Judiciary's commitment to strengthening expertise in specialized areas of law critical to national interests. The insights and connections gained from both the conference and institutional visit inform the Judiciary's strategic planning and support its continuous evolution in meeting contemporary challenges while maintaining the highest standards of judicial excellence.



17TH INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN JUDGES BIENNIAL CONFERENCE, CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Cape Town hosted the 17th Biennial Conference of the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) from 9–12 April 2025, marking the first time South Africa welcomes this global forum. Held under the theme Resilience: Women in Leadership to End Gender-Based Violence & Femicide, the conference convened approximately 900 judges, magistrates, and legal professionals worldwide. Discussions addressed gender equality, judicial reforms, human trafficking, cyber violence, and judicial wellness. Led by Chief Justice Mandisa Maya, the event highlighted the judiciary's role in combating gender-based violence and advancing women's leadership in justice systems.



THE FOURTH GLOBAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL HAGUE NETWORK OF JUDGES

The Fourth Global Meeting of the International Hague Network of Judges was convened at the Peace Palace in the Hague, The Netherlands, bringing together designated Hague Network Judges from jurisdictions worldwide. The meeting was held to advance international judicial cooperation in cross-border family law matters, with particular emphasis on cases arising under the Hague Conventions on international child abduction and child protection.

The programme focused on strengthening judicial collaboration through the practical use of direct judicial communications, enhanced case management techniques, and procedural safeguards to safeguard due process and promote the best interests of the child. Judges engaged in substantive discussions on emerging challenges in Hague Convention cases, including complex custody and relocation disputes, delays in cross-border proceedings, and the interaction of differing legal systems and cultural considerations.

Justice Lewis Johnson attended the meeting as a representative of the jurisdiction, participating in plenary sessions and structured exchanges to reinforce judicial dialogue and cooperation. The meeting underscored the critical role of the International Hague Network of Judges in fostering mutual trust and facilitating the timely and effective resolution of international family law disputes. Participants reaffirmed their shared commitment to upholding the objectives of the Hague Conventions within an increasingly interconnected global legal framework.



CHIEF JUSTICES & HEADS OF JUDICIARY CONFERENCE



Seated L-R: Hon Mr Justice Winston Anderson (President of the CCJ), Prime Minister Philip Davis (The Bahamas), Most Hon. Dame Cyntha A. Pratt (Governor General of The Bahamas), Chief Justice Sir Ian Winder Kt (The Bahamas), Attorney General Ryan Pinder (The Bahamas)

Second Row L-R: Chief Justice Larry Mussenden (Bermuda), Chief Justice Ivor Archie (Trinidad and Tobago), Chief Justice Leslie Haynes (Barbados), Chief Justice Margaret Ramsey-Hale (Cayman), Chief Justice Loise Blenman (Belize), Justice Dinesh Sewratan, High Court of Surinam, Chief Justice Yonette Cummings (Guyana), Chief Justice Byran Sykes (Jamaica)



The Bahamas had the distinct honor of hosting the Conference of Caribbean Chief Justices and Heads of Judiciary in Nassau during the reporting period, convening under the theme "Judiciaries in Transition." This significant regional gathering brought together judicial leadership from across the Caribbean to address the transformative challenges and opportunities facing modern court systems in an era of rapid technological advancement, evolving societal expectations, and institutional modernization.

The Opening Ceremony reflected the national importance of this prestigious conference, attended by distinguished dignitaries, including the Honourable Prime Minister Philip Davis and Her Excellency Governor General Dame Cynthia Alexandria Pratt. Their presence underscored the government's recognition of judicial independence and the critical role the judiciary plays in upholding the rule of law and fostering democratic governance throughout the region. The high-level participation emphasized the shared commitment across branches of government to strengthening judicial institutions.

The conference theme, "Judiciaries in Transition," proved particularly timely and resonant, as Caribbean courts navigate significant institutional transformations. Participants engaged in substantive dialogue on critical matters, including the digital transformation of court processes, innovative case management strategies to address backlogs, enhancing access to justice for vulnerable populations, safeguarding judicial independence amid resource constraints, and building institutional resilience. The discussions acknowledged that Caribbean judiciaries share common challenges—limited resources, small populations, geographic dispersion across island nations, and the need to balance modernization with the preservation of fundamental judicial values.

The conference provided an invaluable platform for knowledge exchange and collaborative problem-solving among peers facing similar contexts. Chief Justices and judges shared successful reform initiatives, discussed obstacles encountered during implementation, and explored opportunities for regional cooperation in areas such as judicial training, technology procurement, and the development of common standards and protocols. The Caribbean perspective—grounded in Westminster constitutional traditions adapted to local contexts—offered unique insights into managing judicial transition in small, resource-constrained jurisdictions.

Closed-door working sessions, conducted over several days, provided a forum for candid discussion of pressing regional challenges, including persistent case backlogs, rising crime rates, and delays in the delivery of judgments across the Caribbean. Participants also examined critical legislative initiatives, including the Anti-Gang Act and judge-alone trials, aimed at enhancing public safety and improving the efficiency of justice delivery. Central to the discussions was the urgent need for judicial modernization, with a strong focus on digital transformation and the integration of artificial intelligence (AI), underscoring the importance of forward-looking judicial reforms to meet future demands.





Alongside the formal sessions, spouses had an opportunity to participate in carefully curated cultural and social activities showcasing Bahamian heritage and hospitality. Activities included guided tours of the Graycliff Chocolate Factory, Nassau Art Gallery, Fort Charlotte, Fort Fincastle, and the Queen’s Staircase, as well as visits to Baha Mar, Arawak Cay, and local cultural institutions. The conference concluded with a memorable day excursion to Rose Island for all delegates, providing opportunities for informal engagement, reflection, and cultural appreciation in a uniquely Bahamian setting.

THE INTERNATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY ANTI-CORRUPTION FOR JUDGES AND PROSECUTORS

The annual ILEA Conference was convened in San Salvador, El Salvador, from 21–25 July 2025, bringing together participants from The Bahamas, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Uruguay, Guatemala, Belize, Panama, Peru, and Colombia. The conference served as a high-level, interactive forum focused on international standards and best practices in combating corruption and complex fraud schemes, with particular emphasis on the legal and practical challenges associated with evidence gathering, including evidence held by overseas financial institutions.



The training programme was anchored in the core principles of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), notably the critical role of judicial and prosecutorial independence, effective international cooperation, and robust mechanisms for cross-border evidence collection. These foundational concepts informed the course curriculum and facilitated in-depth discussion, knowledge exchange, and capacity-building among participating jurisdictions.

COMMONWEALTH MAGISTRATES' AND JUDGES' ASSOCIATION TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE, BANJUL, THE GAMBIA

Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association Triennial Conference, Banjul, The Gambia
From 21–26 September 2025, Banjul hosted the 20th Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association (CMJA) Triennial Conference under the theme Innovation in Judicial Practice: Embracing Change for a Better Future. The gathering brought together more than 25 Chief Justices and over 300 judicial delegates from across the Commonwealth. Key discussions centered on access to justice, judicial independence, and the integration of modern technology, including artificial intelligence, into court processes. The conference reinforced the Commonwealth's commitment to strengthening judicial cooperation and reform.



