



THE JUDICIARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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HIGH COURT
of the
Republic of the Marshall Islands

Post Office Box B
Majuro, MH 96960
Tele.: 692-625-3201
Email: Marshall.Islands.Judiciary@gmail.com

Iokwe, I am pleased to present the 2023 Annual Report for the Judiciary of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. As in recent years, this report reflects the dedication and hard work of the judges and staff who serve the Judiciary, the Government, and the people of the Marshall Islands. It is my pleasure and privilege to work with them.

On behalf of the Judiciary, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the President, the Minister of Justice, and the other members of the Cabinet for their support in 2023. Also, I wish to express our profound thanks to the Nitijela and the House of Iroij for their continuing support of our budgetary and legislative requests. We are committed to working with the Cabinet, the Nitijela, and the House of Iroij in the years to come to maintain an independent judiciary that is fair and efficient, assuring justice and the rule of law for all. Our shared goals mandate that we work together in a spirit of respect and cooperation.

Submitted with the 2023 Annual Report are our Values, Mission Statement, and Vision Statement. For more information about the Judiciary, please contact me or the Chief Clerk of the Courts at the above address.

Sincerely yours,

Carl B. Ingram
Chief Justice, High Court
Date: August 30, 2024



Our Values:

Tomak, Jenok, im Aurok Ko Ad:

The Marshall Islands Judiciary holds the following values, and desires to operate in a manner that is, and will be perceived as:

Jikin Ekajet ko an Marshall Islands rej debij im jermal wot iumin tomak, aurok eo, im konan eo non air jermal ilo wawein ko renaj koman bwe armej ren kalimjeklok ra eo an Jikin Ekajet bwe ej juon eo ej einwot in:

- accessible
- accountable
- competent
- consistent
- efficient
- fair and impartial
- independent
- respectful and
- service-oriented,
- valuing custom and tradition, as well as innovation.

*ebellok non aoleb armej
 etiljek, ekkeke, im maron uwak non jermal ko an
 ekakemooj im emmon an komane jermal eo an
 ej jokkin wot juon an komane jermal eo an
 ebolemen im tiljek ilo an kakke aikuij ko
 ej jermal jimwe ilo ejelok kalijeklok ak jeb
 ejenolok im jutaklok ian make
 ewor an kautiej armej im
 etiljek, jela nae, jela kunaan, im jela karejar
 iben armej,
 ej kaurok im kautiej manit im men ko bwinnid
 im ad jolet, ekoba lomnak im wawein jermal ko
 rekaal.*

These values form the basis for the Judiciary's Mission Statement and Vision.

Tomak im aurok kein rej ejaake bedbed eo non kottobar im ettonak kein ilal.

Mission Statement:

Kottobar Eo:

The mission of the courts of the Marshall Islands, the Judiciary, is to fairly, efficiently, and effectively resolve disputes properly brought before them, discharging their judicial duties and responsibilities in accordance with the Constitution, laws, and customs of this unique island nation, for the benefit of those who use the courts' services.

Kottobar eo an Jikin Ekajet ko an Marshall Islands ej non jermal jimwe ilo ejelok kalijeklok, bolemen im tiljek ilo an kakke aikuij ko ilo aoleb abnono ko rej itok imaer, im non komane jermal in ekajet im edro ko aer ekkar non Jemen-Ei eo, kakien ko, im manit ko an ailon kein ad im jej jenolok kaki jen lal ko jet ikijien manit im men ko bwinnid im ad jolet, non emmanlok eo an ro rej bok jiban jen jikin ekajet eo.

Vision:

Ettonak Eo:

The Marshall Islands Judiciary will be an excellent small-island judiciary, deserving of public trust and confidence.

