



JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION

"A Zimbabwe in which world class justice prevails!"

ANNUAL REPORT 2024





JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT

2024

Mission

In accordance with the laws of Zimbabwe and best practice, to promote the maintenance of a transparent, accountable, and independent judiciary and provide administrative support to the judiciary for an efficient and effective justice delivery system that inspires public trust and confidence in the rule of law.

Vision

A Zimbabwe in which world class justice prevails!

Preamble

In terms of section 323(1) of the **Constitution of Zimbabwe**, every Commission is required to submit to Parliament, through the responsible Minister, an annual report describing fully its operations and activities for the preceding year by not later than the end of March in the succeeding year.

It is in terms of this constitutional provision that the Judicial Service Commission submits its 2024 Annual Report.



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, the Commission, in its operations, was guided by the theme “**The role of the judiciary in entrenching constitutionalism**”. Under this theme, adjudication of matters, reduction of backlog and access to justice through decentralisation of courts remained a priority. The Superior Courts, which are now completely digitised under the Integrated Electronic Case Management System (hereinafter “the IECMS”), performed very well on the platform. The gains and benefits brought about by the IECMS have begun to show through the efficient case management of matters and impressive case clearances by the courts.

A key strategic priority of the Judicial Service Commission 2021-2025 Strategic Plan is enhancing access to justice by improving the accessibility of courts through decentralisation of court services to the general populace of Zimbabwe. This aligns with Government policy as enunciated in the **National Development Strategy 1**. This was done by opening Circuit Courts and resident Provincial and Regional Courts in various Provinces. The commissioning of Triangle Magistrates’ Court and the new Chiredzi Magistrates’ Court building was a continuation of the Commission’s goal of bringing the courts to the townships and decongestion of the courts in the main cities. Various courts which had been operating as periodical courts were elevated to resident Magistrates’ Court status to fully service the communities within their physical jurisdiction. These include Kotwa Magistrates’ Court, Chinamhora Magistrates’ Court and Beatrice Magistrates’ Court. In the same spirit of devolution and decentralisation, Mutoko Magistrates’ Court and Kwekwe Magistrates’ Courts were designated as regional Magistrates’ Courts, amongst other regional courts. At the same time, Cashel Valley was promulgated as a circuit court amongst other courts.

During the year under review, the Magistrates’ Courts underwent various changes to enhance efficiency in that court. The most significant of these was



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the division of the Harare Metropolitan Province into two magisterial provinces, Harare South and Harare North Provinces. The **Harare South Province** comprises Harare Central, Harare South/Waterfalls, Ruwa/Epworth, Chitungwiza, Seke, and Beatrice districts, while Harare North Province comprises Harare North/Borrowdale, Highfield, Mabvuku/Tafara, and Chinamhora districts, Harare civil court and Norton.

In the High Court, Honourable Justice Garainesu Mawadze was appointed as the first-ever Deputy Judge President of the High Court following the creation of the office through the Judicial Laws Amendment Act, 2023. Relatedly, during the year under review, the Commission conducted public interviews for Judges of the High Court and Administrative Court, in terms of the law. Following the public interviews, ten (10) new Judges of the High Court and one (1) judge of the Administrative Court were appointed to the office of a Judge by His Excellency, The President on 17 June 2024. The year 2024, therefore, saw a total of twelve judicial appointments.

On the regional front, the Commission hosted two major conferences in 2024. In January, the Commission successfully hosted the 3rd Annual Symposium of the Africa Electoral Justice Network (AEJN) in Victoria Falls. The Commission also successfully hosted the 7th Congress of the Conference of Constitutional Jurisdictions of Africa (CJCA) from the 30th of October 2024 to the 3rd of November 2024 in Victoria Falls. This was the flagship Conference hosted by the Commission as this is the largest gathering of judiciaries in Africa, held every two years.

During the 7th Congress, Zimbabwe, through the Chief Justice, ascended to the Presidency of CJCA, taking over from Morocco.



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2. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION

- The Judicial Service Commission is an independent constitutional commission established by **section 189** of the **Constitution of Zimbabwe**. Its main functions are prescribed in **section 190** as follows: -
 - to tender advice to the government on matters relating to the judiciary and the administration of justice;
 - to promote and facilitate the independence and accountability of the judiciary; and
 - to promote and facilitate the efficient and transparent administration of justice in Zimbabwe.
- In accordance with the Constitution, the **Judicial Service Act** [Chapter 7:18] confers further functions on the Commission to deal with the employment, discipline and conditions of service of all persons employed in the courts.
- The table below denotes the current composition of the Commission, the incumbents and the relevant provisions under which the persons' appointments as Commissioners in the Judicial Service Commission were made:

TABLE 1

SECTION OF THE CONSTITUTION PROVIDING FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION	NAME OF THE INCUMBENT COMMISSIONER
1. SECTION 189(1)(A) THE CHIEF JUSTICE. PRESIDES OVER THE MEETINGS OF THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION IN TERMS OF SECTION 189(2).	HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE L. MALABA, CHIEF JUSTICE OF ZIMBABWE.



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2. SECTION 189(1)(B) THE DEPUTY CHIEF JUSTICE. PRESIDES OVER THE MEETINGS OF THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION IN THE ABSENCE OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE IN TERMS OF SECTION 189(2).	HONOURABLE MRS JUSTICE E. C. GWAUNZA, DEPUTY CHIEF JUSTICE OF ZIMBABWE.
3. SECTION 189(1)(C) THE JUDGE PRESIDENT OF THE HIGH COURT.	HONOURABLE MRS JUSTICE M. ZIMBA-DUBE, JUDGE PRESIDENT OF THE HIGH COURT OF ZIMBABWE.
4. SECTION 189(1)(D) ONE JUDGE NOMINATED BY THE JUDGES OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT, THE SUPREME COURT, THE HIGH COURT, THE LABOUR COURT AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE COURT. APPOINTED FOR ONE NON-RENEWABLE TERM OF SIX YEARS IN TERMS OF SECTION 189(3).	HONOURABLE MR JUSTICE C. E. BHUNU, JUDGE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF ZIMBABWE.
5. SECTION 189(1)(E) THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.	HONOURABLE MRS V. MABHIZA, ATTORNEY-GENERAL OF ZIMBABWE.
6. SECTION 189(1)(F) THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE.	MRS V. P GUWURIRO, CHIEF MAGISTRATE OF ZIMBABWE*
7. SECTION 189(1)(G) THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.	DR V. HUNGWE, CHAIRPERSON OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.
8. SECTION 189(1)(H) THREE PRACTISING LEGAL PRACTITIONERS OF AT LEAST SEVEN YEARS' EXPERIENCE DESIGNATED BY THE ASSOCIATION, CONSTITUTED UNDER AN ACT OF PARLIAMENT, WHICH REPRESENTS LEGAL PRACTITIONERS IN ZIMBABWE. APPOINTED FOR ONE NON-	MS N. MOYO, LEGAL PRACTITIONER.



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<p>RENEWABLE TERM OF SIX YEARS IN TERMS OF SECTION 189(3).</p>	
<p>9. SECTION 189(1)(H) THREE PRACTISING LEGAL PRACTITIONERS OF AT LEAST SEVEN YEARS' EXPERIENCE DESIGNATED BY THE ASSOCIATION, CONSTITUTED UNDER AN ACT OF PARLIAMENT, WHICH REPRESENTS LEGAL PRACTITIONERS IN ZIMBABWE. APPOINTED FOR ONE NON-RENEWABLE TERM OF SIX YEARS IN TERMS OF SECTION 189(3).</p>	<p>MR T. MASIYE-MOYO, LEGAL PRACTITIONER.</p>
<p>10. SECTION 189(1)(H) THREE PRACTISING LEGAL PRACTITIONERS OF AT LEAST SEVEN YEARS' EXPERIENCE DESIGNATED BY THE ASSOCIATION, CONSTITUTED UNDER AN ACT OF PARLIAMENT, WHICH REPRESENTS LEGAL PRACTITIONERS IN ZIMBABWE. APPOINTED FOR ONE NON-RENEWABLE TERM OF SIX YEARS IN TERMS OF SECTION 189(3).</p>	<p>MR M. HOGWE, LEGAL PRACTITIONER.</p>
<p>11. SECTION 189(1)(I) ONE PROFESSOR OR SENIOR LECTURER OF LAW DESIGNATED BY AN ASSOCIATION REPRESENTING THE MAJORITY OF THE TEACHERS OF LAW AT ZIMBABWEAN UNIVERSITIES OR, IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH AN ASSOCIATION, APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT. APPOINTED FOR ONE NON-RENEWABLE TERM OF SIX YEARS IN TERMS OF SECTION 189(3).</p>	<p>DR R.K. KATSANDE, LAW LECTURER.</p>
<p>12. SECTION 189(1)(J) ONE PERSON WHO FOR AT LEAST SEVEN YEARS HAS PRACTISED IN ZIMBABWE AS A PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT OR AUDITOR, AND WHO IS DESIGNATED BY AN</p>	<p>MR F.V. CHINGOZHO, PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT.</p>



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ASSOCIATION, CONSTITUTED UNDER AN ACT OF PARLIAMENT, WHICH REPRESENTS SUCH PERSONS. APPOINTED FOR ONE NON-RENEWABLE TERM OF SIX YEARS IN TERMS OF SECTION 189(3).	
13. SECTION 189(1)(K) ONE PERSON WITH AT LEAST SEVEN YEARS' EXPERIENCE IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT. APPOINTED FOR ONE NON-RENEWABLE TERM OF SIX YEARS IN TERMS OF SECTION 189(3).	MS T. JASI, HUMAN RESOURCES EXPERT.

*New appointment to the Judicial Service Commission

- Mrs Vongai Palmer Guwuriro was appointed as the substantive Chief Magistrate on 11 December 2024 following Mrs Faith Mushure's appointment as a High Court Judge. She becomes a commissioner of the Judicial Service Commission by virtue of her appointment to the office of Chief Magistrate, in terms of **section 189** of the Constitution.



