

# COMMONWEALTH MAGISTRATES AND JUDGES' ASSOCIATION

*Serving Judicial Officers in the Commonwealth since 1970*



To ALL MEMBERS OF THE CMJA

6 April 2020

Dear Member

## CMJA and COVID 19

I am reaching out, on behalf of the CMJA Council, to all members in support of your efforts to keep you and your families safe during these very difficult times for us all.

The CMJA is following the guidance provided by Commonwealth governments. The CMJA staff has been working from home since 18 March 2020 and whilst some of the CMJA activities which required travel, have been curtailed, the CMJA Secretariat are set up to continue to provide services to their members from their remote locations for the foreseeable future.

We are aware that many of our members are continuing, in the face of rising challenges, to ensure that the good administration of justice continues in the Commonwealth and that some of you are still putting your lives on the line as a result by attending court on a daily basis. We recognise that in these difficult times, judicial officers will continue to ensure that they protect the most vulnerable members of society and will continue to serve their fellow citizens.

If there is any way we can, in our modest way, support you in your activities, please let us know. The CMJA Secretary General has suggested that those who can, share any new ways they are dealing with cases before them so that others around the Commonwealth can take advantage of suggested new approaches whilst protecting themselves and the court staff that are also on duty during these trying times. Please feel free to contact her on the above email about this.

Our Patron, Her Majesty The Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, stated on 18 March 2020:

*".. We know that many individuals and families across the United Kingdom and around the world are entering a period of great concern and uncertainty.*

*We are all being advised to change our normal routines and regular patterns of life for the good of the communities we live in, and in particular, to protect the most vulnerable within them.*

*.... we all have a vitally important part to play as individuals- today and in the coming days, weeks and months".*

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Her Majesty the Queen

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Justice Charles Mkandawire (Malawi)

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Mrs Sybil Roach Tennant (England and Wales)  
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Her Worship Katrina Walubita (Zambia)

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She further addressed the Commonwealth in her speech on 5 April 2020 and stated:

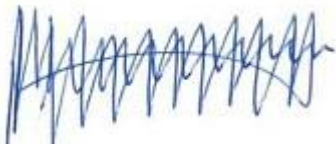
*"Across the Commonwealth and around the world we have seen heart-warming stories of people coming together to help others....*

*Whilst we have faced challenges before, this one is different. This time we join with all nations across the globe in a common endeavour using the great advances of science and our instinctive compassion to heal. We will succeed and that success will belong to everyone of us. We should take comfort that, while we may have more still to endure, better days will return..."*

It is important that, with the restrictions imposed due to the pandemic, governments should not use this opportunity to undermine the role of the judiciary who continue to be the guarantors of the rule of law and fundamental rights and the CMJA is keeping vigilant to any developments in the Commonwealth which might jeopardize the independence of the judiciary in these difficult times.

Please ensure that you follow all guidance to keep you safe in your work and home environments. Wishing you all the best in these unprecedented times.

Kind Regards



Justice Charles Mkandawire  
CMJA President

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