14TH EDITION FRAUD, ASSET TRACING & RECOVERY CONFERENCE

The 14th Edition Fraud, Asset Tracing & Recovery Conference is a premier international forum focused on contemporary challenges and best practices in fraud litigation, asset tracing, and cross-border recovery. Convened in Miami, Florida, the conference brought together senior legal practitioners, insolvency professionals, forensic experts, regulators, and law enforcement officials from multiple jurisdictions. The conference was attended by Justice Indra Charles, Justice of the Court of Appeal, underscoring the judiciary’s engagement with evolving global approaches to fraud and asset recovery.

Over the course of the conference, participants engaged in high-level discussions on complex and emerging issues, including multi-jurisdictional asset recovery, cross-border insolvency, enforcement strategies, and asset tracing in hostile or high-risk jurisdictions. Particular attention was given to evolving risks associated with digital assets, the use of technology and artificial intelligence in fraud detection, and recent developments in international cooperation and enforcement mechanisms.

Through expert panels, interactive sessions, and targeted networking opportunities, the conference provided practical, solution-oriented insights grounded in real-world experience. The 14th edition reaffirmed the conference’s value as a platform for knowledge exchange, professional collaboration, and the advancement of effective strategies to combat financial fraud and strengthen global asset recovery efforts.



ORGANIZATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES 19TH REGIONAL LAW CONFERENCE, GRENADA

The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) hosted its 19th Regional Law Conference in Grenada from 23–26 October 2025. The event featured sessions on global freezing injunctions, family wealth protection, and reforms to Caribbean Citizenship by Investment programmes. Discussions also addressed the growing impact of artificial intelligence in the workplace, anti-money laundering compliance, and evolving criminal advocacy practices. A dedicated wellness day highlighted the importance of self-care for legal professionals, combining physical activity, creative expression, and social connection.

Through expert panels, interactive sessions, and targeted networking opportunities, the conference provided practical, solution-oriented insights grounded in real-world experience. The 14th edition reaffirmed the conference’s value as a platform for knowledge exchange, professional collaboration, and the advancement of effective strategies to combat financial fraud and strengthen global asset recovery efforts.

Left to right: Assistant Registrar Jonathan Deal, Attorney Glenda Roker, Dame Cecile La Grenade (Governor-General of Grenada), Assistant Registrar Sharonna Johnson-Richards, and Acting Deputy Chief Magistrate Charlton Smith



The 8th Biennial Conference of the CCJ Academy for Law

The 8th Biennial Conference of the CCJ Academy for Law was convened from 26–28 November 2025 at the Hyatt Regency, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, under the theme “The CCJ at 20: Reflections on Caribbean Jurisprudence.” The conference marked the twentieth anniversary of the Caribbean Court of Justice and brought together judges, legal practitioners, academics, policymakers, and regional stakeholders to reflect on the Court’s jurisprudential contributions and its role in strengthening the Caribbean legal order. The conference was attended by Justice Andrew McKinney, highlighting judicial engagement with regional legal development and discourse.

Over the three-day programme, participants engaged in substantive panel discussions and keynote addresses addressing a broad range of contemporary legal issues, including constitutional and administrative law, criminal justice reform, commercial and family law, environmental justice, intellectual property, and the impact of technology on jurisprudence. Particular emphasis was placed on the CCJ’s role in shaping Caribbean Community law and promoting legal harmonisation, judicial independence, and access to justice across the region.

The conference served as a critical platform for scholarly exchange, professional collaboration, and forward-looking dialogue on the future of Caribbean jurisprudence. It reaffirmed the CCJ Academy for Law’s mandate to advance legal education, support judicial excellence, and foster a cohesive and responsive regional legal framework aligned with the evolving social, economic, and technological realities of the Caribbean.

FLORIDA BLACK LAWYERS SUMMIT

Florida Black Lawyers Summit

The Inaugural Florida Black Lawyers Summit was held on 21 November 2025 at the Marriott Orlando Downtown Hotel under the theme “Strengthening Our Power Through Unity.” The Summit brought together Black attorneys, judges, law students, and community leaders to promote collaboration, professional development, and collective advancement within the legal profession.



L-R: Eilyah Johnson, Ezranda Bodie, Patricia Roberts, Debra Thompson

Four representatives from the Judicial Research Counsel Department attended the Summit. The event was organized by the Virgil Hawkins Florida Chapter of the National Bar Association in collaboration with fourteen other voluntary bar associations, reflecting a unified commitment to advocacy and excellence within Florida’s Black legal community.

The keynote address, delivered by civil rights attorney Benjamin L. Crump, emphasized principled advocacy, moral clarity, and the responsibility of Black lawyers to pursue justice beyond mere legality.

Breakout sessions focused on building sustainable legal careers, emphasizing mentorship, entrepreneurship, financial planning, and work/life balance; developing profitable and collaborative law practices through shared resources, referrals, and strategic networking; and the value of judicial clerkships in shaping professional competence, credibility, and long-term career success. Speakers also highlighted the growing role of technology, including Artificial Intelligence, in improving efficiency in legal practice.

The Summit underscored the importance of unity, collaboration, and intentional professional development as key drivers of individual success and collective empowerment within the Black legal community.



JUDICIARY
THE BAHAMAS

08

**JUDICIAL
ARTICLES**



www.courts.bs
www.courtsofappeal.org.bs



[@BAHJudiciary](https://twitter.com/BAHJudiciary)



[BAHJudiciary](https://www.facebook.com/BAHJudiciary)



2025

Bahamas Judiciary
Annual Report

- **The Dilemma of Judgments Delivered by Judges who have Retired**
- **Judicial Wellness: Breaking the Silence**
- **Ethical Implications of AI Misuse: Risks to the Justice System**
- **ICMS: A Digital Transformation Success Story**

THE DILEMMA OF JUDGMENTS DELIVERED BY JUDGES WHO HAVE RETIRED



Justice of the Court of Appeal

Gregory Smith

Summary

On 30th July, 2025, a five-member panel of the Court of Appeal delivered a high-profile constitutional decision in **Rt. Hon. Hubert Minnis et al v Dahene Nonard** Civil Appeal 146 of 2024. The appeal raised fundamental questions about judicial power, the validity of judgments delivered after a judge demitted office, the scope of Article 96 of the Constitution, and the application of the de facto officer doctrine in Bahamian law.

The court, by a majority of 4 to 1, declared the impugned judgment a nullity and remitted that matter to the Supreme Court for a rehearing. The court later exercised its discretion on costs by ordering that there be no order as to costs in respect of the appeal.

Factual Background

Justice Bowe-Darville was appointed as a Justice of the Supreme Court by the Governor General pursuant to Article 94(2) of the Constitution on 30 May 2019. She attained the age of 65 shortly thereafter, but before attaining that age, her appointment was extended to age 67 pursuant to the proviso to Article 96(1). Upon reaching the age of 67, her appointment was extended to 3 December 2021, pursuant to Article 96(2).3.

On or about the 19th or 21st of February 2021, while still holding office as a Justice of the Supreme Court, the Honourable Madam Justice Bowe-Darville (as she then was) heard and reserved her decision in relation to an Originating Motion filed by the Respondent on 7 November 2018 in Supreme Court (Suit No: PUB/jrv/26/2018) seeking judicial review and constitutional relief.

Justice Bowe-Darville subsequently demitted her office as a Justice of the Supreme Court on 3 December 2021, having still not delivered her reserved decision.