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JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



HONOURABLE CHIEF JUSTICE
L. MALABA



HONOURABLE DEPUTY CHIEF JUSTICE
E.C. GWAUNZA



DR. V. HUNGWE
CHAIRPERSON
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION



HONOURABLE JUDGE PRESIDENT OF THE
HIGH COURT
JUSTICE M. ZIMBA-DUBE



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HONOURABLE MRS V. MABHIZA
ATTORNEY GENERAL



HONOURABLE JUSTICE C.E. BHUNU
JUDGE OF THE SUPREME COURT



MRS V.P. GUWURO
CHIEF MAGISTRATE



MS N. MOYO
COMMISSIONER



MR T. MASIYE-MOYO
COMMISSIONER



DR R. K. KATSANDE
COMMISSIONER



MR M. HOGWE
COMMISSIONER



MS T. JASI
COMMISSIONER



MR F. V CHINGOZHO
COMMISSIONER



MR W. T. CHIKWANA
SECRETARY, JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION

3. HUMAN RESOURCES

- The Commission commenced the year with a total of **2192** members of staff in post. By the end of 2024, the number of employees had increased to **2352**. The increases in staff complement is attributed to the need to meet the growing human capital requirements in the Commission arising from the decentralisation of the courts through the establishment of additional courts, supporting the IECMS trajectory as phase three of the implementation matrix was rolled out and the recruitment of additional judges for the High Court and the Administrative Court.
- The graph below details the steady increase in the staff complement over the last three years:

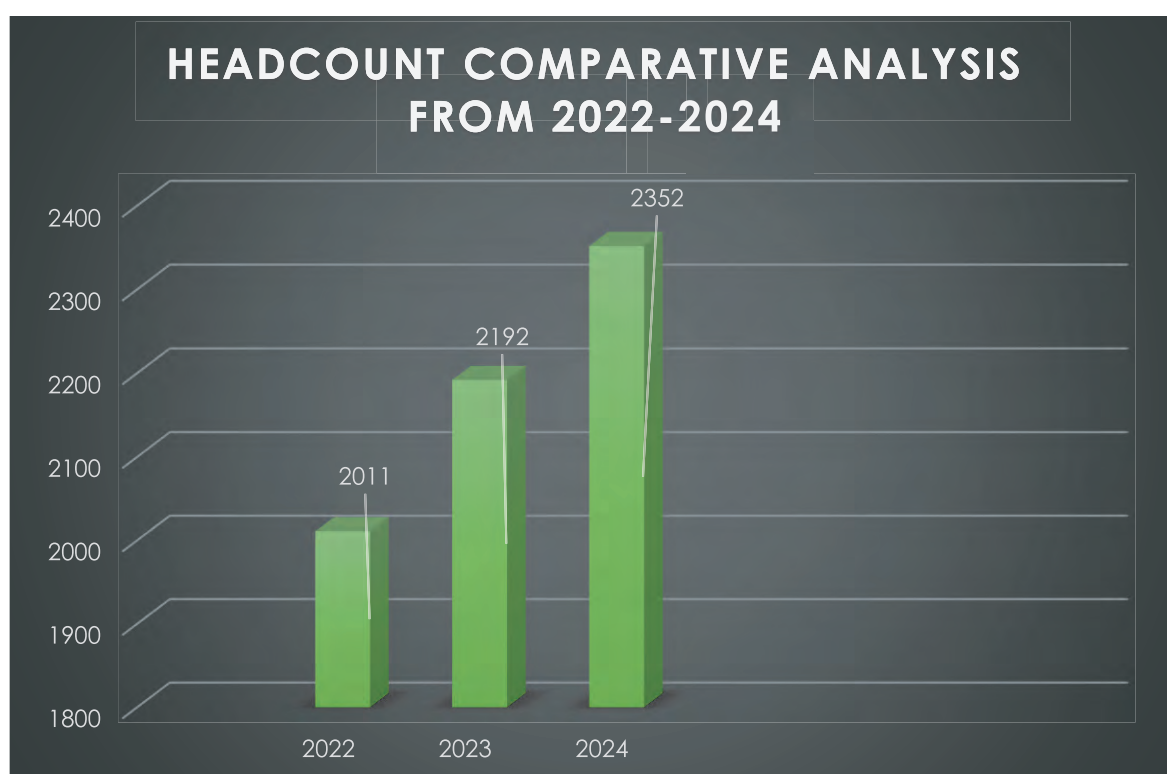


Figure 2: Headcount Comparative Analysis from 2022-2024

Headcount Distribution by Gender

- The staff demographics of the Commission show a continued adherence to the principles of gender equality as guided by section 17 of the

Constitution. Of the **2 352** staff members in the Commission, **1 287** are female while **1 065** are male.

- The graph below shows the statistics of the distribution of staff members by gender in the last three years:

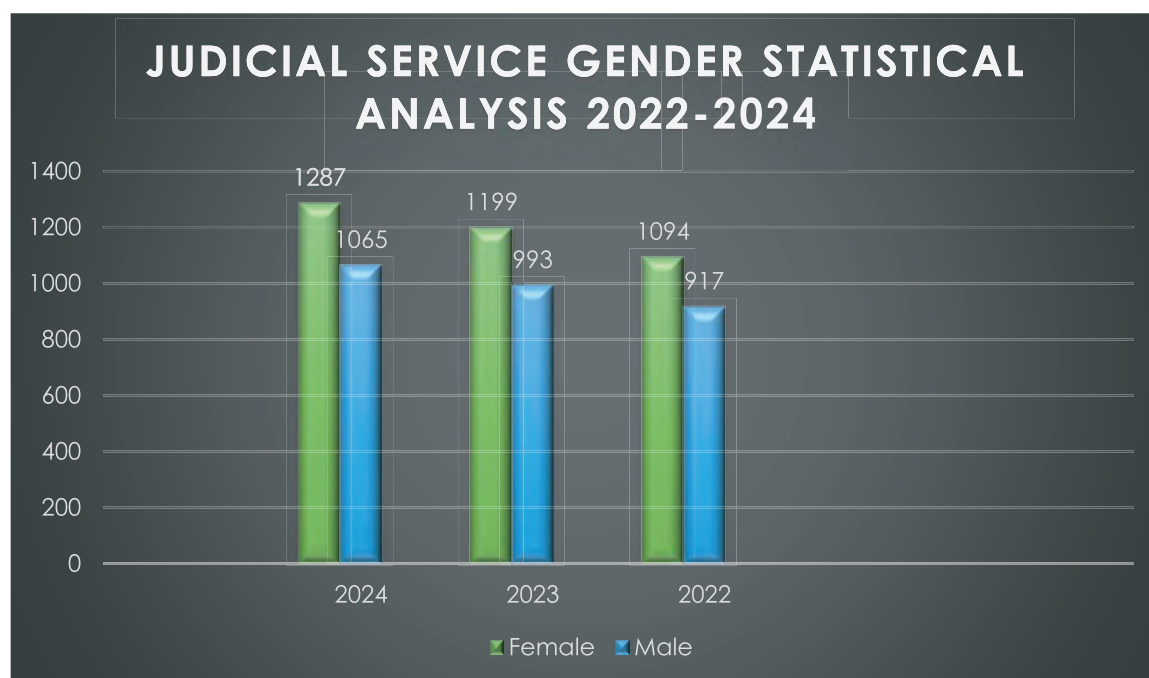


Figure 3: Judicial Service Gender Statistical Analysis 2022-2024

JUDGES HEADCOUNT

- In 2024, the headcount of judges increased from sixty-six (**66**) to seventy-four (**74**). This is the highest number of judges the Commission has had in post for the past three years.
- The complement of judges increased following the recruitment of eleven (**11**) additional judges during the course of the year, being ten (**10**) High Court judges and one (**1**) Administrative Court judge. The following Justices were appointed to the High Court, Mpokiseng Dube J, Sijabuliso Siziba J, Joel Mambara J, Regis Dembure J, Naison Chivayo J, Vivian Ndlovu J, Philipa Phillips J, Faith Mushure J, Gibson Mandaza J and Ngoni Nduna J. Maxwell Kaitano J was appointed as a judge of the Administrative Court.



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- Following the introduction of the office of the Deputy Judge President of the High Court through the Judicial Laws Amendment Act, 2023, there remained a need to appoint an incumbent for the office to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the operations of the High Court.
- The Honourable Garainesu Mawadze J was appointed as the Deputy Judge President of the High Court of Zimbabwe to assist the Judge President in supervising the court's operations. He was sworn into office on June 17, 2024, together with the eleven (11) judges who had been recently recruited.
- The Commission mourned the loss of the Honourable Justice Mercy Moya-Matshanga, who passed away on the 17th of July 2024. She was the Judge in charge of the Bulawayo Labour Court. She served the Labour Court bench in the southern region with distinction and integrity until her untimely death.
- On 31st December 2024, Honourable Justice David Mangota, the Senior Judge of the Bulawayo High Court retired from the bench having reached the age of seventy (**70**) years.
- Below is the graphical exposition of the judges' headcount over the last three years.



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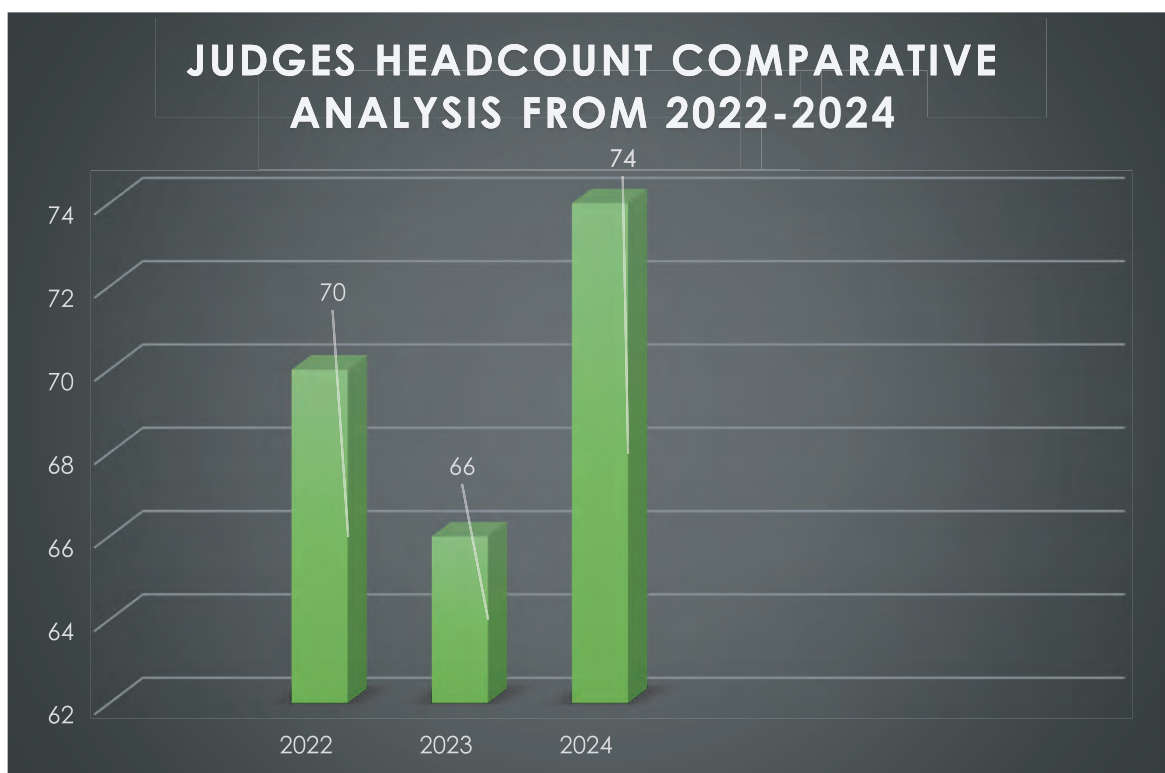


Figure 4: Judges Headcount Comparative Analysis 2022-2024

LEADERSHIP CHANGES IN THE MAGISTRACY DEPARTMENT

- The Magistracy underwent significant leadership changes following the ascendancy of Honourable Mushure J and Honourable Nduna J from the positions of Chief Magistrate and Deputy Chief Magistrate, respectively, to that of Judges of the High Court.
- Mrs Guwuriro, then the Principal Administrator, took over the department's leadership following her appointment as Chief Magistrate on 11 December 2024. Mr Collet Ncube was appointed the Deputy Chief Magistrate, while Mr Farai Gwitima was appointed the Principal Administrator in the Chief Magistrate's Office.



