

PLEA BARGAIN CAMP LAUNCHED AT UG. UPPER PRISON, LUZIRA

In a move towards expeditious and effective administration of justice, His Lordship Alfonso Chigamony Owiny Dollo, the Chief Justice of Uganda, inaugurated the Plea Bargain Camp at UG. Prison Upper, Luzira. The ceremony was marked by collaboration, and the shared commitment to transform Uganda's legal landscape.

Addressing the audience, Chief Justice Owiny Dollo commended the open-door policy of the top leadership of Uganda Prisons Service, stressing the importance of collaboration between the judiciary and Uganda Prison Service in promoting access to justice. The Chief Justice shed light on Uganda's plea bargaining journey, emphasizing its significance in addressing resource constraints and case backlogs in developing countries.

The initiative, supported by Pepperdine University of the USA, plays a crucial role in justice reform. Pepperdine University collaborates with the Ugandan judiciary, providing training and legal representation for accused individuals. This meaningful partnership aims to create a fair and efficient legal system.

Encouraging inmates to consider plea bargaining if they accept responsibility for their crimes, Chief Justice Dollo highlighted the potential for achieving peace through this process. He urged inmates to utilize the program responsibly, aligning with the principles of fairness and accountability.

The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Hon. Lady Justice Jane Frances Abodo, expressed appreciation for Chief Justice Dollo's leadership in promoting plea bargain initiatives. Drawing parallels with traditional African conflict resolution methods, she emphasized the role of remorse and forgiveness in paving the way for reintegration.

Hon. Lady Justice Abodo applauded inmates for exercising their constitutional right to participate in plea bargaining. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, she highlighted the success of the program and underlined the importance of fair punishment based on evidence, considering the rights of victims. The DPP urged prosecutors to handle case files diligently, maintaining a balance between justice and compassion.

Speaking on behalf of the Commissioner General of Prisons, Mr. Jacob Kivumbi, Commissioner of Prisons (Custodial Services), emphasized the Plea Bargain Camp's importance in fostering a more efficient and fair justice system. He noted that the initiative aligns with their commitment to ensure justice is served promptly while considering the rights and circumstances of the accused.

Plea bargaining holds immense significance in the legal realm as it encourages cooperation between the prosecution and defense. Defendants opting for plea agreements may receive more lenient sentences in exchange for admitting guilt, thereby saving valuable court resources.

During the camp, inmates were provided with an opportunity to present their cases, engaging in prosecution and defense sessions. This hands-on approach allows for a thorough examination of circumstances surrounding each case, facilitating informed decisions by both parties. The Plea Bargain Camp stands as a beacon of hope for a more accessible, efficient, and compassionate justice system in Uganda.