- The Judiciary will be fair and impartial.
- The Judiciary will treat court users and colleagues with dignity, courtesy, and respect, and will require the same in return.
- The Judiciary will provide affordable and accessible services to court users.
- The Judiciary will seek to resolve matters efficiently, while maintaining quality, consistency, and certainty.
- The Judiciary will be independent yet accountable, deciding matters based upon the facts before the courts and a conscientious understanding of the law and custom.
- The Judiciary will administer the courts in accordance with internationally recognized standards for leadership, management, and accountability.
- The Judiciary will seek and employ innovative practices and procedures to better serve court users, to identify users' needs, and to develop court personnel.
- The Judiciary will maintain adequate and safe courthouses and a supportive work environment.

Ra eo an jikin ekajet eo an Marshall Islands enaj juon eo ebolemen, im ebed liki im kojatdrikdrik an armij ro ie.

- *Ra eo an jikin ekajet eo enaj jermal jimwe ilo ejelok an kalijeklok.*

- *Ra eo an jikin ekajet eo enaj kile, kautej, im karejar ippen ro rej kojerbal im bukot jiban jen jikin ekajet eo, ekoba dri-jerbal ro mottam, im enaj kotmene bwe armij renaj ukot tok ilo ejja wawein kein wot.*
- *Ra eo an jikin ekajet eo enaj komman bwe en drik wonen, bidodo, im ejelok aban non ro rej kojerbal im bok jiban jen jikin ekajet eo.*
- *Ra eo an jikin ekajet eo enaj bukot kojkan bwe en mokaj, emman, im jejet wawein am bukot mejlan ailwaro im aikuj ko.*
- *Ra eo an jikin ekajet eo enaj komman jemlok non abnono ko, ilo an ejelok kibel jen ijoko jabrewot, bedbed wot ion menin kamol ko rej walok, im jen am melele kin kien im manit.*
- *Ra eo an jikin ekajet eo enaj kommani jerbal im eddro ko an court ekkar non jonak im wawein ko lal in ej kili im lori ikijen jerbal in tel, lolorjake, im bok eddro.*
- *Ra eo an jikin ekajet eo enaj bukot im kojerbal wawein im rebeltan jerbal ko rekaal bwe en emman lok am kake aikuj ko an ro rej kojerbal jikin ekajet eo, im bareinwot non am kolablok kabeel ibben dri-jerbal ro ilo jikin ekajet eo.*
- *Ra eo an jikin ekajet eo enaj lolorjake bwe jikin ekajet ko ren ainemmon im bolemeir, im bwe jitbon jerbal in ippen dron eo en wonmanlok wot.*

which had been discharged by the High Court of the TTPI. An organizational chart of the Judiciary is attached as Appendix 1, and a listing of Judiciary personnel at the end of calendar year 2023 is attached as Appendix 2.

In the sections that follow, this report summarizes the Judiciary’s operations and accomplishments in calendar year 2023, as well as its challenges, including the need for financial support. These sections include the following:

- The Courts: Efficiency, Quality, and Accessibility;
- The Judicial Service Commission: Judicial Appointments;
- Accountability: Codes of Conduct and Complaints;
- Facilities, Technology, and Library; and
- Annual Budget and Audit Report.

II. THE COURTS: EFFICIENCY, QUALITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY

The goals of the Judiciary include to be efficient, to produce quality decisions, and to be accessible.

- The Judiciary’s **efficiency** can be measured by annual clearance rates, five-year clearance rates, time standards, the age of cleared cases, pending to disposal ratios (“PDR”) and the age of pending cases.
- The **quality** of decisions can be measured by appeals and cases overturned on appeal.
- **Accessibility** can be measured by fee waivers, lower fees for vulnerable litigants, cases heard on circuit, free legal counsel, the availability of forms, the accessibility of courthouses, appearance by contemporaneous transmission, and access for women and those with disabilities.

To these ends, the 2023 Annual Report reviews all five levels of the Judiciary—the Supreme Court, the High Court, the Traditional Rights Court, the District Court, and the Community Courts. The review includes the courts’ jurisdictions, staffing, and case statistics, as well as continuing professional development for judges and staff. The case statistics come from the Judiciary’s Case Tracking System (“CTS”) developed and enhanced through funding by New Zealand. This includes statistics regarding gender, disability, representation, remote proceedings, and fee waiver.