On 2 August 2024, the parties were notified that the long-awaited decision was ready. They attended the Supreme Court and received a written Judgment some 2 years and 8 months after the now retired Justice Bowe-Darville had vacated her former office as a Justice of the Supreme Court.

In her Judgment of 2 August 2024, retired Justice Bowe-Darville purportedly made two declarations against the Director of Immigration and/or the Board of Immigration and further awarded the Claimant (now “the Respondent”) a global sum of \$575,000.00 being damages for constitutional breaches, damages for the tort of misfeasance in public office, and exemplary and aggravated damages. Additionally, she further awarded pre-judgment interest at 5% on the award from the date of the Writ until judgment and thereafter at the statutory rate prescribed by the Civil Procedure (Award of Interest) Act.

The Appellant challenged the constitutional validity of the judgment of former Justice Gregory Smith Court of Appeal.

The challenge raised 2 issues for determination, namely:

- Whether a reserved Judgment handed down by a retired Supreme Court Judge after demitting office as a Justice of the Supreme Court is unconstitutional, invalid, and a nullity, or is saved from invalidity by Article 96(3) of the Constitution?
- Can such a Judgment be saved from invalidity by the operation of the de facto officer doctrine?

Why a Five-Member Panel

There have been seemingly contradictory decisions regarding judges delivering judgments after retirement. For example, in Jamaica, regarding similar legislation, it was decided in the case of Paul Chen Young et al v Eagle Merchant Bank et al (2018) JMCA App 7 that such judgments made after retirement were not constitutionally valid.

In Barbados, the Caribbean Court of Justice, in Knox v Dean & others [2021] CC 5, decided that a specific piece of legislation, which was not applicable to The Bahamas, rendered such post-retirement judgments valid.

In the case of **Sookar v. The Attorney-General of Trinidad and Tobago**, Civil Appeal No. S331 of 2014, a slightly different question was addressed, namely, whether a judge who had not reached the age of retirement, but had resigned, could be appointed for the specific purpose of delivering a judgment. In that case, the Court of Appeal of Trinidad and Tobago decided this question in the affirmative.

More specifically, in the local cases **Rubis Bahamas Limited v Russell and Clemenza Ltd v The Attorney General of The Bahamas**, Civ App Nos 86 and 28 of 2022, a three-member panel of the Court of Appeal delivered split verdicts on the two issues for determination mentioned above. Namely:

- 1 In respect of the issue whether such post-retirement judgments were saved from invalidity by Article 96 (3) of the Constitution, the majority (Evans and Jones JJA) opined that they were not saved from invalidity by Article 96 (3) of the Constitution.

Barnett P. felt that Article 96 (3) saved such post-retirement judgments.

- 2 In respect of the application of the de facto officer doctrine, the majority (Barnett and Evans JJA) opined that, on the facts of that case, the judgments were saved from invalidity by the application of that doctrine.

Jones JA opined that the de facto officer doctrine could not save the judgments from invalidity.

Given this apparent dichotomy of opinions on the issue, the President of the Court of Appeal, Evans JA, invoked the proviso in section 7 (1) of the Court of Appeal Act to enable the matter to be decided by a five-member panel because of both its constitutional and general importance.

The Decision (Summarized)

 **ISSUE 1** Article 96 (3) of the constitution of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas provides that...-

“Nothing done by a Justice of the Supreme Court shall be invalid by reason only that he has attained the age at which he is required by this Article to vacate his office.”

The majority decided that this was not a standalone provision and it only applied to validate the acts of a retired judge when he lawfully continued in office as a judge.

The minority opined that this was a standalone provision that validated any acts of a judge even after retirement.

 **ISSUE 2** The de facto officer doctrine

The majority decided that this common law doctrine is fact-specific and could not save the decision of Justice Bowe-Darville, especially after the specific indication of Evans JA. in the **Rubis Bahamas** Case at paragraph 100. Evans JA indicated that any judgment delivered by the same judge after 3rd May, 2023, could not be saved from invalidity by the de facto officer doctrine. The present judgment, which came more than 1 year after this pronouncement, was therefore outside the ambit of the de facto officer doctrine.

The minority opined that the public policy of maintaining the public’s confidence in the administration of justice took precedence over the time limits suggested by Evans JA, and that the de facto officer doctrine would validate Justice Bowe-Darville's judgment in this case.

The implications of the decision

- 1 The case underscores that finality and practical convenience cannot override constitutional requirements about who may exercise judicial power—a judgment rendered by someone lacking the requisite judicial status at the time of delivery risks being void.
- 2 Although the de facto officer doctrine can protect third parties acting in good faith, this decision indicates that its reach is not unlimited and will be scrutinized where constitutional tenure and the propriety of judicial decision-making are engaged.
- 3 Administrative arrangements must now be made for a judge to deliver all decisions before demitting office.
- 4 Since the Respondent was not responsible for the failings of the system, it was not appropriate to punish her with costs even though the decision went against her.
- 5 The decision is being appealed to the Privy Council, and we anxiously await a ruling from our final court on this controversial issue of the delivery of judgments by judges who have retired.

JUDICIAL WELLNESS: BREAKING THE SILENCE



Justice of the Supreme Court

Camille Darville Gomez

The widespread recognition that judges have high-stress jobs is something quite new. For generations, the Judiciary has been regarded as a pillar of resilience, expected to be immersed in and withstand the weight of society's most difficult disputes without faltering. Yet behind the robes and gavels lies a reality long left unspoken: judges are human, they are a part of the societies in which they live and work, and the demands of their role create immense psychological and emotional stress. Until recently, judicial wellness was a taboo subject. To admit stress privately or even professionally among peers was often seen as a weakness, and to acknowledge it publicly was thought to risk undermining confidence in judicial fitness. The silence, however, came at a cost. Judges pressed forward under immense pressure, doing their best while carrying burdens that were rarely recognized. Today, that silence is finally breaking.

Historical Context and Gendered Challenges

Historically, the Judiciary was dominated by men, many of whom had supportive spouses who managed the responsibilities of home and family. This dynamic allowed male judges to devote themselves almost exclusively to their professional duties, reinforcing the perception that judicial officers could — and should — remain unaffected by personal strain. Nevertheless, the perception was not always reality. Male judicial officers, like all judicial officers, experience great stress that can adversely affect their wellness and, in consequence, their judicial performance.

As more women enter the Judiciary, however, the picture is shifting. Female judges often face the dual burden of professional demands and primary responsibility for home and family life. Balancing the weight of complex cases with the societal expectations of caregiving adds additional layers of stress that are not always visible but are deeply felt. This reality underscores the importance of judicial wellness initiatives, which must also account for gendered experiences and provide support that recognizes the diverse challenges faced by all judges today.

Regional and International Developments

Concerns about judicial wellness began surfacing in regional bodies, particularly within the Caribbean. The Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers (CAJO) addressed the issue at its 2024 Conference in Bermuda, building on earlier discussions and its 2021 report entitled *Exploring the Wellbeing of Caribbean Judicial Officers*. At the CAJO conference, judicial wellness was expanded to include judicial staff, reflecting a holistic approach to justice that recognized the interconnectedness of judges and the wider court community.