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MAGISTERIAL HEADCOUNT

- As the Commission continued to decentralise the Magistrates' Courts by establishing additional resident courts throughout the country, there was a need to complement this move by recruiting more Magistrates who were deployed to these new courts. Consequently, the Magistrates complement increased from **249** in 2023 to **254** as of 31 December 2024.
- The graph below demonstrates the gradual increase of Magistrates in post from 2022 to 2024:

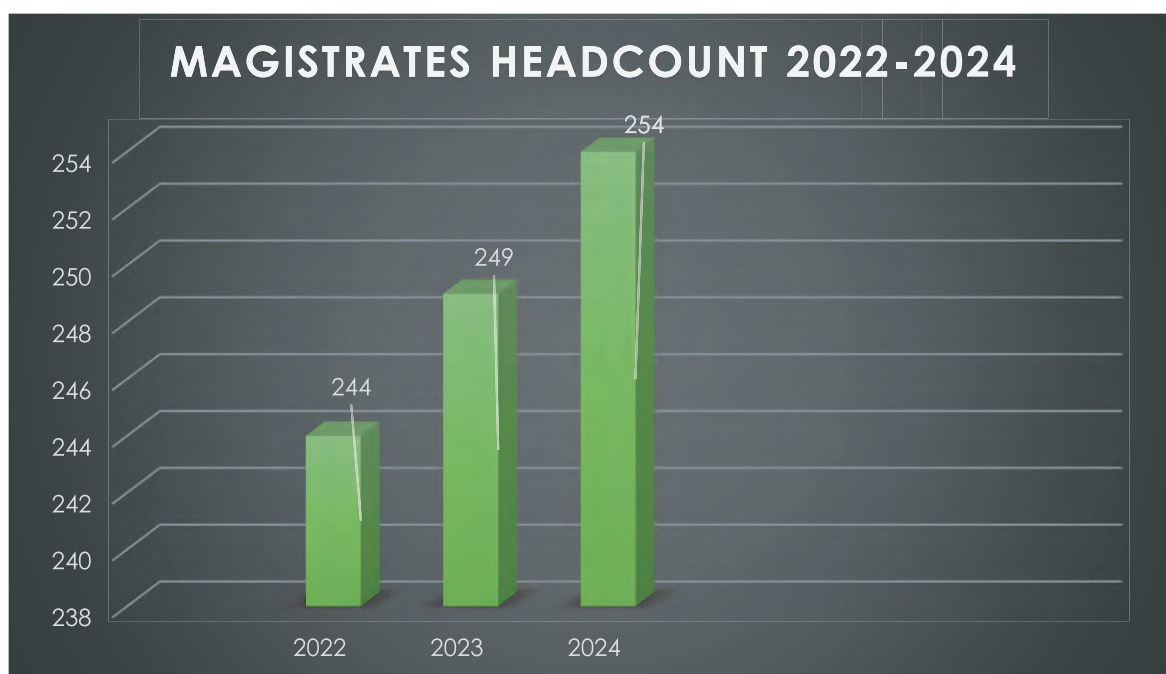


Figure 5: Magistrates' Headcount 2022-2024

Headcount of Magistrates by gender

- The gender proportion of the Magistracy is **153** females to **101** males. The focus of the Commission is always to ensure that there is gender balance in the Magistracy so as to comply with the provisions of **section 17** of the Constitution.
- The current proportion of gender distribution in the Magistracy is illustrated below:

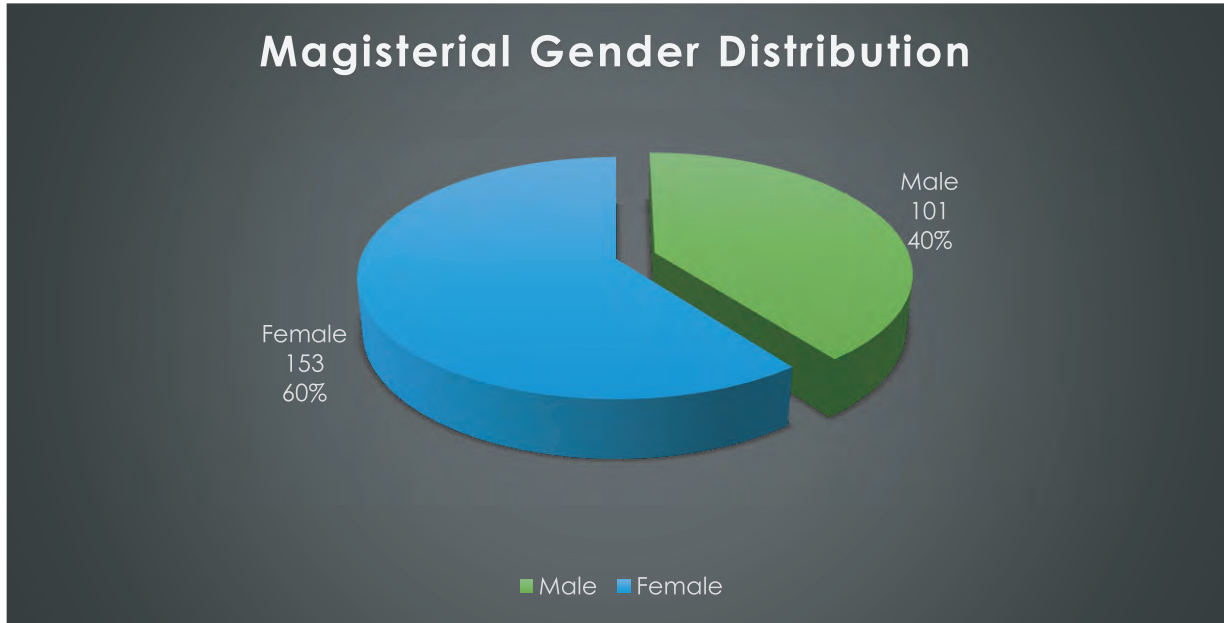


Figure 6: Magisterial Gender Distribution

MAGISTERIAL DEPLOYMENT BY PROVINCE AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

- The table below shows the deployment of the **254** Magistrates in post by province.

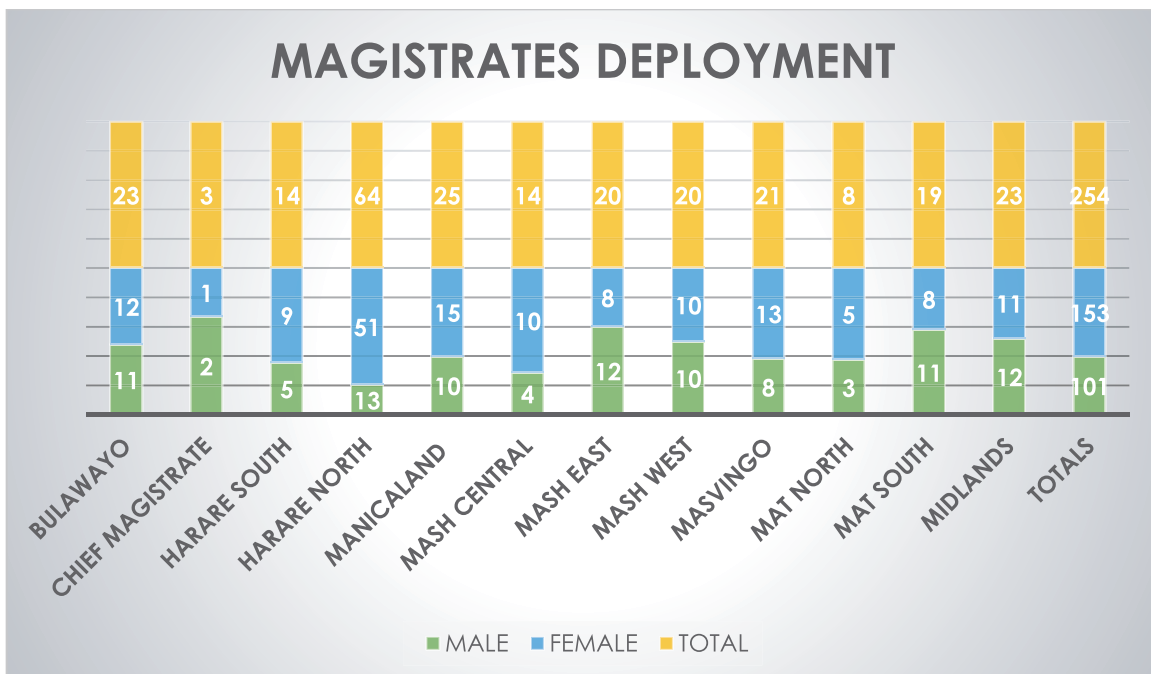


Figure 7: Magisterial Deployment

Wastage and natural attrition

- The Commission lost **167** staff members in 2024 through various forms of attrition, an increase from **150** in the previous year.
- Below is the comparative analysis of the attrition from 2022 to 2024:

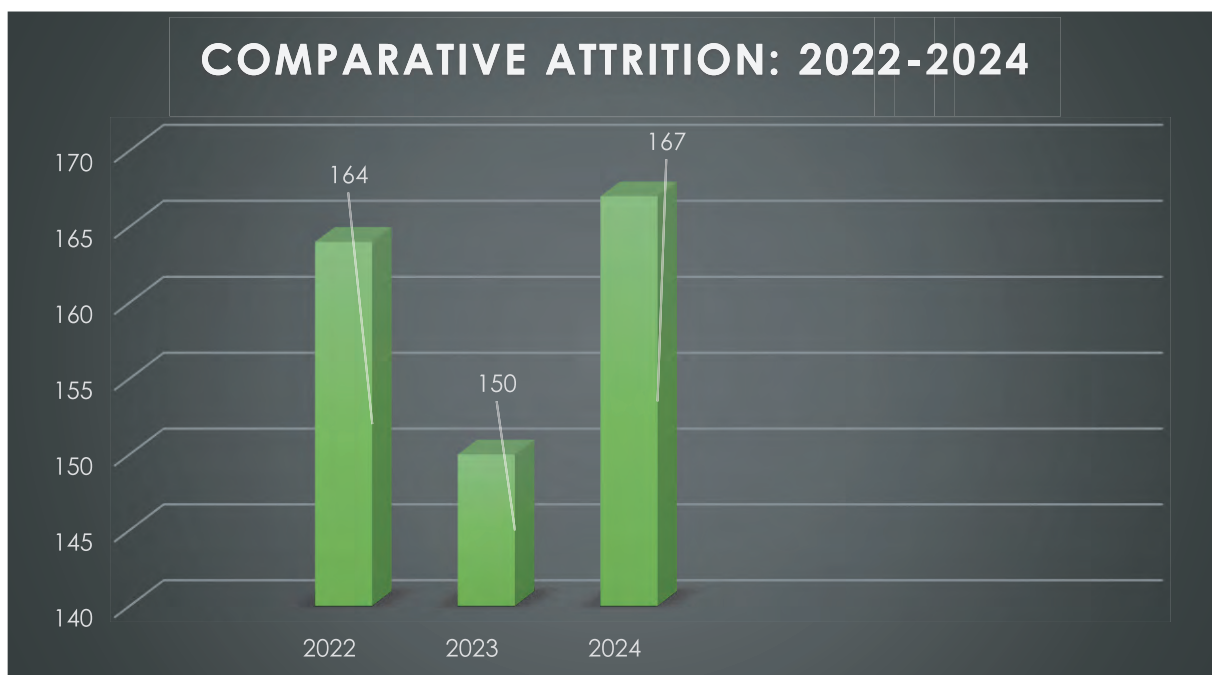


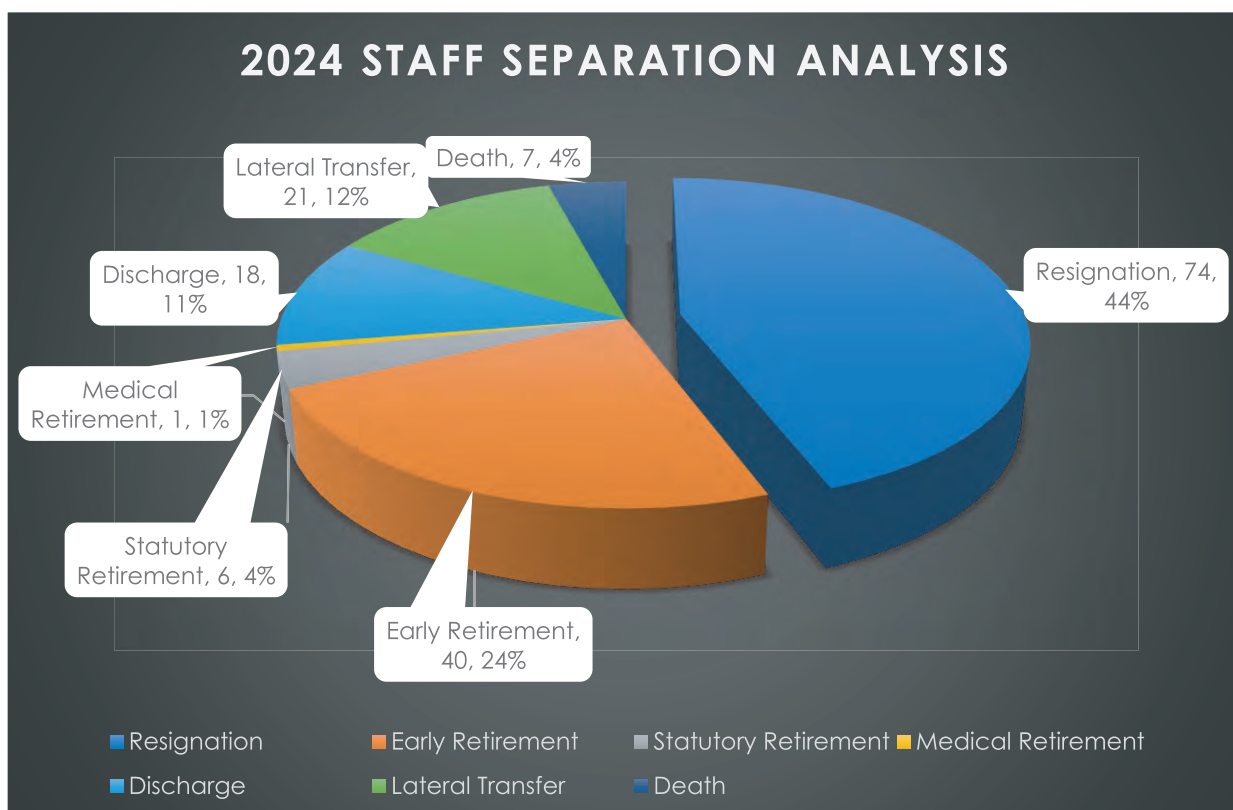
Figure 8: Comparative Attrition:2022-2024

- The highest cause of attrition during the year under review was resignations, under which the Commission lost a total of **74** members of staff. The primary reason for resignations from the analysis is the economic hardships caused by unattractive remuneration.
- In addition to resignations, the Commission also lost staff through other reasons, such as death, retirement, and discharge from service. A pertinent observation is also the increased number of staff members who are going on early retirement and discharged from employment for disciplinary reasons.
- The chart below illustrates a complete analysis of the reasons for staff separation.



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- The need to continuously review staff salaries remains pertinent to arrest the high number of resignations. The Commission also employed other non-monetary means of attracting and retaining staff, like providing transport for members. To that end, the Commission procured more motor vehicles and buses to ferry staff to and from home.

Staff Training and Professional Development

- **Section 165 (7)** of the Constitution requires that members of the judiciary maintain and enhance their competencies in order to fully serve the people of Zimbabwe from whom judicial authority derives. On its part, the Commission, through the Judicial Training Institute of Zimbabwe (JTIZ), has created a platform for a well-coordinated training regime for all judicial and non-judicial members of the Judicial Service.
- The key training programmes undertaken during the period under review include the following:
 - An induction programme was held for the eleven (**11**) recently appointed judges. The induction programme was thematised



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to facilitate the smooth transition of the newly appointed judges to the office of a judge.

- Similarly, Magistrates orientation programmes were run for fifty-two (**52**) newly recruited Magistrates under three (**3**) intakes. Twenty-three (**23**) Magistrates were successfully sworn in in 2024, while the rest are scheduled to complete the programme in the coming year.
- The End of Second Term Symposium was held in collaboration with the Competition and Tariff Commission and the COMESA Competition Commission. Per tradition, this symposium provided a platform for members of the judiciary to exchange views on the law, in this case, competition law. The regional perspective brought by the COMESA Competition Commission was beneficial for distilling best practices in the region.
- Two judges attended the Annual Judges' Symposium in South Africa. The Symposium is an important event organised by the South African Judicial Education Institute (SAJEI), which provides ongoing judicial education, training, professional development, and dialogue opportunities among judges in the region.
- Magistrates participated in a Data Protection and Cybercrime Training Programme in Bulawayo. The programme, run in collaboration with the Postal Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (POTRAZ), was designed to transfer knowledge on data protection and cybercrime to Magistrates as they adjudicate cyber-related offences.
- The impending launch of the Electronic Auctions (E-Auctions) in the Sheriff's Office as complementary to IECMS necessitated warehouse management and inventory control training. The training was administered to the Sheriff's Office in collaboration with the Harare Polytechnic College.



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- Preparations for the launch of the Fourth Phase of IECMS gained momentum in 2024. All the Commission's technical personnel received training on the functionality of the system in the Magistrates' Courts. The training equipped the technical teams to support the Magistrates' Court once it is live on IECMS.
- The Electronic Learning Management System (E-LMS), a digital learning space in use within the JTIZ, proved to be an invaluable tool for the capacity-building of both judicial and non-judicial staff. One hundred forty-four (**144**) virtual trainings were conducted for every department and category of employees within the Judicial Service.
- Regional Magistrates continued to regularly provide training to all Magistrates deployed within their divisions. It is now a performance management assessment requirement that a regional Magistrate conducts at least two training sessions for Magistrates in a month.



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4. COURT OPERATIONS

Legislative and policy developments

- Having noted the huge numbers of cases that were being processed by the courts in the Harare metropolitan province and the high number of litigants visiting those courts daily, which was now causing serious administrative challenges, the JSC decided to split the province into two by creating **Harare North** and **Harare South** Provinces. The desire was to streamline the operational exigencies and administrative efficiency in the courts located in the province. These provinces were created in terms of the Magistrates' Court (Provinces)(Amendment)Notice published under Statutory Instrument 165 of 2024.
- The **Harare South Province** comprises Harare Central, Harare South/Waterfalls, Ruwa/Epworth, Chitungwiza, Seke, and Beatrice districts, while Harare North comprises Harare North/Borrowdale, Highfield, Mabvuku/Tafara, and Chinamhora districts, Harare civil court and Norton.
- The High Court (Amendment) Rules, 2023, which amended the High Court Rules, 2021, were further amended by Statutory Instrument 81 of 2024, following comments made by the Parliamentary Legal Committee.
- The Labour Court Rules were amended through the Labour Court (Fees)(Amendment) Rules, 2024 (Statutory Instrument 156 of 2024) to align the taxation fees and the fees for processing of court records with other court rules.

Decentralisation of Courts

- The decentralisation of the Magistrates' Courts was one of the key performance drivers for the Commission during the period under review. The priority was to increase the number of regional courts and resident



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provincial courts so that the distances which the public travel from their homes to the nearest court stations are reduced.