A. Supreme Court

The Supreme Court, the court of last resort, is a superior court of record having appellate jurisdiction with final authority to adjudicate all cases and controversies properly brought before it. An appeal lies to the Supreme Court:

- (i) as of right from a final decision of the High Court in the exercise of its original jurisdiction;
- (ii) as of right from a final decision of the High Court in the exercise of its appellate jurisdiction, but only if the case involves a substantial question of law as to the interpretation or effect of the Constitution; and
- (iii) at the discretion of the Supreme Court from any final decision of any court.

Also, the High Court may remove to the Supreme Court questions arising as to the interpretation or effect of the Constitution.

The Supreme Court consists of three justices: a chief justice and two associate justices. To date, all Supreme Court judges have been law-trained attorneys and most have been experienced judges. The current chief justice, Daniel N. Cadra, is a United States citizen appointed to his second 10-year term effective



September 2023. Generally, associate justices have been acting judges from other jurisdictions—the United States Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, the United States Federal District Courts within the Ninth Circuit, the Republic of Palau, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Canada. In 2023, the acting associate justices were two United States Federal Court judges from the Ninth Circuit: District Court Judge Michael Seabright from the District of Hawaii and Chief District Court Judge Richard Seeborg from the District of Northern California. The Chief Clerk of the Courts, Ingrid K. Kabua, serves as the clerk of the Supreme Court.

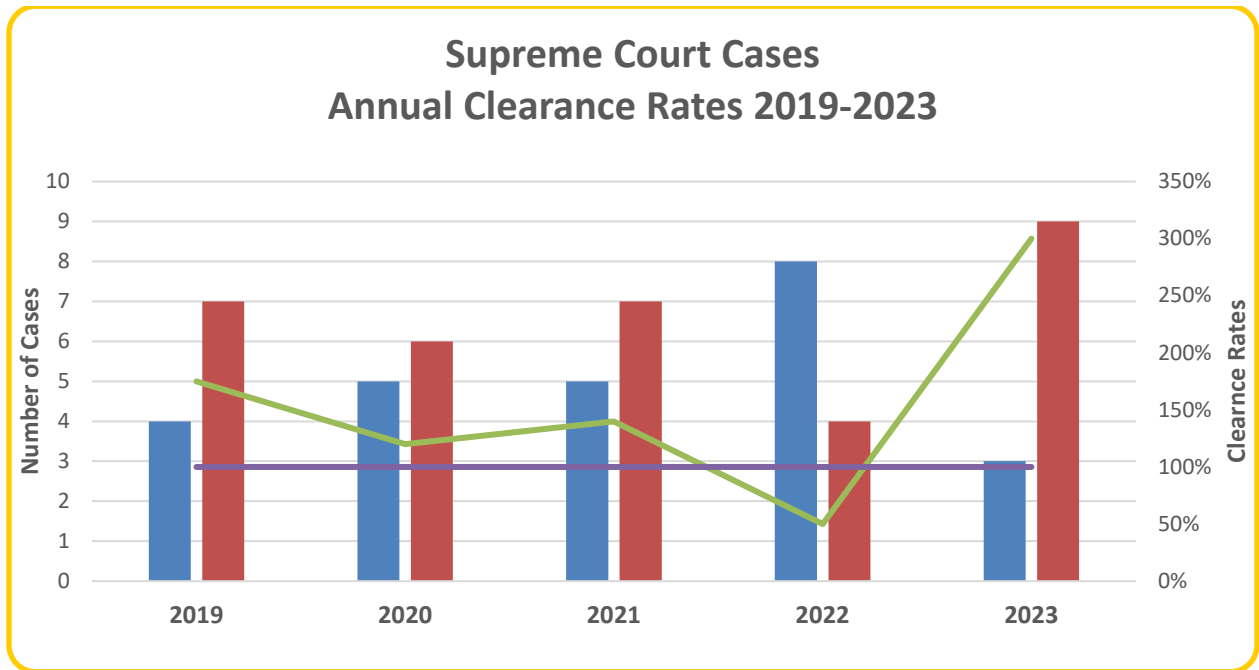
The Supreme Court's 2023 case and workload are summarized below, including the annual clearance rate, the five-year clearance rate, the annual average age of cleared cases, and the annual average age of pending cases. However, it should be noted that as the number of appeals each year is low. Accordingly, the annual performance indicators can fluctuate significantly.