Australian research played a pivotal role in shaping these regional conversations. Pioneering empirical studies by psychologist and lawyer Dr. Carly Schrever, surveying 152 judicial officers across five Australian courts, revealed high levels of psychological distress, burnout, and secondary trauma. Findings were published in 2019, 2022, and as recently as 2024. Sources of stress ranged from the emotionally difficult content of cases to isolation from peers and the weight of public criticism. These insights resonated strongly across the Caribbean and beyond, influencing the way judicial wellness was understood and addressed in regional initiatives.

On the global stage, the Republic of Nauru took bold action by leading the creation of the Nauru Declaration on Judicial Well-Being in 2024, developed in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). This initiative culminated on 4 March 2025, when the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution establishing 25 July as the International Day for Judicial Well-Being, co-sponsored by more than 70 countries. This landmark declaration raised international awareness and set a precedent for judicial wellness as a global priority, signalling a new era of openness and support for judiciaries worldwide.

The Bahamian Response

The Bahamas Judicial Education Institute (BJEI) has been proactive in addressing judicial wellness. Over the past five years, the Institute has hosted training sessions equipping judges with tools to manage stress and maintain balance. These sessions were conducted not only by local experts but also by clinical psychologists from across the region and internationally, ensuring that Bahamian judges benefitted from diverse perspectives and best practices in judicial wellness. On 25 July 2025, the Institute proudly marked the inaugural International Day for Judicial Well-Being with a series of activities designed to promote holistic health among judicial officers and staff.

Key Activities

- Health checks across court locations in Marsh Harbour, Abaco, and New Providence were conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Wellness.
- Wellness communications leading up to the day, staff received weekly health and wellness tips via email, reinforcing the importance of sustained self-care.
- Inspirational messages: Pre-recorded addresses were shared, including:
 - “3D Approach to Judicial Wellness” by the Honourable Mr. Justice Peter Jamadar, President of the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers and Justice of the Caribbean Court of Justice.
 - “Spiritual Wellness in the Workplace” by Reverend Angela Palacios.

Plans are already underway to repeat and expand these efforts in 2026, ensuring that judicial wellness remains a sustained priority.

Looking Ahead

What was once a hidden struggle is now openly acknowledged as essential to the functioning, performance, and credibility of the Judiciary. The global movement toward judicial wellness affirms that resilience is not defined by silence or stoicism, but by the ability to manage stress with openness, support, and care. By embracing wellness, courts safeguard not only the health of their officers but also the quality of justice delivered to the public. The Bahamas, through the initiatives of the BJEI and its partnerships with organizations such as CAJO and others, stands firmly within this international wave of progress, ensuring that judges and staff alike are equipped to serve with strength, clarity, and humanity. Judicial wellness is no longer a private burden — it is a collective responsibility and very much an essential part of the foundation of justice.

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF AI MISUSE: RISKS TO THE JUSTICE SYSTEM



—— Registrar of the Supreme Court, Renaldo Toote

Marcus Gruesser & Ira Hess v Robert Phelps Herman 2023/PRO/cpr/00006 (Supreme Court of The Bahamas, Probate Division, unreported Judgment delivered 1 August 2025 by Justice Denise Lewis Johnson).

Summary

In recent times, courts across the globe have had to confront the misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in legal practice.

The Supreme Court of The Bahamas recently addressed this critical issue in **Gruesser v Herman**. In **Gruesser v Herman**, the Court found that an attorney advanced a hallucinated case generated by ChatGPT without verification. The attorney did not confirm the authenticity of the cases before presenting them in oral submissions and in speaking points. This conduct was deemed a serious breach of professional responsibility, prompting the referral of the use of non-existent cases to the Ethics Committee of The Bahamas Bar Association for hearing and determination based on the Code of Professional Conduct.

At the time of the incident, the Court accepted that there was no legal or ethical restriction on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by attorneys, and that modern technology such as ChatGPT can assist attorneys in their work, but emphasized that technological innovation does not dilute an attorney's fundamental duty to the Court never to mislead and to always act with honesty and integrity in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct. The Court noted that attorneys are duty-bound to verify the authenticity and accuracy of any case law cited and relied upon by them, that the quotes used by them in their submission are factual and truthful, and that the Court is in no way misled.

The Court opined that the advancement of non-existent cases may amount to contempt of court. There are many dangers of advancing AI hallucinations as authentic, as they can particularly lead to a waste of judicial time and resources to both the Court and opposing parties, as every citation must now be rigorously fact-checked to ensure its existence. Additionally, it can seriously prejudice opposing parties who are compelled to deal with the hallucinations. It further poses a real risk of harm to the integrity of the judicial process and risks eroding trust in the adversarial system. The adversarial system relies on the presumption of candor, the belief that citations and evidence provided by counsel are genuine.

When hallucinated cases are presented as factual, it forces a breakdown in the traditional trust between the Bench and the Bar. As Justice Lewis-Johnson observed, quoting from the Trinidadian case of **Nexgen Pathology Services Limited v Duncan [2025] TTHC CV2023-04039**, “The integrity of the justice system relies on diligence, honesty, and professional accountability.”

The Court considered that when attorneys make submissions to the Court, they are to be taken as certifying that they have made the requisite inquiries into the authenticity of the case law relied upon by them and that the reasonable standard of performance in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct has been met. The Court should be entitled to accept that the citations and quotes advanced by attorneys are factual without reservations. That is an advocate's basic duty.

While the court referred the matter to the Ethics Committee for a final determination, the judgment and subsequent judicial directives highlighted the following violations of the Bahamas Bar (Code of Professional Conduct) Regulations, which are promulgated under the Legal Profession Act :

Rule 1: Duty of Integrity – An attorney must discharge their duties to the Court, clients, and the public with integrity. By presenting hallucinated cases as factual, the attorney breached the basic duty of honesty and the expectation that a counsel's submissions are truthful.

Rule II: Duty of Competence – This rule requires an attorney to perform work in a competent manner, providing quality service equal to that expected of a competent attorney in a similar situation. The court ruled that the attorney failed to be diligent and verify the accuracy of the information being relied on.

Breach of Duty to the Court – Madam Justice J. Denise Lewis-Johnson explicitly stated that the attorney's failure to verify AI-generated content violated the basic duty to the Court, where citations and quotes are expected to be accepted as factual without further proof.

Conclusion

AI tools are permissible aids but must be used responsibly. Practice Direction No. 3 of 2025 (A Practice Direction to provide a Guide to the Use of Generative AI in Court Proceedings), dated 5 November 2025, now provides guidance.

Attorneys appearing before the Court remain bound by their oath and ethical codes, regardless of technological advances, and are responsible for their submissions to the Court.

Failure to verify AI-generated content can result not only in reputational harm but in disciplinary action.

ICMS: A DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SUCCESS STORY

Assistant Registrars/ Curia Administrators – Indy Hunter, Rosanne Sweeting, and Akeira Martin

On 5 February 2024, as part of the Supreme Court's ongoing commitment to digital transformation through the implementation of E-Justice technologies, electronic filing officially became a reality. The project, undertaken in partnership with the Caribbean Association for Justice Solutions (CAJS), has addressed the increased demand for enhanced institutional capacity to deliver digital court services to court users. The transition from paper-based to electronic processing began in earnest.

The Integrated Case Management System

The launch of the Integrated Case Management System (ICMS) has transformed the judicial landscape. The ICMS consists of Folio (external user filing platform), Attache (internal court user platform), and Sightlines (internal Curia Administrator platform). The launch of this suite is one of many building blocks toward a smarter justice system through the incorporation of technology-based solutions.