- In that regard, during the course of the year under review, additional regional courts were opened at Kwekwe, Mutoko, Zvishavane, Mbare and Guruve. Whilst all the other regional courts are fully operational, there have been delays in operationalising Guruve Regional Magistrates' Court because of the need to set up appropriate facilities to house the regional court.
- Resident Magistrates' Courts were established at a number of stations which used to be run on a periodic basis. These were at Triangle in Masvingo province, Kotwa in Mashonaland East province, Shamva in Mashonaland Central province, Banket in Mashonaland West province, Beatrice in Harare South province, Mabvuku and Chinamora in Harare North province, Nembudziya in Midlands province and Wedza in Mashonaland East province. Some of the courts are already operational, while others will open their doors to the public during the first term of 2025.
- All the logistics for the opening of the courts have been finalised. What is left are consultations with key stakeholders such as the National Prosecuting Authority and the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services.
- In the Harare North province, it is envisaged that the station at Mabvuku will start operating during the course of 2025 because the construction of the courthouse has since commenced. In Matabeleland South Province, Brunapeg was designated as a resident Magistrates' Court. The land has been secured to construct the court, and the Commission is currently in engagement with the Treasury to provide funding to construct the courthouse.
- In addition to the resident Magistrates' Courts, the Commission spearheaded the designation of circuit courts at Nyanga for the regional court to be serviced by Mutare regional court, at Ruwange to



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be serviced by Nyanga Magistrates' Court, at Makuti to be serviced by Karoi Magistrates' Court, at Cashel Valley in Manicaland to be serviced by Chimanimani Magistrates' Court, at Mahusekwa to be serviced by Marondera Magistrates' Court, and at Lusulu and Siabuwa to be serviced by Binga Magistrates' Court.

- The year 2024 witnessed the unprecedented establishment of Magisterial Courts. This was not surprising because the Commission relentlessly pursued its strategic plan objective of decentralising the courts to enhance access to justice for all citizens.

Regional Collaboration

- The Judicial Service Commission was honoured to host the 3rd Annual Symposium of the Africa Electoral Justice Network (AEJN) in January 2024 in Victoria Falls. The symposium was held under the theme: **“Making the dream African Charter a reality: The role of the judiciary in upholding the rule of law with specific reference to free, fair and credible elections in Africa.”** The symposium was held at the Elephant Hills Resort in Victoria Falls and brought together judges, legal experts and scholars in Africa to deliberate and share experiences on topical issues related to electoral justice and the role of the judiciary in ensuring free and fair elections. It marked a significant milestone with the formal adoption and signing of the statute governing the electoral network.
- From 30th October to 3rd November 2024, Zimbabwe, through the Judiciary, hosted the Seventh Congress of the Conference of Constitutional Jurisdictions of Africa (CJCA) at the Elephant Hills Resort in Victoria Falls. More than two hundred (**200**) delegates from forty-three (**43**) countries and ten (**10**) international and regional organisations attended the Congress, which was held under the theme: **“Human dignity as a fundamental value and principle: A source of constitutional interpretation, protection of fundamental human rights and application.”** Amongst the **43** countries in

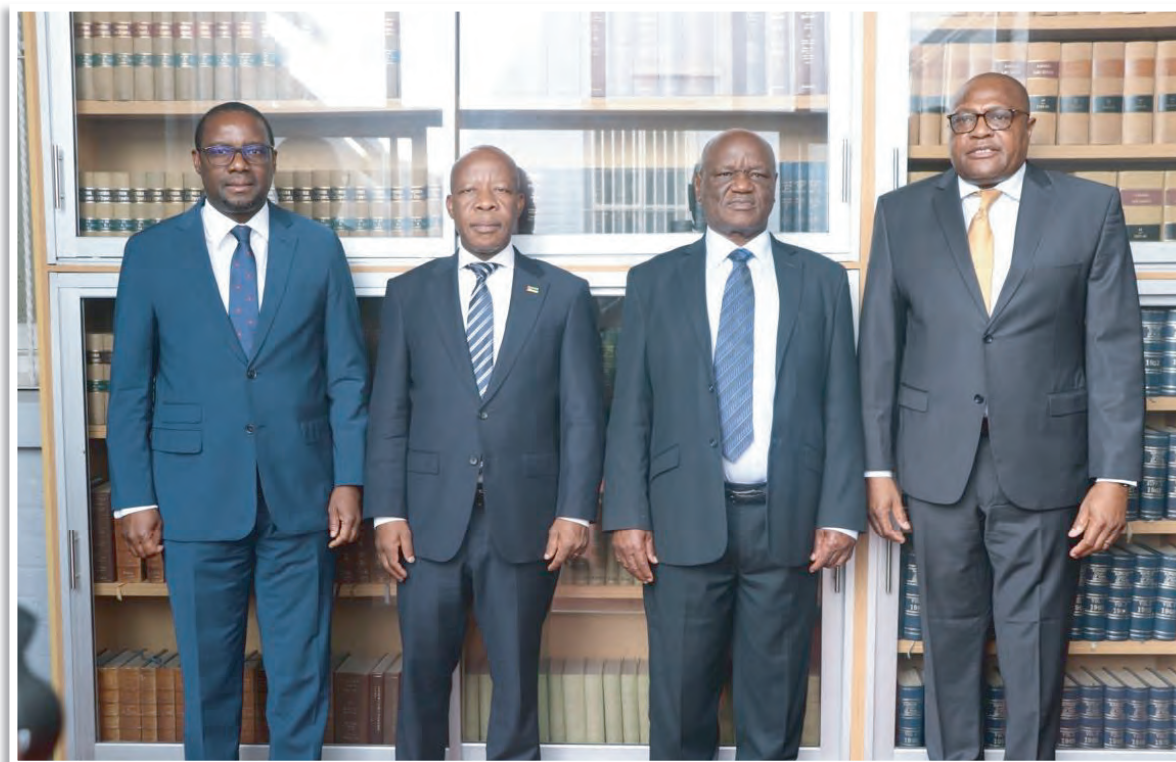


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attendance were the judiciaries from Russia, Turkey, and Albania, who attended the conference as observer members. It was the biggest gathering of judiciaries in Africa. Zimbabwe, through the Chief Justice, assumed the Presidency of the organisation, taking over from the Kingdom of Morocco.

- The Judiciary of Zimbabwe has become the torch bearer on court administration and digitisation within the region and beyond. The successful implementation of the digitisation of the courts through IECMS continued to be a regional attraction for benchmarking visits to Zimbabwe. In 2024, the Judicial Service Commission welcomed the judiciary of Mozambique led by the Chief Justice Honourable Adelino Manuel Muchanga on a visit to assess the transformative trends in our jurisdiction on judicial administration and how court digitisation through IECMS has enhanced access to justice. Mozambique joined other countries, such as Malawi, Zambia, and Namibia, which have embarked on similar benchmarking visits to Zimbabwe.



Judiciary of Mozambique benchmark visit to Zimbabwe



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3rd Annual Symposium of the Africa Electoral Justice Network (AEJN)



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7th Congress of the Conference of Constitutional Jurisdictions of Africa



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5. PERFORMANCE OF THE COURTS AND THE SHERIFF OF ZIMBABWE

National Scenario for Superior Courts

- The Superior Courts of Zimbabwe are now all operating on the IECMS platform. The platform fared well during 2024, and the national statistics for the Superior Courts are demonstrated in the table below:

COURT	CASES B/F AS AT 01/01/24	RECEIVED	TOTAL	COMPLETED	CASES C/F	CLEARANCE RATE (%)
Constitutional Court	27	65	92	69	23	75%
Supreme Court	291	862	1153	932	221	81%
High Court	588	32272	32860	32045	815	98%
Labour Court	598	1903	2501	2108	393	84%
Administrative Court	12	42	54	41	13	76%
Grand Total	1516	35144	36660	35195	1465	96%

- The Superior Courts, during the year under review, opened the year with a total of **1 516** cases, received **35 144** cases, completed **36 660** cases and closed the period under review with a backlog of **1 465** cases. The global decrease in backlog translated to a **96%** clearance rate.

Constitutional Court

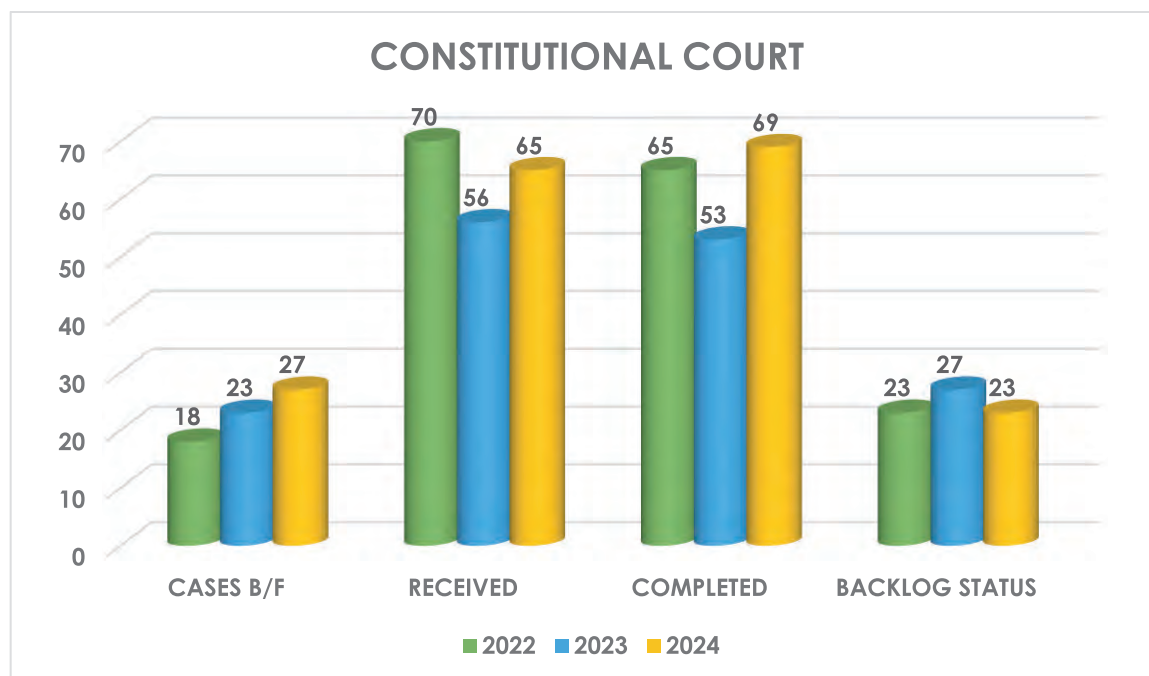
- The Constitutional Court began the year with a backlog of twenty-seven (**27**) cases. During the year, it received sixty-five (**65**) cases and completed sixty-nine (**69**) cases, leaving a backlog of twenty-three (**23**) cases as of 30



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November 2024. The clearance rate stood at **75%**. The graph below details the annual trends in the performance of the Constitutional Court from 2022 to 2024.