At the beginning of 2023, there were 11 matters pending before the Supreme Court. In 2023, another three matters were filed (two criminal cases and one divorce case). However, with the

end of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Government’s travel ban and quarantine, the Supreme Court was able to hear and clear nine cases (one divorce case, one collection case, one criminal case, one maritime case, one tort case, and four land cases). By the end of 2023, only five cases remained (three criminal cases and two land cases).

With respect to deciding the cases brought before it, the Supreme Court’s goal is to achieve an annual clearance rate of 100% and a five-year clearance rate of 100%. In 2023, the Supreme Court met both clearance goals. With three cases filed and nine cases cleared in 2023, the annual clearance rate was 300% (3/9). Additionally, the five-year clearance rate was 132% (25/33). The Judiciary anticipates that the Supreme Court’s annual clearance rate and five-year clearance rate will continue to fluctuate around 100%. To date in 2024, the Supreme Court has cleared all five cases pending from 2023, and three new appeals have been filed.

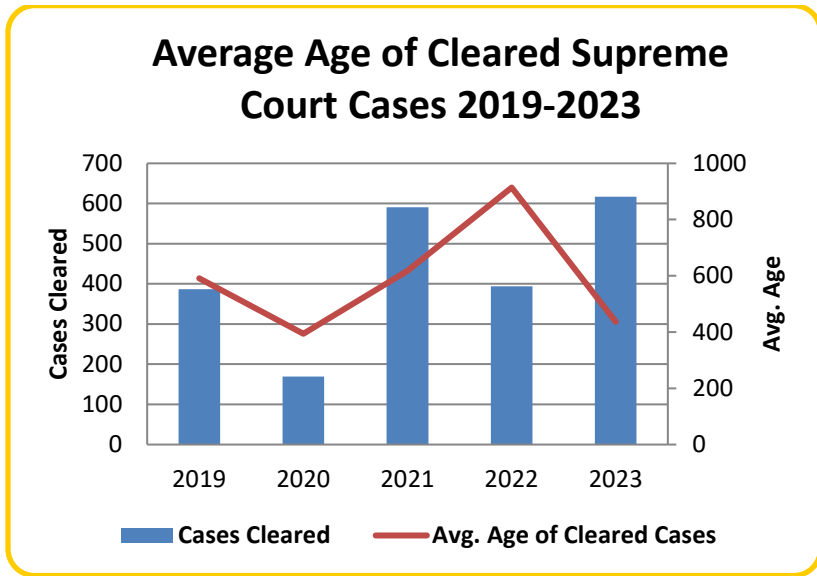
Annual and 5-Year Clearance Rates for Supreme Court Cases 2019-2023						
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5-Year
Cases Filed	4	5	5	8	3	25
Cases Cleared	7	6	7	4	9	33
Clearance Rate	175%	120%	140%	50%	300%	132%
Annual Goal	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



In addition to the clearance rate figures, the Judiciary tracks the average age of cleared Supreme Court cases. In 2023, the average age of the nine cases cleared was 436 days. The five-year trend for the average age of cleared Supreme Court cases is set forth below in the table and