The core driver behind these reforms has been the need for increased transparency and greater efficiency in judicial actions for court users. The primary benefit of the e-filing system is its facilitation of access to justice by establishing a new digital channel to initiate court actions and maintain digital access to court documents. E-filing, which was part of the broader rollout of the ICMS, is aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the judicial process for court users and court staff alike.

Immediate Benefits and Impact

The ICMS aims at eventually eliminating the physical movement of paper files and is on track to fulfill that goal. Some of the immediate effects of implementation are that hard copy files for matters commenced since the platform went live are unnecessary for Judicial Officers to hear a matter. Indeed, the misplacement of a hard copy file, which in times past may have triggered a delay in the movement of a matter, has been greatly reduced. Furthermore, processing times for new actions across Supreme Court Registries have increased significantly.

Fee Payment Options

Fees in the ICMS are mapped to documents, which allow users to be prompted upon upload to remit the prescribed fee. The filing team is tasked with the duty to apply and alert the uploading party of the appropriate fees via the Financials Tab for those users who may be uncertain of the fees required to file an action.

There are more options now to pay fees filed in the Supreme Court than ever before. Fees can be paid online securely via debit or credit card. Unbanked individuals and those simply preferring to pay in cash can pay at the cashier's cage in Annex I of the Supreme Court, Bank Lane, or at the Family Court Complex, Bernard Road.

An important highlight that is a collateral effect of the implementation of e-filing is that it assists with efficiency in listing matters through the Listing Offices servicing the Civil and Family Courts. Physical trips to the Court's Registries no longer include the need to retrieve documents that have been deposited awaiting new application numbers. While certain Family and Probate Division applications still require parties to remit original documents such as marriage and birth certificates and Wills, these are now the exception rather than the rule.

Enhanced Transparency and Accessibility

The ICMS has increased transparency and court availability for all court users. Users are alerted to filings within any case to which they are a party and can view filings instantaneously from any location globally where they can access the internet.

There is no doubt that parties have experienced a positive impact as a result of the switch to a digital platform. The court has seen a significant reduction in paper consumption. Various chambers canvassed prior to the writing of this article also report a reduction in paper usage. Filings which typically, prior to e-filing, saw the printing of five or more copies of the same document are no longer necessary. It has become unnecessary to produce this volume of hard copies even in instances where parties are required to lodge hard copies at a Registry of the Court for processing prior to upload.

Implementation Challenges and Success

The path to providing the Courts with an ICMS was not without its challenges. The deployment of such solutions is complex and requires organization and procedural compliance that is difficult to achieve. The legislative support of the Electronic Filing Rules 2023 was and continues to be a valuable tool for all court users accessing and using the portal.

Notwithstanding the challenges that were encountered in the early days following its implementation, the tide has effectively turned, and court users have enthusiastically embraced this major digital transformation. This shift in perception may be attributed to the preparation that members of the Bar made during and after implementation. A significant number of users from the legal community and court staff pre-registered and actively engaged in every training session hosted by the CAJS team in conjunction with the Chief Justice and Curia Administrators. Users continued to reach out, and guidance was and remains available whenever requested.

It has been more than eighteen months since the implementation of e-filing in the Supreme Court. The partnership with the CAJS has proven to be a fruitful one.

METRIC	PAPER SYSTEM (PRE-FEB 2024)	E-FILING (CURRENT)	IMPROVEMENT
Avg. Registry Number Assignment	14 days	4 hours	97% faster
File Misplacement Incidents	15/month	0/month	100% reduction
Paper Reams Used	200/month	30/month	85% reduction
Registry Counter Visits	250/week	75/week	70% reduction

Team Expansion

The team that saw the ICMS go live on 5 February 2024 was the project's Supervising Judge, Justice Andrew Forbes, along with Assistant Registrars Roseanne Sweeting and Indy Hunter as Curia Administrators. The team was further expanded in mid-2025 by the addition of Kristin Higgins as E-Registry support officer.

In January 2025, Assistant Registrar Akeira Martin was sworn in as an Assistant Registrar of the court and was added as an additional Curia Administrator to the filing team. Joining the E-Registry team shortly thereafter were Tasia Carroll, E-Registry support officer, and Andeshia Mackey, Secretary to AR Martin.

Registry Tracker Innovation

With the assistance of the Department of Internet & Technology (DIT), the E-Filing Administrators sought to enhance service to all court users accessing the ICMS by streamlining electronic registry operations even further. Ms. Vanessa Francis and Denise Clarke from DIT were instrumental in developing a Registry Tracker portal for the use of the filing team. The Registry Tracker allows the team to apply registry action numbers in record time for new applications. These applications span all of the divisions of court – Civil, Probate, Family, Criminal, Commercial, and Public Law – in accordance with the Supreme Court Divisions of Court Order.

A process under the now-defunct paper-based system that would normally take up to two weeks for a registry action number to be assigned is now completed in mere hours. The wait to have new applications returned to registry folders for collection with freshly assigned registry numbers handwritten on them is a thing of the past for court users. Counsel called to the Bahamas Bar in 2024 and beyond, since the advent of e-filing, knows no other way than the efficiency produced by the system. E-filing has transformed and redesigned justice services around the needs of court users both internally and externally.

E-Filing Kiosks and Ongoing Support

Access to justice has been further enhanced with the creation of e-filing kiosks in the Supreme Court buildings in Nassau and Freeport, Grand Bahama. These kiosks are fully equipped with computers and scanners for user convenience. Countless counsel and pro se litigants have been assisted, since the start of e-filing, through visits to the Supreme Court complexes for assistance at the kiosks. The Curia Administrators have personally assisted and remain available to assist parties, Judicial Officers, and court staff with any e-filing enquiries. Tutorials on how to navigate the platform remain available, and the access link is available upon request. Refresher training is also available upon request by emailing any of the Assistant Registrars who act as Curia Administrators:

- Rosanne.sweeting@courts.bs
- Akeira.martin@courts.bs
- Indy.hunter@courts.bs

Conclusion

The ICMS continues to fulfill its mandate and enables parties to start judicial proceedings, view documents filed by all parties to a case, receive notifications upon documents being filed, pay court fees securely online, and provides a secure repository of documents/case files.

For up-to-date information and access to Folio, users can visit the official Judiciary of The Bahamas website at courts.bs. Questions or concerns can be emailed to any of the Curia Administrators listed above.

External and Internal Court User Commentary

Raynard Rigby KC – The Curia E-Filing platform is a transformative and effective tool for the administration of justice. It aids in and makes court services more efficient, and allows Counsels to work on filings and upload them at all hours. It also ensures timely filings, same day or early next day, allowing access by Judges and Counsels in real time. I especially enjoy it because it allows me to upload documents even on weekends, maximizing my time during the work week. I congratulate the Court Services Council for this innovation and the staff who manage the Curia E-Filing platform for its introduction and smooth implementation. The staff are amazing and super competent.

It makes me eagerly await the other new measures that will be introduced to further advance and enhance our judicial system and build public confidence.

Kudos to the team! Her only criticism is that sometimes the system moves slowly when attempting to access various electronic case files.

Justice Constance Delancy has remarked on how great the ICMS filing system has been. Her only criticism is that sometimes the system moves slowly when attempting to access various electronic case files.