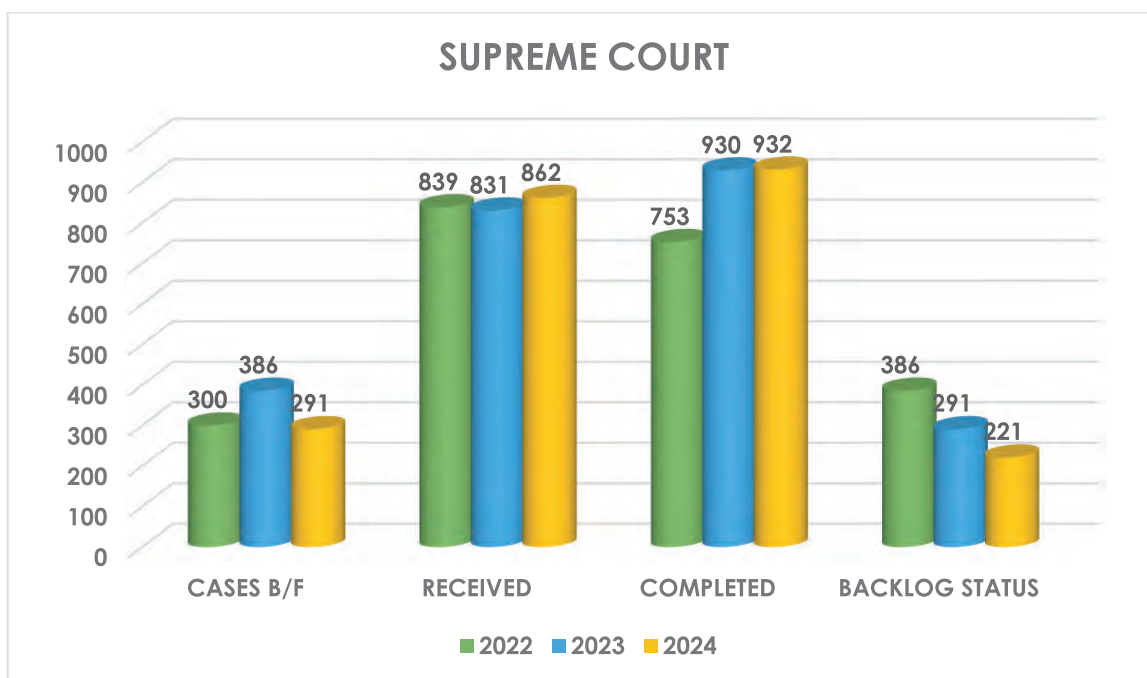
Supreme Court

- The Supreme Court started 2024 with an opening balance of **291** cases and received a total of **862** cases. It completed **932** cases, leaving a backlog of **221** cases at the end of the year. The court received and completed more matters than the previous year. The clearance rate stood at **81%**, and the overall backlog of the court declined compared to the backlog at the end of 2023.
- The graph below shows the annual trends in the performance of the Supreme Court from 2022 to 2024.



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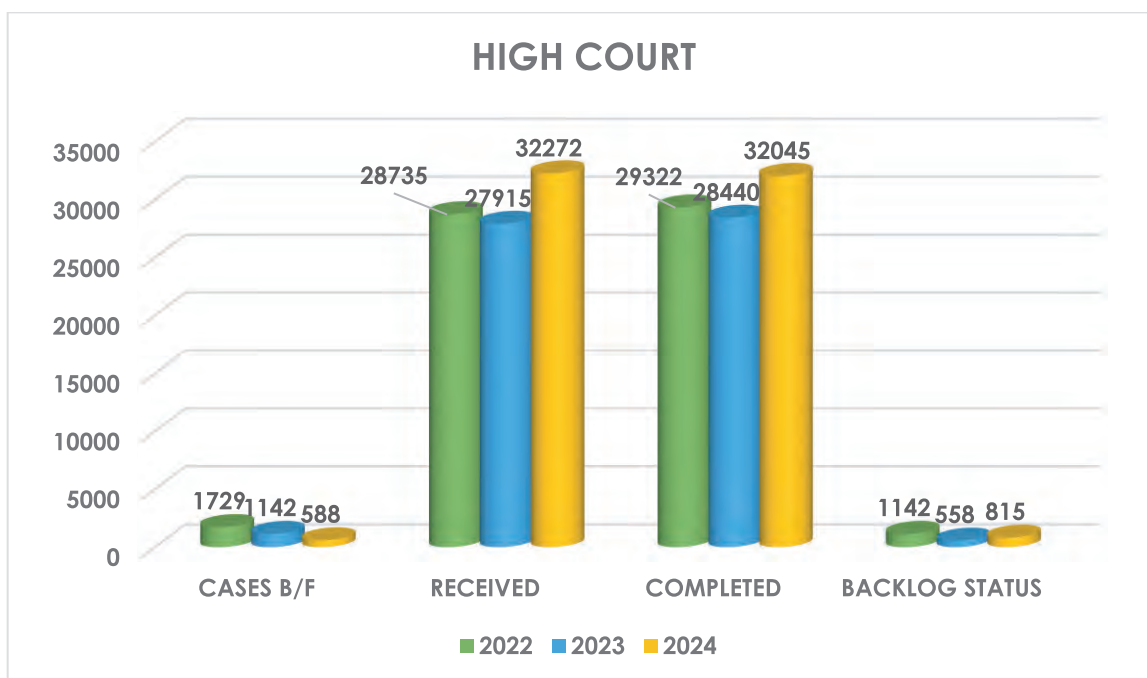
High Court

- The High Court commenced operations for the year 2024 with a backlog of **588** cases. During the year, it received **32 272** cases and completed **32 045** cases, leaving a backlog of **817** cases. The court received significantly more matters in 2024 than the **26 840** cases received in 2023, and equally, the High Court completed more cases in 2024 than in 2023. Thus, the clearance rate at the end of the year stood at **98%**.
- The table below shows the court's performance from 2022 to 2024.



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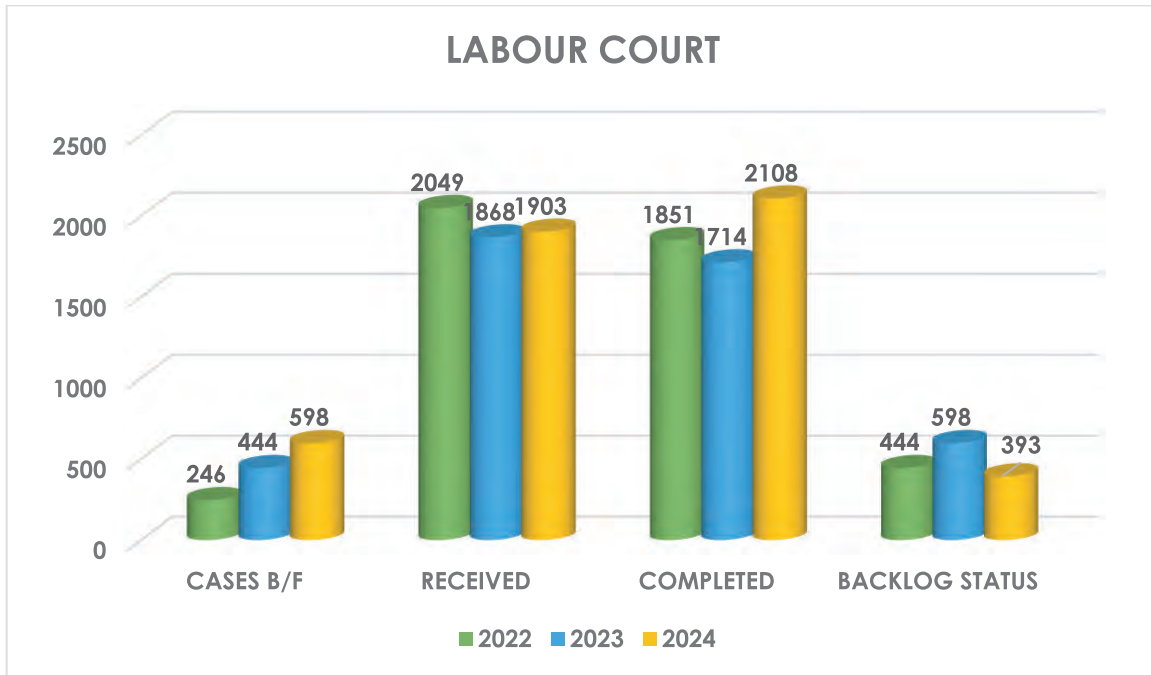
Labour Court

- The Labour Court started the year with a backlog of **598** cases. During the year, it received **1 903** cases and completed **2 108** cases. It closed the year with a backlog of **393** cases and a clearance rate of **84%**.
- The table below shows the performance of the Labour Court from 2022 to 2024.