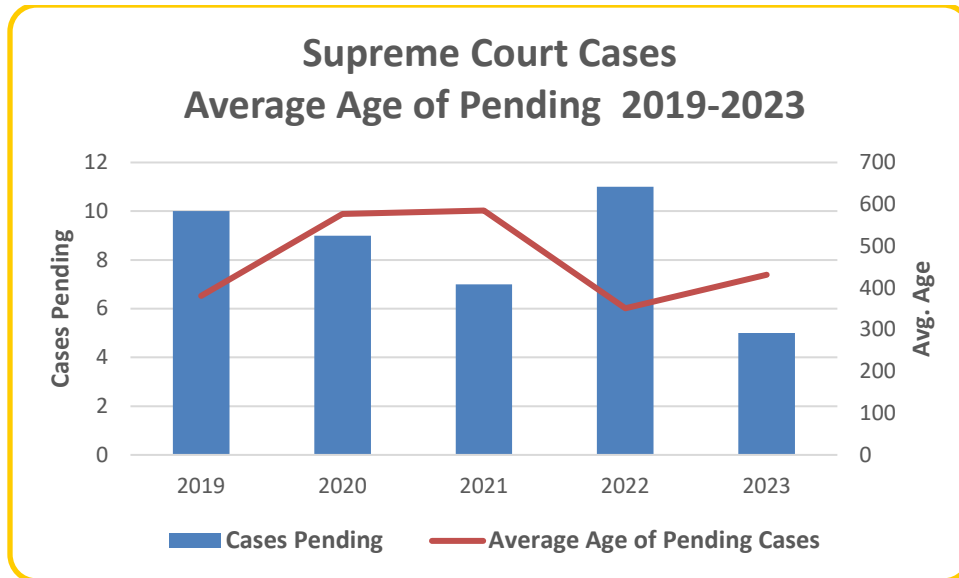
chart. The age of cleared cases in 2023 decreased by 478 days, 52%, less than 2022’s figure. This reduction is a result of the Supreme Court clearing its COVID backlog.

Average Age of Cleared Supreme Court Cases 2019-2023					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cases Cleared	7	6	7	4	9
Avg. Age of Cleared Cases	591	394	617	914	436



Regarding the average age of pending cases, as the table below shows, at the end of 2023 the average age of the five pending Supreme Court cases was 431 days, up 80 days from 351 the end of 2022. The increase was due to clearing older cases. The five-year trend for the average age of pending Supreme Court cases is set forth below in the table and chart.

Supreme Court Cases: Average Age of Pending Cases 2019-2023					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cases Pending	10	9	7	11	5
Average Age of Pending Cases	381	577	585	351	431



In addition to the average of pending cases, the Judiciary tracks the pending to disposal ratio, or PDR. This is the number of cases pending at the end the year divided by the number of cases disposed or cleared in the past 12 months. The PDR is a lead indicator. That is, a PDR consistently over 1.0 is likely to lead to a backlog. For 2023, the Supreme Court’s PDR was low at 0.56 (5/9), resulting from clearing its backlog.

In addition to the disposal rate, to track the Supreme Court’s efficiency the Judiciary also reviews the distribution and the average age of pending cases. At the end of 2023, there were three cases pending before the Supreme Court from previous years: one from 2021 and two from 2022. This relatively short “tail” demonstrates that the Supreme Court has cleared its older cases.

Beyond efficiency, the Supreme Court is affordable and accessible. Affordability and accessibility may be measured in terms of the availability of low filing fees for most litigants, fee waivers, the availability of free legal service for those who cannot afford an attorney, access for women, accommodations for those with disabilities, and publication of decisions.

- **Low Filing Fees.** The filing fee for most appeals is low, only \$100, and the availability of fee waivers was, and continues to be, publicized. The filing fee for non-resident matters is higher. That is, the filing fee is \$1,000 for appeals involving a non-resident entity, a foreign entity, or a foreign maritime entity, or cases involving the enforcement of a foreign judgment, arbitration award, or the like.
- **Fee Waivers.** Of the three cases filed in 2023, fee waivers for the filing fee and transcript fee were only sought in the two criminal appeals. In those cases, fee waivers were granted in the High Court, court appealed from.