She states that she no longer has to wait for a physical file and that she can extract the documents she requires for a particular application. Further, she can pull up all the necessary documents on her screen in real time as a hearing progresses. She finds the “Notes” tab very useful as she is able to type her notes directly into the system, and if the file is misplaced, she can always refer to those notes. She also says that her disposition time has improved as she is no longer being held hostage waiting for paper documents to be delivered or submitted to her chambers.

Jacara Smith, Family Registry Supervisor – I like the digital system. I can now simply go to the computer when a document, such as a certified copy of a Decree Absolute, is requested, as opposed to going to a cabinet to pull a hard copy file. Sometimes the files may not be in place; they may be out to a Judge, which would mean having to find out where the file is before being able to assist the customer. Initially, keeping the Cause List up to date was a challenge, and we are working to ensure that it is up to date.



JUDICIARY
THE BAHAMAS

09

**COURT SERVICE
COUNCIL'S
RETIREES AND
IN MEMORIAM**



www.courts.bs
www.courtsofappeal.org.bs



@BAHJudiciary



BAHJudiciary

COURT SERVICES COUNCIL - RETIREES 2025



JANITRESS

VALENCIA MOTT-MCPHEE

Start Date

22 JULY 1996

Retirement Date

6 JUNE 2025

JANITRESS

MILDRED THOMPSON

Start Date

1 JUNE 2020

Retirement Date

2 AUGUST 2025



BAILIFF

RANDOLPH MUNROE

Start Date

9 JANUARY 1997

Retirement Date

1 AUGUST 2025



COURT MARSHAL

ROY BURROWS

Start Date

10 APRIL 2017

Retirement Date

11 OCTOBER 2025

JUDICIAL SUPPORT OFFICER

KIRK MOSS

Start Date

3 APRIL 2000

Retirement Date

13 MARCH 2025



SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER

MABELL GRANT-BROWN

Start Date

10TH FEBRUARY 1997

Retirement Date

10TH SEPTEMBER 2025



COURT MARSHAL

SUZETTE FERGUSON

Start Date

19 FEBRUARY 2024

Decease Date

14 AUGUST 2025

HEAD BAILIFF

PHILIP CLARKE

Start Date

25 AUGUST 2014

Decease Date

14 JUNE 2025



MAINTENANCE MANAGER

MR. EDWARD GAYLE

Start Date

JAN 2021

Date of Death

28TH MAY 2025

JUDICIAL SUPPORT OFFICER

MRS. SHAVONNE GREENE

Start Date

19 JULY 2011

Decease Date

8TH DECEMBER 2025





JUDICIARY
THE BAHAMAS

10

EDUCATION OUTREACH



www.courts.bs
www.courtsofappeal.org.bs



@BAHJudiciary



BAHJudiciary

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

◆ QUEEN'S COLLEGE





Blairwood Academy



Jordan Prince William Baptist School



Royal Bahamas Defence Force



Eugene Dupuch Law School



Eugene Dupuch Law School students with Senior Justice Cheryl Grant Thompson



Eugene Dupuch Law School Criminal Appellate Moot



JUDICIARY
THE BAHAMAS

11

**STAFF OF THE
COURT SERVICES
COUNCIL**



www.courts.bs
www.courtsofappeal.org.bs



@BAHJudiciary



BAHJudiciary

STAFF OF THE COURT OF APPEAL



Seated L-R: Destiny Henfield, Michelle McPhee, Deborah Miller, Althea Anderson

Middle row L-R: Sarah Saunders, Wendy Moss-Gardiner, Guenevere Knowles, Tegera Allen-Johnson, Dedrie Sweeting, Candice Bowe-Forbes, Carla Nicolls, Ruthmae Brown, Chikara Cunningham, Shaquell Rolle,

Back row L-R: Levio Braynen, Jermain Dames, Kevin Louis, Godfrey Telusma, Derick Hanna

Missing: Felicia Martin, Shyann Reckley, Dorminique Morley

STAFF OF THE SUPREME COURT



First Row L-R: Kephia Ewing, Thecola Cochiamogulos, Donna Deveaux, Loretta Duncombe, Javia Gibson, Margo Smith, Sandra Lightbourne

Middle Row L-R: Katreia Saunders, Nicole Swain, Shermiyah Brown, Nicole Musgrove, Rajya Smith, Wendy Colebrooke

Back Row L-R: Vivian Henfield, Kamia Curtis, Derek Collie



Front Row L-R: Wilkeshnia McKenzie, Randy Forbes, Andymore Saunders, Wardia Anderson, Nolan Scavella

Back Row L-R: Curtis Adderley, Genae Frazer, Baron Musgrove, Thomas Grant, Deshae Robinson, Elizabeth Johnson -Hanna



Front Row L-R: Sonia Tynes, Tamara Johnson, Sasha Martin, Jayde Moss
Back Row L-R: Latoya Markland, D'Vonya Cooper, Ronique Roberts



Front Row L-R: Starsheema Smith, Grace Bostwick, Kachiri McPhee, Erinique Sands, Tasia Carol, Daniella Mohammed, Linda Florvil
Back Row L-R: Deniqua Bain, Sherman Campbell, Kristin Hall, Duke Percentie, Craig Thompson

COURT REPORTING SECTION



L-R: Calvern Johnson, Katrina Sears, Althea Miller, Lavonne Adderley, Tonia Colebrook, Dr. Royanne Morrison, Melissa Poitier, Tanya Sands, Karen Scavella, Tabitha Morley.
Missing: Katisha Bannister, Yontalae Cash, Hubert Cash, Diandra Robinson, Derricka Burrows-Adderley, Krista Stubbs, Tahesha Ingraham, Paulia Reid.

COURT MARSHALS DEPARTMENT



Front Row L-R: Timothy Smith, Susan Smith, Marco Smith, Sharon Mackey, Sharon Hanna, Duke Percentie
Middle Row L-R: Julian Mackey, Brian Harvey, Ricardo Neely, Godfrey Patrick Johnson
Back Row L-R: Stephen Russell, Kevin GreenSlade, Alfred Munnings

STAFF OF THE MAGISTRATES COURT, NASSAU STREET



First Row L-R: Alphanette Grant, Tiara Knowles, Natori Collett, Joycelyn Smith, Paige Mackey, Danielle Beneby, Falesha Lowe, Berneka Russell

Second Row: Sterling Charlton, Melenese Armbrister, Shanda McKenzie, Cyntheretta Miller, Mazoie Morley, Dalette Walkes, Jaimie Clarke,

Back Rows: Omar Nottage, Teshonn Lockhart, Mark Turnquest, Kenron Bullard, Patrick Knowles, Alexander Laroda, Noel Kemp, Phylis Rahming, Marco Smith, Marvin Storr, Michelle Farrington, Brittany Knowles, Doris Patton, Tamika Pennerman, Charles Anthon, Alliah Richards, Bobbyanne Rolle, Erica Rolle, Azaria Bartlett, Frances Cambell, Jennifer Sweeting, Maxverna McBride, and Philiper Gardiner.