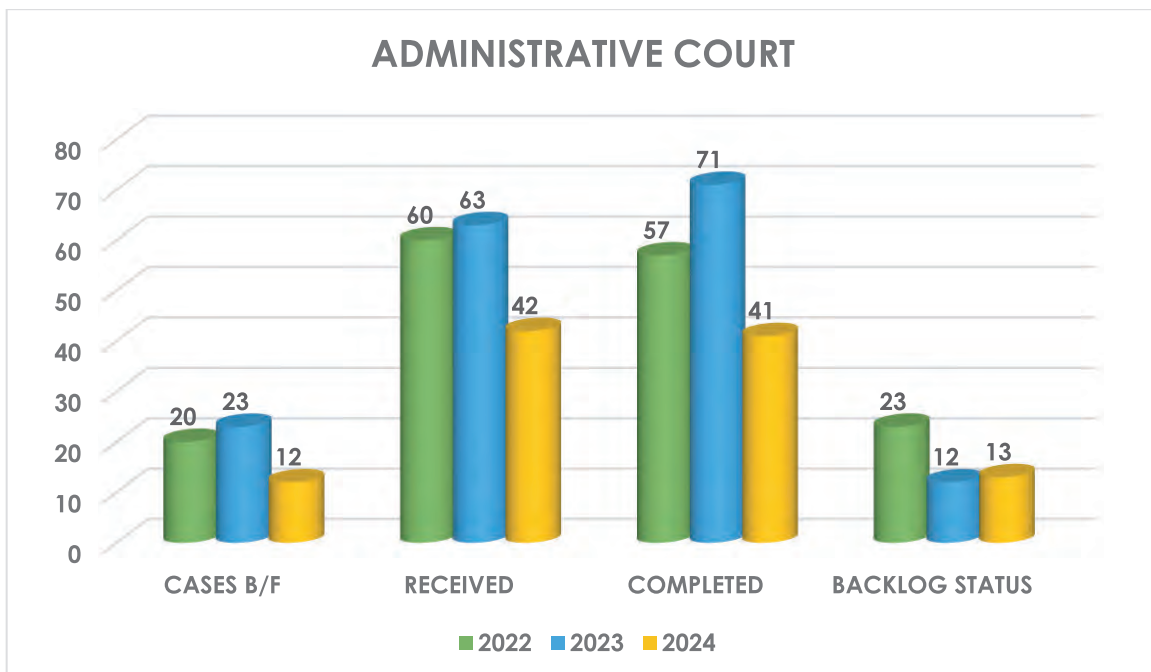
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Administrative Court

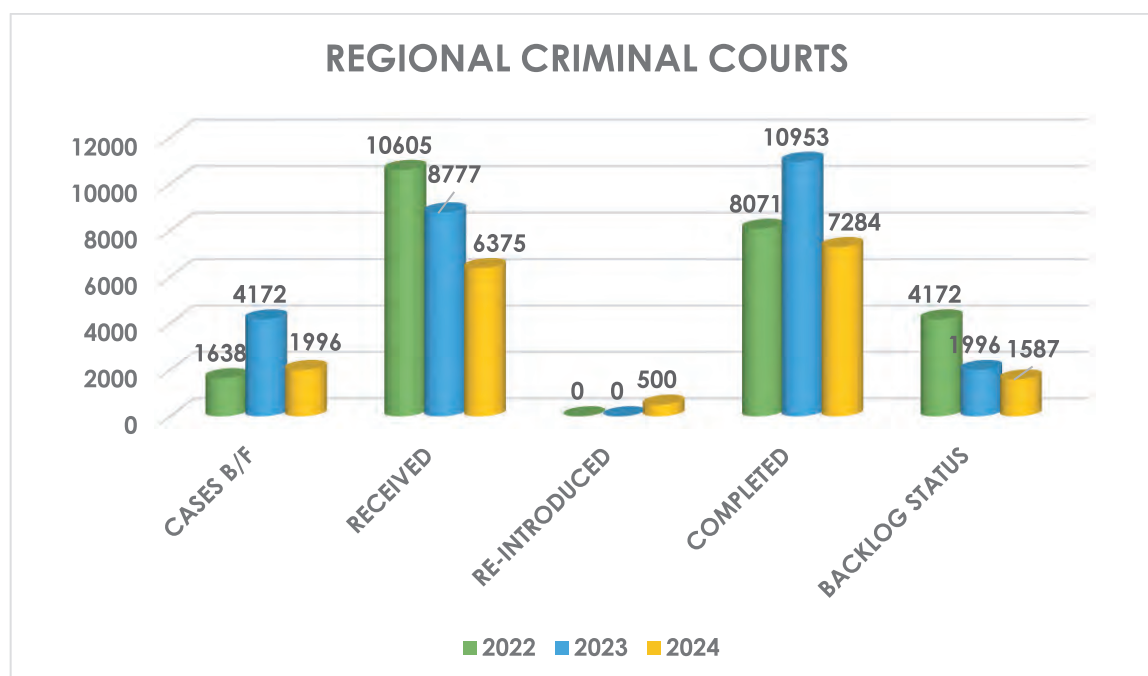
- The Administrative Court started the year with a backlog of **12** cases. It received **42** cases and completed **41** cases during the year. It closed the year with a backlog of **13** cases and a **76%** clearance rate.
- The table below shows the court's performance from 2022 to 2024.



THE MAGISTRATES' COURTS

Regional Court

- The Magistrates' Regional Courts started the year with a combined backlog of **1 996** cases. The four regional divisions collectively received **6 375** new cases and **500** re-introduced cases, creating an annual workload of **8 871** cases. A total of **7 284** cases were completed leaving a backlog of **1 587** cases. The clearance rate for 2024 was, therefore, **82%**.
- Below is an analysis of the performance of the regional courts from 2022-2024.



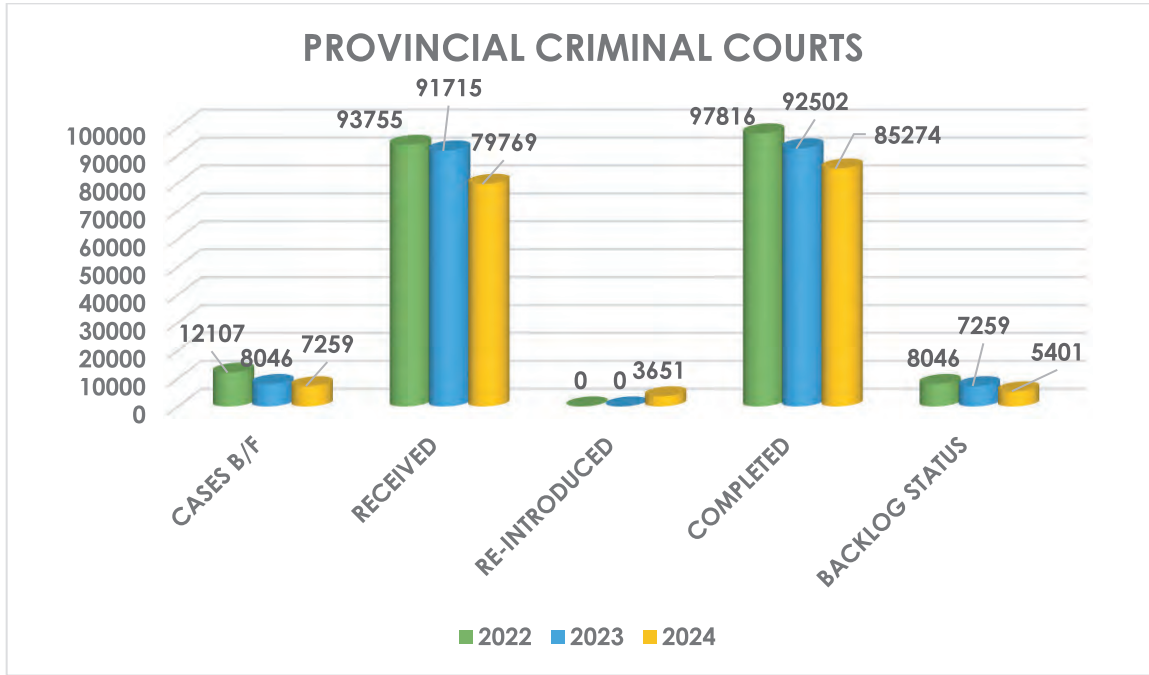
Magistrates' Provincial Criminal Courts

- The provincial courts opened the year with **7 259** cases. During the year, the courts received **79 769** cases and **3 651** reintroduced cases. The courts collectively completed **85 274** cases, leaving a decreased backlog of **5 401** cases. The clearance rate was **93%**.
- Below is an analysis of the courts' performance for the last three years.



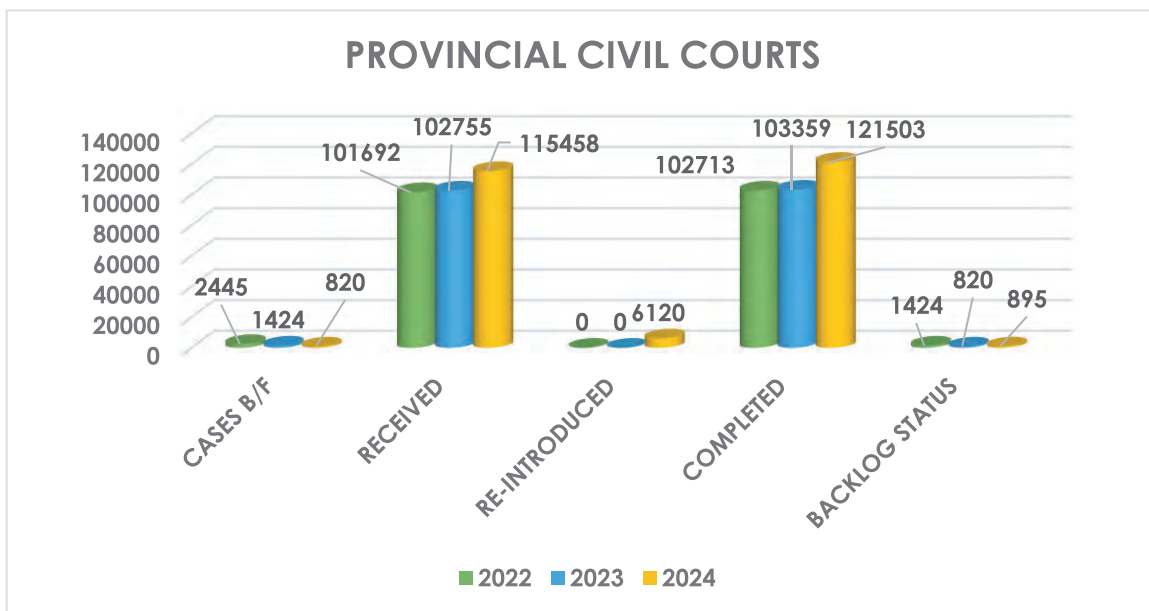
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Provincial Civil Court

- The Magistrates' Court civil division opened the year with **820** cases. It received **115 458** cases and **6 120** reintroduced cases in 2024. The division collectively completed **121 503** cases leaving a backlog of **895** cases. The clearance rate of the civil court was **99%**.
- Below is the performance of the civil court from 2022 to 2024.



