



**COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF NYANDARUA
OFFICE OF H.E THE GOVERNOR**



GOVERNOR'S PRESS SERVICE

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY GOVERNOR (DR.) MOSES KIARIE BADILISHA
ON THE OCCASION OF OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE OL'KALOU HIGH
COURT, ON 31ST AUGUST, 2023 IN OL'KALOU**

**The Chief Justice and the President of the Supreme Court of Kenya,
Hon. Martha Koome,
The Hon. Justice Isaac Lenaola, Judge of the Supreme Court of Kenya,
The Hon. Justice Daniel Musinga, Judge and President of the Court of Appeal,
Presiding Judges present,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good Morning,

I welcome you here today for this great and historic occasion of the official opening of the OPKalou High Court.

But at the very onset, allow me to briefly indulge you on why this court is not just historic for us in Nyandarua County, but one of great symbolism, and a fulfilment of a dream deferred for sixty years.

Nyandarua County is the home to the struggle for Kenya's independence. In this county, now home to its first court of justice, gallant men and women braved the harsh terrain, faced better-armed colonial forces, settlers and their collaborators and an oppressive legal regime, to reclaim back their land, freedom and to live in liberty. Nyandarua was not just the perfect home for the colonial settlers and their Happy Valley homes located in these White Highlands, but was an epicenter of struggle with our iconic Aberdare Ranges providing a great hideout for these men and women as they fought for what we now pride ourselves as the modern nation-state called Kenya.

Therefore, to stand here - sixty years after independence, to bequeath a High Court to the people of Nyandarua – in their own land, run by their African brothers and sisters, and adjudicating their issues using their own laws – and a Constitution crafted for and by themselves, is not just another event of cutting ribbons and ushering robed men and women into halls of justice: it is a moment of great celebration and fulfilment of a dream; it is about justice and liberty which their forefathers fought for.

For this, I congratulate you, the Honorable Chief Justice, and the entire Judiciary for this great milestone.

The Hon. Chief Justice,

But even as celebrate this historic milestone, and profoundly congratulate you and the entire Judiciary for actualizing this dream, we however make a request: bearing this rich history of our people in the statecraft of the modern independent nation, the naming of this court would have been more appropriate if it was gazetted as the **OP'Kalou High Court in Nyandarua County**, and not the Nyandarua High Court in OP'Kalou.

This, as you are aware, is an important issue of pride and identity which is central to our people, and will help in creating even deeper ownership. It is our hope that this request is granted.

Notwithstanding this, however, allow me to appreciate the profound impact that this court will have on the people of Nyandarua county in their pursuit of justice, and also on their economy. Importantly, it is critical for any society's development that its adjudication and dispute resolution mechanisms are accessible, available, and respected by all. I commend the Judiciary and its leadership for maintaining this very important, in fact an existential cardinal and helping keep the national fabric intact through a society guided by law and order. That is what has now been devolved to our people who have had to travel long distances, and at great costs, to seek and access justice. And for the longest, this inaccessibility to justice has led to inordinate delays in court cases which has inevitably led to denial of justice – for justice delayed, is indeed justice denied. In other instances, litigants have resulted into extra-judicial mechanisms which is a threat to the rule of law and cohesion. With this High Court, this is now solved.

I also wish to thank the Chief Justice for ensuring that the Ol'Kalou County Magistrate's court, which has been operating from one of our county facilities, is running. This, again, has been a great step towards making justice available, and closer, to our people.

The Hon. Chief Justice, and the President of the Supreme Court,

A few kilometers from the Engineer court, is the Kinyahwe House which also housed a local court – Tulaga Court. Together with the National Government, the National Museums of Kenya and the National Heroes Council, we are rehabilitating the colonial house as part of preserving our rich history, and especially that of our independence struggle, the Mau Mau, and the colonial settlers. Beside that project, we are also establishing a museum that will preserve for posterity all available records and history of Mau Mau and the rebirth of this great nation, Kenya. It would be a great honor for the people of Nyandarua County to see the Judiciary also get involved in this important project that helps preserve our history. This would be a great project for your arm of government to participate in, and I look forward to its actualization by incorporating all agencies and stakeholders who have a stake and likely to enrich the process.

The Hon. Chief Justice,

In conclusion, as a government, we share with you the desire of full digitization and skilling of our youth especially in new digital skills.

The new order of doing things, not just in governments, is one which seeks to collapse time, distance, and open new frontiers which the digital space has provided.

Indeed, the Covid-19 pandemic taught us the need for continuous innovation and exploration of new ways and means to discharge public duties even with such serious disruptions. And nothing better exemplifies this innovation and an advancement than the adoption of e-courts and the exploitation of digital assets, including the e-filing system that has just been launched here today. Digitization not only helps in easing workflow, but also reduces prospects of corruption, loss or misplacement of documents and files, and improves on access to justice. Once again, I congratulate the Judiciary for remaining innovative and deploying ICT in its operations.

Towards this, Your Ladyship the Chief Justice, Nyandarua County Government has been actively engaged in digital skilling of our youth, including partnering with global ICT leaders like Huawei, the National Government's Ajira programme, and our own ICT training programmes, to equip our youth with critical digital skills that would be quite useful in your courts digitization process, especially here in Nyandarua. As you engage in this digitization exercise, it is my request that you grant these highly trained and skilled youngsters an opportunity to fulfil that digital dream of a fully functional e-court system.

Finally, let me once again thank you and the entire Judiciary, the court users' fraternity and the people of Nyandarua on this historic occasion. On my own behalf and that of the County Government of Nyandarua, I assure you of my support towards making this court's work and operations successful.

Thank you and God bless you all, God Bless Kenya, and God Bless Nyandarua.