- **Legal Aid Services.** Of the three cases filed in 2023, the defendants in two criminal cases were represented by the Office of the Public Defender (“OPD”). In the remaining case, as divorce case, the parties were represented by private counsel.
- **Women’s Access to Justice.** In 2023, the Supreme Court tracked the gender of appellees and appellants on the Judiciary’s CTS. In the three appeals filed in 2023, only the appellant in the divorce case was women. In the remaining case filed in 2023, the parties were men or the Republic.
- **Accommodation for Disabilities.** In 2023, the Supreme Court tracked via the CTS the disability status of litigants. In five appeals, one or more of the parties was a senior (over 60 years of age) with multiple disabilities, including walking and hearing. However, no evidentiary hearings were held in the matters, and the disabled parties were represented by able-bodied family members.
- **Proceedings Heard by Contemporaneous Transmission.** In 2023, none of the parties requested argument by contemporaneous transmission – that is, via Zoom. All arguments were held in open court. Motions were decided on written submissions.
- **Publication of Decisions.** All the Supreme Court’s decisions can be found on the Judiciary’s website, <http://rmicourts.org/>, under the heading Court Decisions and Digests.

Aside from the Supreme Court’s regular docket, Supreme Court Chief Justice Cadra, together with High Court Chief Justice Carl B. Ingram, admits new attorney to the practice of law in the Republic. In most years, one or two Marshallese law graduates will seek admission to practice law and around six attorneys from overseas will seek admission to represent clients with respect to non-resident litigation. In 2023 three Marshallese, all women, applied to practice law and were admitted. Also in July 2023, the Judiciary offered a bar examination to overseas attorneys seeking admission. However, due to difficulty making travel arrangements, no applicants appeared.

B. High Court

The High Court is the highest court at the trial level. It is a superior court of record having general jurisdiction over controversies of law and fact in the Marshall Islands. The High Court has original jurisdiction over all cases properly filed with it, appellate jurisdiction over cases originally filed in subordinate courts, and, unless otherwise provided by law, jurisdiction to review the legality of any final decision of a government agency.



In 2023, the High Court included a chief justice and three associate justices: Chief Justice Carl B. Ingram and Associate Justice Witten T. Philippo for the entire year and in the last part of the year Associate Justice Murnane. All are law-trained attorneys, as have been all prior High Court judges, and attend at least one professional development seminar or workshop each year. Chief Justice Ingram was appointed to his third ten-year term in October 2023. Although Chief Justice Ingram is a United States citizen, he has lived and worked in the Marshall Islands since 1979. In 2018, Associate Justice Philippo, as a citizen of the Republic was appointed until age 72 (January 31, 2030). In November 2022, the High Court added a third justice, Linda Murnane. Associate Justice Murnane was appointed to a two-year term commencing in November 2022, renewable for a second two-year term.



In addition to the three justices, the High Court is served by a chief clerk of the courts and four assistant clerks. The High Court’s 2023 case statistics for civil cases, probate cases, criminal cases, juvenile cases, and caseloads are set forth below.

1. Civil Cases (other than Probate Cases)

The High Court’s 2023 statistics for civil cases (include family and personal status cases, general civil case, land cases, and other civil matters, excluding probate cases) cover the following:

- the number and nature of cases filed;
- the annual clearance rate and the five-year clearance rate;
- the average age of cleared cases at the end of the year;
- the time standards: clear 75% of cases cleared within 120 days and 90% within 360 days;
- the number and average age of pending cases at the end of the year and the five-year trend;
- the pending to disposal ratio;
- the distribution of pending cases, i.e., the “tail”;
- the percentage of cleared cases appealed and the percentage of cases overturned on appeal; and

- affordability and accessibility in terms of fee waivers, low fees for vulnerable parties, cases heard on circuit, appearance by contemporaneous transmission, legal aid, forms, and access for women and those with disabilities.

a. Number and Nature of Cases Filed

In 2023, plaintiffs and petitioners filed 252 new civil cases in the High Court: 224 in Majuro and 28 in Ebeye. This is three more than the 249 cases filed in 2023.