Office of the Sheriff of Zimbabwe

- The Office of the Sheriff began the year with **112** pending processes carried over from 2023. It received a total of **6737** processes and served a total of **6 583** processes, leaving a balance of **266** processes at the end of 2024. The Commission is working tirelessly to reduce the backlog in the office of the Sheriff.
- A statistical breakdown of the processes received during the year is tabulated below:

PROCESSES	BAL B/F	RECEIVED	TOTAL	SERVED	PENDING
WRITS	98	1398	1496	1242	254
SUMMONS	10	4684	4694	4686	8
COURT ORDERS	0	22	22	22	0
COURT NOTICES	0	37	37	37	0
COURT APPLICATIONS	0	22	22	22	0
URGENT CHAMBER APPLICATIONS	0	3	3	3	0
REMOVALS	0	4	4	4	0
NOTICE OF SET DOWN	0	369	369	369	0
CAVEATS	0	8	8	8	0
CHAMBER APPLICATIONS	0	15	15	14	1
TRANSFER DOCUMENTS	4	175	179	176	3
HEADS OF ARGUMENTS	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	112	6737	6849	6583	266



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6. PROJECTS

- The Commission is mandated by the Constitution to facilitate the effective, efficient, and transparent administration of justice in Zimbabwe.
- An elementary requirement of that mandate is to ensure improved access to justice for the general populace of Zimbabwe. Over the years, the Commission has heeded this call by constructing courts across all provinces in the spirit of devolution and decentralization of the essential service, that is, justice delivery.
- 2024 was no exception as the Commission continued in its quest to bring the courts closer to the people by commencing, continuing, and completing various construction projects. Additionally, the Commission carried out various rehabilitation projects at various courthouses to maintain and enhance existing premises.
- Another key project that the Commission successfully undertook was the procurement of motor vehicles for circuit court operations, constitutional appointees, and members of the Judicial Service who are so entitled as part of their conditions of service.

6.1. CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Chiredzi Magistrates' Court

- The new court complex at Chiredzi Magistrates' Court was completed in 2024. It was officially commissioned on 20 September 2024 by the Honourable Chief Justice. The new complex was constructed in replacement of the prefabricated courthouse which had become dilapidated.



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The new court complex at Chiredzi Magistrates' Court

Triangle Magistrates' Court

- The Honourable Chief Justice also officially opened Triangle Magistrates' Court on 20 September 2024. The court used to operate as a circuit court for Chiredzi Magistrates' Court but it has now been fully operationalised as a resident Magistrates' Court. The construction of the court was in response to the high caseload at the then circuit court and to eliminate the distance barriers that necessitated the residents of Triangle to travel to Chiredzi for the expeditious hearing of their cases.
- The opening of the court was significant as it continued to fulfil the Commission's promise to bring the courts to the townships and decongest the courts situated in major cities. In the previous year, Epworth Magistrates' Court became the first of the courts successfully opened in a populous township, and Triangle Magistrates' Court continued that trajectory. Similar projects are currently underway for areas such as Sakubva in Mutare, Mkoba in Gweru, Mabvuku-Tafara in Harare, and Cowdray Park in Bulawayo.



Triangle Magistrates' Court



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Gwanda Magistrates' Court

- The construction at Gwanda Court Complex continued to make progress in 2024. In the last report to Parliament, the Commission expressed optimism that the court complex would be completed by the end of 2024 subject to the availing of timely funding by the Treasury. While significant progress was made on the structure in the form of brickwork completion for four courtrooms, holding cells, and partially on the judges' chambers, there are some civil works and mechanical works that remain outstanding.
- The Commission is hopeful that the construction of the court complex will be finalized by the third quarter of 2025.



The construction project of Gwanda Court Complex

Mutawatawa Magistrates' Court

- Construction at Mutawatawa Magistrates' Court is almost complete. The court complex has been roofed, and plumbing, mechanical, and electrical works are complete. The contractor is working on finishings, which include painting, tiling, and landscaping. The court will be ready for opening by the end of the first quarter of 2025.



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Cowdray Park Magistrates' Court

The construction of the Cowdray Park Magistrates' Court in Bulawayo is currently underway. As at the end of the year under review, brickwork for the substructure had been completed and the contractor was working on brickwork for the main structure. In the coming year, the project will be prioritized as its completion improves access to justice for the residents of Cowdray Park.



The construction of the Cowdray Park Magistrates' Court

Kwekwe Magistrates' Court

- In 2024, the Commission commenced the construction of a court complex at Kwekwe Magistrates' Court. The construction of the building is moving fairly well, as the contractor is now at slab level and will soon commence brickwork.



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Judicial Training Institute of Zimbabwe Training Centre

- The establishment of the Judicial Training Institute of Zimbabwe in 2021 necessitated the need to construct a Training Centre for the Institute to fully carry out its mandate.
- The construction of the Training Centre is already underway. There was steady progress during the year with the brickwork for the ground floor having been completed up to ring beam level. The Training Centre will be ready for use by the end of the year.

Renovations and rehabilitation projects

- The Commission carried out various renovation and rehabilitation projects at various courthouses nationwide. The construction of an additional courtroom and an office block for members of staff at Chegutu Magistrates' Court, as well as the repainting of the entire courthouse, was completed in 2024.
- The Commission successfully rehabilitated the premises currently being used as Kotwa Magistrates' Court. As stated elsewhere in the report, the court was designated as a resident court during the course of the year. The renovations were completed, and the court was operationalized on 1 August 2024. On the same day, Mutoko Regional Court was also operationalized.
- Renovations of the regional court at Zvishavane Magistrates' Court were completed during the period under review. The Regional Court is now operating from its premises separate from the provincial court.
- The renovations at Mbare Magistrates' Court are ongoing. Two additional courtrooms have been completed, and construction of offices and additional ablution facilities is currently in progress. A new brick-and-mortar durawall to enhance security at the courthouse is also under construction.
- At Masvingo High Court, renovations aimed at addressing space constraints were commenced during the year under review. These included the



expansion of the second courtroom and judges' chambers. These renovations were completed.

- Similarly, renovations and rehabilitation works were conducted at various courthouses, including Kezi, Mberengwa, Tsholotsho, Inyathi, Esigodini, Filabusi, Mwenezi, Zaka, Bikita, Rusape, Victoria Falls, Mutare Criminal, Chivhu, Murehwa, Guruve, Norton, Chitungwiza, and Epworth. These renovations and rehabilitations were done to ensure that justice is dispensed in clean and well-equipped halls of justice.

Acquisition of Motor Vehicles

- In 2024, the Commission acquired various types of motor vehicles for use as operational vehicles to visit circuit courts, for registrars, researchers, Judges, and Magistrates as condition of service and official use vehicles, and by the Sheriff to execute court orders.
- The Commission continued with the process of procuring buses for use by members of staff to go to and from work, with the acquisition of two additional buses.



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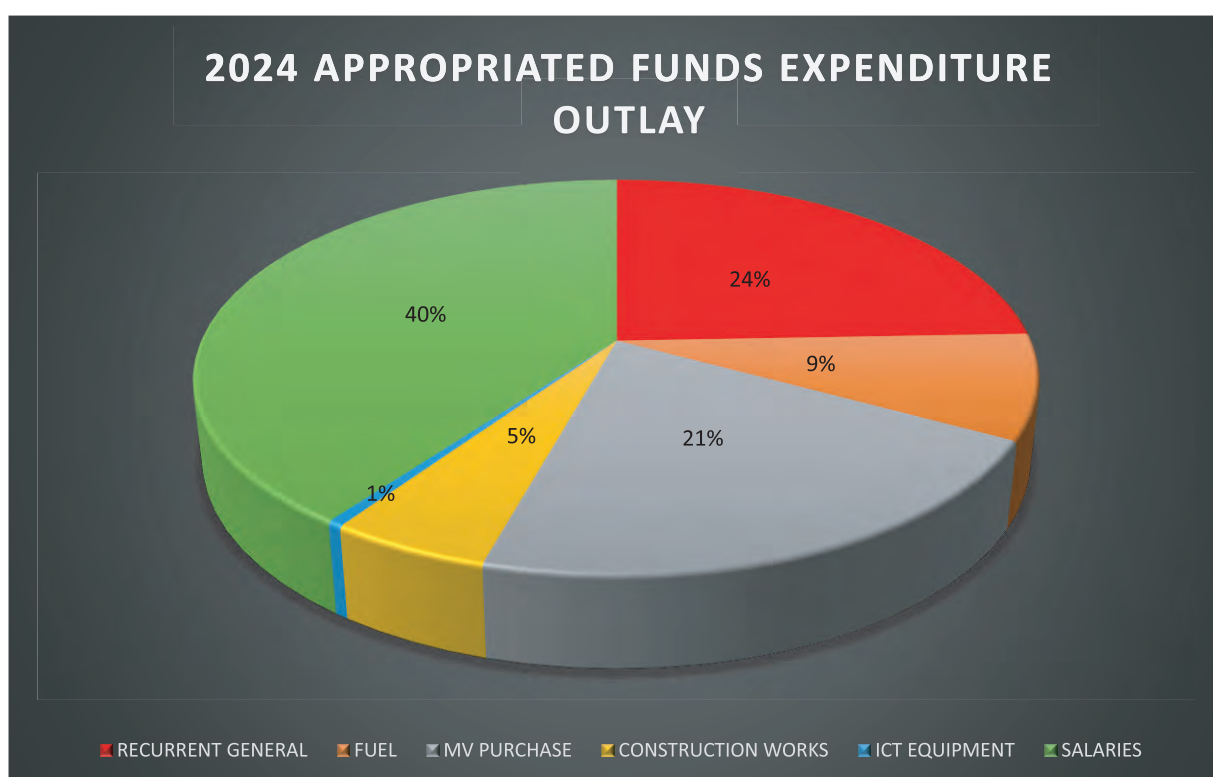
Kia Picanto, Renault Kwid, and Ford Ranger vehicles



Some of the UD trucks procured

7. FINANCE

- During the period under review, the Commission received budgetary support totalling six hundred and fifty-five million, six hundred and forty-one thousand, eight hundred and forty-nine ZiG and sixty-two cents (**ZWG 655 641 849.62**) from Treasury.
- The entire amount was expended during the period under review, and the expenditure is detailed below:



- Under the Courts Administration Fund, the Commission collected and retained one hundred and eight million, two hundred and twenty-three thousand, six hundred and forty-nine ZiG and thirty-six cents (**ZWG 108 223 694.36**) nationwide from the courts.
- The Judicial Service Commission continues to express its gratitude to Treasury for the budgetary support extended to it during the year under review.

8. CONCLUSION

- The year 2024 has been the most eventful and successful for the Commission. The highlights of the year include the successful hosting of two regional conferences, good performances by the courts, and the recruitment of judges for the courts. The massive establishment and opening of new courthouses in the Magistrates' Courts has been the highlight of the year because the Commission has never opened such a high number of resident Magistrates' Courts and circuit courts in one calendar year since its establishment. As the year ends, the Commission remains motivated to post more successes for the justice delivery system in 2025. At the top of its priorities is the rollout of implementing the fourth phase of the IECMS in the Magistrates' Court in 2025.
- The Commission remains grateful for the immense support that it receives from the various arms and structures of government. The Commission carries the memory of 2024 as the assurance that in 2025, the same support will enable it to facilitate the effective, efficient, and transparent administration of justice.

The Honourable Mr Justice Luke Malaba
Chief Justice of Zimbabwe



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