

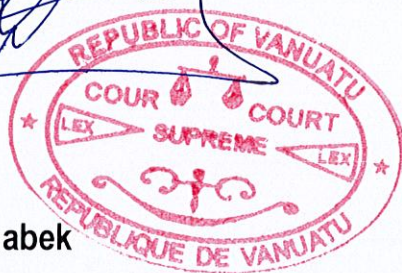
## Court Arrangements due to Covid-19 Revised

### Message from the Chief Justice

16 June 2020

1. This short statement is aimed at Judges, Magistrates, lawyers and other court users.
2. I advised, in April 2020, that in my view the likelihood was that Covid-19 would somehow get to Vanuatu. I remain of that view, especially as Vanuatu looks to open its borders again to international travelers. Of all of Vanuatu, I suspect that Port Vila and its residents are the most vulnerable.
3. As there has yet to be a recorded case of Covid-19 here in Vanuatu, I am of the view that the risks involved in the Courts of Vanuatu resuming being fully operational are presently much reduced. I have therefore determined to **re-commence** the essential services of **Supreme Court tours to the outer islands as from 1 July 2020.**
4. Judges, Magistrates, lawyers and other court users are also informed that **an interim review of the Supreme Court and other Court tours is being considered for the remaining balance of the year 2020** so as to ensure that court resources are best utilized on cases that are not only pending but also ready for resolution by the courts before the end of the year 2020.
5. **A special prioritization reference is considered for Domestic Violence (DV) Cases** and the courts plan and the way forward.
6. It is of note that **the Election Petitions are considered separately as soon as they are ready for hearing** in the respective islands or constituencies where most of the witnesses reside and within the statutory time requirements.
7. Despite our success to date in avoiding any Covid-19 cases, it remains critical that everyone continues to practice good hygiene and the prevention of possible spreading. Contact tracing is also a sensible precaution to maintain.

8. The Judicial Administration, with the assistance of the Ministry of Justice through SRBJS, will continue to assist with the necessary sanitation requirements for the Court rooms, Judge's and Magistrate's Chambers, Court offices and Court staff desks. Judges and Court staff are keeping a record of all appearances in Court and Chambers.
9. Efforts on equipping court rooms in Port Vila (Efate), Luganville (Santo), Lakatoro (Malekula) and Isangel (Tanna) with remote facilities will be continued.
10. This guideline will be updated in the event of a case of Covid-19 being confirmed in Vanuatu.



**Vincent Lunabek**  
**Chief Justice**