The 224 civil cases filed in Majuro in 2023 breakdown as follows:

- 147 (66%), involved family and personal status matters (including 61 customary adoptions; one child custody and support case; 14 citizenship cases; three civil confinement cases; four divorce cases with child custody and/or support; six divorce cases without child custody and/or support; eight domestic violence cases seeking protection orders; 45 guardianships; and five name-change petition);
- 66 (29%) commercial cases (56 collection cases; two contract cases; one corporate; five declaratory relief cases; and two injunctive relief cases);
- Nine (4%) land cases; and
- Two (1%) appeals from the District Court.

Of the 224 civil cases filed in Majuro in 2023, 180 were cleared in 2023, leaving 44 civil cases filed in 2023 pending at the end of the year: one child support case; three citizenship cases; one divorce case with child custody and/or support; two divorce cases without child custody and/or support; one domestic violence case seeking protection orders; 20 collection cases; two contract cases; one corporate case; three declaratory relief cases; one injunctive relief case; and eight land cases; one appeal).

As noted above, 28 civil cases were filed in Ebeye. Of the 28 cases, 25 were family and personal status matters (one citizenship case; 22 confirmations of customary adoption cases; one divorce case without child custody and/or support; and one domestic violence case seeking a protection order). The remaining three cases were collection cases. All but two of the 28 Ebeye civil cases were cleared in 2023: a citizenship case and a divorce case remaining pending.

Also, with respect to the civil cases, the High Court tracks via its CTS the gender of the parties and other persons. Almost all child custody and support cases, divorce cases with child custody and/or support, and domestic violence protection order cases are filed by women against men. Otherwise, the case numbers disaggregated by gender do not reveal any pattern or trend. Most Marshallese seeking divorces, child custody and support, and domestic violence protection orders are represented at no cost by the Micronesian Legal Services Corporation (“MLSC”). The

defendants in those cases a usually represented by the OPD. However, every year or two, there will be a non-Marshallese couple seeking a divorce (for example, Americans stationed at the United States missile range on Kwajalein Atoll). They are usually represented by private attorneys.

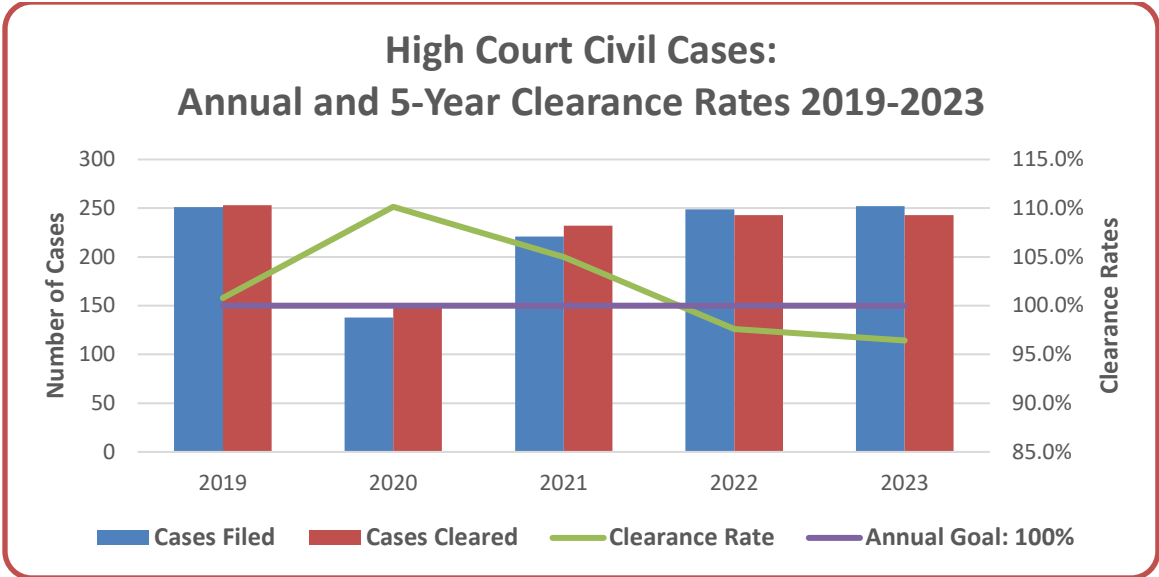
The High Court also tracks via the CTS the disability status of litigants. The most common disability is difficulty walking. When litigants, attorneys, or witnesses cannot easily climb stairs, their cases are heard in a ground-floor courtroom, and land rights cases, which involve older litigants and witnesses, are as a rule heard in a ground-floor courtroom. Also, witness depositions are used, particularly if the witness is home or hospital bound or lives overseas. Except as noted, disaggregation by disability status does not reveal any pattern.