Missing: Ulean Clarke, Volante Johnson, Shavonne Seymour, Savannah Davidson, Nadya Bowe, Kendi Storr, Japhia Bodie, Shezelle Rolle, Freda Farrington, Renee Hanna, Kristin Bennett, Makayla Sands, Perry Charlton, Charles Charlton, Harry Newton, Craidell Brown- Marshall

STAFF OF THE FAMILY COURT COMPLEX



Seated L-R: Assistant Registrar Indy Hunter; Hon. Madam Justice C. V. Hope Strachan,
Second Row L-R: Khirsten Brown, Kerri Ramsay, Emily Watkins, Shekiera Calma; Charlene Munnings, Philisha Forbes, Kennice Burrows,
Third Row L-R: Jimmylee Stevens, Clarence Smith, Tesha Storr, Ashley Patton, Kristin Higgins, Kamara Stubbs,
Back Row L-R: Cleveland Williams, Seabury Ferguson, Sherrell Martin, Geovanghne Goodman, Tevin Farrington, Kaitlyn Micklewhite, Katrina McPhee, Wayne Rodgers
Missing: Claudina Cooper, Alyssa Forbes, Loretta Maycock, Jacara Smith, Giavanna Gibson, Sharon Brown, Jada Moxey, Brittany Curtis, Craig Hanna, Delton Rolle

TRANSCRIPTION UNIT



L-R: Darrenique Smith, Onike Archer, Edwina Roberts

STAFF OF THE GARNET LEVARITY JUSTICE CENTRE, FREEPORT, GRAND BAHAMA



Front Row L-R: Mickeal Miller, Zenobia Duncombe, Charmaine Fernander, Marilyn Bastian, Samantha Bain, Dajanae Missick, Fredrica Gordon-Farr

Second Row L-R: Celeste Bascombe, Angel Scott, Kaylor Pinder Ranger, Alejandria Johnson, Tornett Black, Caljanae Russell, Tannis Robinson, Shantell Adderley

Third Row L-R: Pherne Sands, Enith Nixon, Richard Leadon, Erin Cooper, Nathelee Shanique Edgecombe, Crystal Forbes, Leisa Williams, Audliah Nortleus, Christal Bartlett

Back Row: L-R: Terry Barry, Arlington Farquharson, Sharmaine Adderley, Glynan Pratt-Stuart, Gustavus Cox Jr., Hesley Rolle, Craig Wallace, Patrick Adderley, Roosevelt Rolle Sr.

Missing: Cedric Dale Bethel, Sophia Clarke, Shavonne Greene, Zenequa Hanna, Lashad Roberts, Carolyn Smith, Alexis Nesbitt

STAFF OF THE EIGHT MILE ROCK MAGISTRATES COURT, GRAND BAHAMA



L-R: Tannis Robinson, Richard Leadon, Erin Cooper

STAFF OF THE MARSH HARBOUR MAGISTRATE'S COURT



L-R: Sheneka Tador, Esther Cornish-Laing, Assistant Chief Magistrate Ancella Evans, Carla Nixon, Shandira Forbes, and Dereck Ferguson



JUDICIARY
THE BAHAMAS

12

**COURT SERVICE
COUNCIL'S
2024-2025
BUDGET REPORT**



www.courts.bs
www.courtsofappeal.org.bs



@BAHJudiciary



BAHJudiciary

BUDGET COURT SERVICES COUNCIL

BUDGET COURT SERVICES COUNCIL

2025-2026

DESCRIPTION		2025/2026 ALLOCATION
PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS		
Salary – Permanent/Pensionable	BS\$	8,989,742.00
Salary – Contract Workers	BS\$	6,198,900.00
TOTAL PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS	BS\$	14,535,942.00
Honoraria	BS\$	70,800.00
Overtime - Monthly Employees (General)	BS\$	90,000.00
Housing Allowance	BS\$	-
Scarcity Allowance	BS\$	208,000.00
Technical Allowance	BS\$	3,300.00
Transport & Mileage Allowance	BS\$	7,200.00
Plain Clothes Allowance	BS\$	50,000.00
Drivers Aide	BS\$	64,000.00
Responsibility Allowance	BS\$	62,000.00
Acting Allowance	BS\$	97,400.00
TOTAL ALLOWANCES	BS\$	652,700.00
TOTAL FOR BLOCK 211	BS\$	15,188,642.00

OBJECT CLASSIFICATION OF		
EXPENDITURE DESCRIPTION OF		
SUB HEAD ITEM		2025/2026
		(JULY - JUNE)
OTHER CHARGES		

BLOCK 221 - TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE

Air & Other Transport -Domestic (General Admin)	BS\$	80,000.00
Air & Other Transport - Domestic (Freeport)	BS\$	20,000.00
Air & Other Transport - Domestic (Abaco)	BS\$	-
Air & Other Transport - Domestic (COAP)	BS\$	10,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	110,000.00
Mileage In The Bahamas	BS\$	5,000.00
Subsistence - Domestic (General Administration)	BS\$	25,000.00
Subsistence - Domestic (Freeport)	BS\$	5,000.00
Subsistence - Domestic (Abaco)	BS\$	-
Subsistence - Domestic (COAP)	BS\$	3,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	38,000.00
Air & Other Transport (International)	BS\$	100,000.00
Subsistence (International)	BS\$	30,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	130,000.00
GRAND TOTAL FOR TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE	BS\$	278,000.00

OBJECT CLASSIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE DESCRIPTION OF SUB-HEAD & ITEM		PROPOSED ESTIMATES 2025/26 (JULY-JUNE)
BLOCK 222 - RENT		
Living Accommodation - Rent (General Admin)		
Living Accommodation - Rent (Abaco)		
GRAND TOTAL FOR RENT		
BLOCK 224 - SUPPLIES & MATERIALS		
Office Supplies & Stationery (General Admin)	BS\$	35,000.00
Office Supplies & Stationery (Freeport)	BS\$	15,000.00
Office Supplies & Stationery (Abaco)	BS\$	5,000.00
Office Supplies & Stationery (COAP)	BS\$	3,000.00
SUB-TOTAL		BS\$ 58,000.00
Food, Ice & Drinking Water (General Admin)	BS\$	40,000.00
Food, Ice & Drinking Water (Freeport)	BS\$	10,000.00
Food, Ice & Drinking Water (Abaco)	BS\$	-
Food, Ice & Drinking Water (COAP)	BS\$	5,000.00
SUB-TOTAL		BS\$ 55,000.00
Publications (General Administration)	BS\$	5,120.00
Publications (Freeport)	BS\$	4,320.00
Publications (COAP)	BS\$	3,200.00
SUB-TOTAL		BS\$ 12,640.00

Cleaning & Toilet Supplies (General Admin)	BS\$	40,000.00
Cleaning & Toilet Supplies (Freeport)	BS\$	10,000.00
Cleaning & Toilet Supplies (Abaco)	BS\$	-
Cleaning & Toilet Supplies (COAP)	BS\$	4,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	54,000.00
Computer Software Supplies & Mat (General Admin).	BS\$	60,000.00
Computer Software Supplies & Mat (Freeport)	BS\$	10,000.00
Computer Software Supplies & Mat. (Abaco)	BS\$	-
Computer Software Supplies & Mat. (COAP)	BS\$	4,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	74,000.00
Clothing & Clothing Supplies (General Admin)	BS\$	30,000.00
Clothing & Clothing Supplies (Freeport)	BS\$	10,000.00
Clothing & Clothing Supplies (COAP)	BS\$	3,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	43,000.00
OBJECT CLASSIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE DESCRIPTION OF SUB-HEAD & ITEM		PROPOSED ESTIMATES 2025/26 (JULY-JUNE)
Other Supplies & Materials (General Admin)	BS\$	6,880.00
Other Supplies & Materials (Freeport)	BS\$	8,000.00
Other Supplies & Materials (Abaco)	BS\$	-
Other Supplies & Materials (COAP)	BS\$	6,700.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	21,580.00
GRAND TOTAL FOR SUPPLIES & MATERIALS	BS\$	318,220.00

BLOCK 225 - SERVICES		
Printing & Duplication Service (General Admin.)	BS\$	30,000.00
Printing & Duplication Service (Freeport)	BS\$	10,000.00
Printing & Duplication Service (Abaco)	BS\$	
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	40,000.00
Advertising & Public Notices (General Admin)	BS\$	-
Advertising & Public Notices (Freeport)	BS\$	-
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	-
Professional Services (Audit, Accting.)	BS\$	-
Workshops, Conf., Sem, Meetings & Exh (Gen. Adm.)	BS\$	8,000.00
Workshops, Conf., Sem, Meetings & Exh (Freeport)	BS\$	6,400.00
Workshops, Conf., Sem, Meetings & Exh (COAP)	BS\$	1,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	15,400.00
Tuition, Training & In-Service Awards (Gen. Admin)	BS\$	30,000.00
Tuition, Training & In-Service Awards (Freeport)	BS\$	10,000.00
Tuition, Training & In-Service Awards (COAP)	BS\$	10,000.00
Licensing & Inspection of Vehicles (General Admin.)	BS\$	-
Licensing & Inspection of Vehicles (Freeport)	BS\$	-
Licensing & Inspection of Vehicles (Abaco)	BS\$	-
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	50,000.00

OBJECT CLASSIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE DESCRIPTION OF SUB-HEAD & ITEM		PROPOSED ESTIMATES 2025/26 (JULY-JUNE)
Postal Service (COAP)	BS\$	-
Consultancy Services (COAP)	BS\$	60,000.00
Fees & Other Services (General Admin)	BS\$	19,861.00
Fees & Other Services (Freeport)	BS\$	20,000.00
Fees & Other Services (Abaco)	BS\$	3,000.00
Fees & Other Services (COAP)	BS\$	27,330.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	130,191.00
Staff Events (General Administration)	BS\$	40,000.00
Staff Events (Freeport)	BS\$	10,000.00
Staff Events (COAP)	BS\$	7,500.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	57,500.00
Local Transportation of Goods	BS\$	-
Freight & Express (General Admin)	BS\$	3,000.00
Freight & Express (Freeport)	BS\$	1,600.00
Freight & Express (Abaco)	BS\$	-
Freight & Express (COAP)	BS\$	1,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	5,600.00
Maintenance and Support (COAP)	BS\$	10,000.00
Building Maintenance (General Admin)	BS\$	90,000.00
Building Maintenance (Freeport)	BS\$	10,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	110,000.00
Fumigation and Pest Control (COAP)	BS\$	2,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	2,000.00

Fumigation and Pest Control (COAP)	BS\$	2,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	2,000.00
Operation of Facilities or Other Ser Cont. (Gen.Adm.)	BS\$	1,066,109.00
Operation of Facilities or Other Ser Cont. (Freeport)	BS\$	78,000.00
Operation of Facilities or Other Service Cont. (Abaco)	BS\$	-
Operation of Facilities or Other Service Cont (COAP)	BS\$	97,853.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	1,241,962.00
GRAND TOTAL FOR SERVICES	BS\$	1,652,653.00

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Special Projects - Office of The Chief Justice	BS\$	1,000,000.00
--	------	--------------

OBJECT CLASSIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE DESCRIPTION OF SUB-HEAD & ITEM

PROPOSED ESTIMATES 2025/26 (JULY-JUNE)

BLOCK 226 - MINOR CAPITAL REPAIRS

Transportation Equipment - Upk (General Admin.)	BS\$	30,000.00
Transportation Equipment - Upkeep (Freeport)	BS\$	3,200.00
Transportation Equipment - Upkeep (Abaco)	BS\$	4,000.00
Transportation Equipment - Upkeep (COAP)	BS\$	10,000.00
GRAND TOTAL FOR MINOR CAPITAL REPAIRS	BS\$	47,200.00

BLOCK 227 - OPERATIONAL EXPENSES

Operational Expenses - Magistrate Courts	BS\$	500,000.00
Operational Expenses - Magistrate Courts (Freeport)	BS\$	-
GRAND TOTAL FOR OPERATIONAL EXPENSES	BS\$	500,000.00

BLOCK 228 - SPECIAL FINANCIAL TRANSACTION		
VAT Expense	BS\$	-
Judicial Service Commission	BS\$	-
GRAND TOTAL FOR SPECIAL FINANCIAL TRANSACTION	BS\$	-
BLOCK 272 - SOCIAL BENEFITS		
Legal Consultation Meetings - Legal Aid (General Admin.)	BS\$	400,000.00
Legal Consultation Meetings - Legal Aid (Freeport)	BS\$	100,000.00
Legal Consultation Meetings - Legal Aid (COAP)	BS\$	16,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	516,000.00
Victim Care Fund - Jury (Gen. Admin)	BS\$	150,505.00
Victim Care Fund - Jury (Freeport)	BS\$	30,000.00
SUB-TOTAL	BS\$	180,505.00
GRAND TOTAL FOR BENEFITS	BS\$	696,505.00
OBJECT CLASSIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE DESCRIPTION OF SUB-HEAD & ITEM		PROPOSED ESTIMATES 2025/26 (JULY-JUNE)
Bank Service Charges	BS\$	10,000.00
GRAND TOTAL FOR MINOR CAPITAL REPAIRS	BS\$	47,200.00
GRAND TOTAL FOR OTHER CHARGES	BS\$	4,184,358.00
	BS\$	4,184,358.00

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Members of the Annual Report Committee

- 1 **Ms. Kristina Wallace Whitfield** - Court of Appeal Registrar, Co-Chairperson
- 2 **Mr. Renaldo Tooté** - Supreme Court Registrar, Co-Chairperson
- 3 **Justice Gregory Smith** - Justice of the Court of Appeal
- 4 **Justice Camille Darville-Gomez** - Justice of the Supreme Court
- 5 **Justice Constance Delancy** - Justice of the Supreme Court
- 6 **Mrs. Kara Turnquest-Deveaux** - Deputy Chief Magistrate
- 7 **Mrs. Sharonna Johnson-Richards** - Court of Appeal Assistant Registrar
- 8 **Ms. Mildred Bodie** - Chief Executive Officer
- 9 **Ms. Daniella Mohammed** - Manager, Statistics Department
- 10 **Ms. Darrenique Smith** - Manager, Transcription Unit

The Judiciary wishes to thank the talented and hardworking team at the Bahamas Government Printing Department, especially Mr. Stephen Collins, Mr. David Knowles of Pro Photo, Mr. Justin Cancino of the Starboard Softworks, Ltd. Team, and the Bahamas Information Service.



JUDICIARY

THE BAHAMAS



www.courtofappeal.org.bs

www.courts.bs



[@BAHJudiciary](https://twitter.com/BAHJudiciary)



facebook.com/BAHJudiciary