Based upon the above civil caseload, the High Court measures its efficiency in terms of the annual clearance rates, the five-year clearance rate, time standards, the age of cleared cases, disposed to pending ratio, distribution of pending cases, and the age of pending cases.

b. Annual Clearance Rate and the Five-Year Clearance Rate

With respect to clearance rates, the High Court’s clearance goals are to achieve an annual clearance rate of 100% and a five-year clearance rate of 100%. In 2023, the High Court only recorded an annual clearance rate of 96.4% for civil cases: 243 cases were cleared and 252 were filed. However, in 2023 the five-year clearance rate remained above 100% at 101.1% (1,223 cases cleared and 1,111 filed) – a consistent level of performance. The High Court expects both the annual clearance rate and the five-year clearance rate to remain within 5% of the 100% goal.

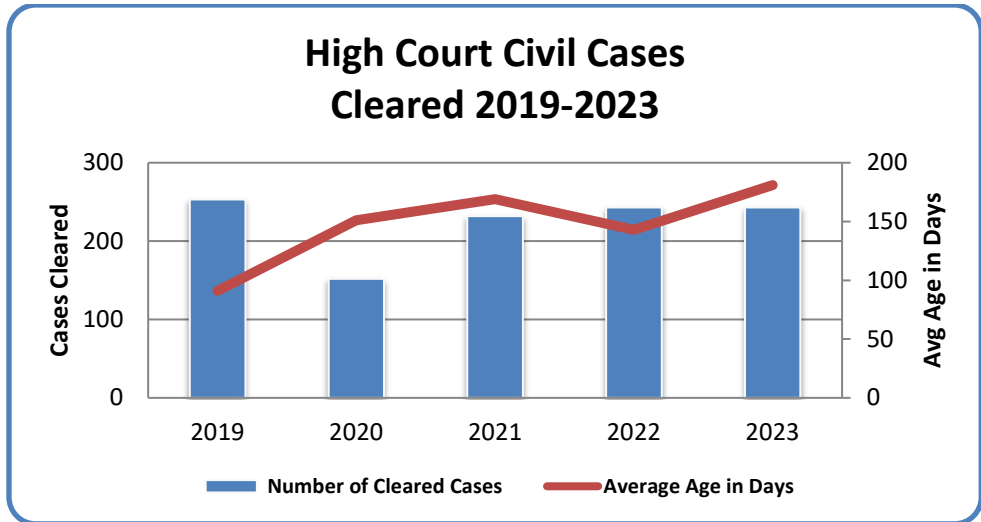
High Court Civil Cases: Annual and 5-Year Clearances Rates 2019 to 2023						
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5-Year
Cases Filed	251	138	221	249	252	1,111
Cases Cleared	253	152	232	243	243	1,123
Clearance Rate	100.8%	110.1%	105.0%	97.6%	96.4%	101.1%
Annual Goal: 100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



c. Average Age of Cleared Cases at the End of the Year and the Five-Year Trend

In addition to the clearance rates, the High Court tracks the average age of cleared cases. As the table and chart below show, in 2023 the average age of the 243 cleared High Court cases was 181 days, 38 days more than in 2022.

Average Age of High Court Civil Cases Cleared 2019-2023					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of Cleared Cases	253	152	232	243	243
Average Age in Days	91	151	169	143	181



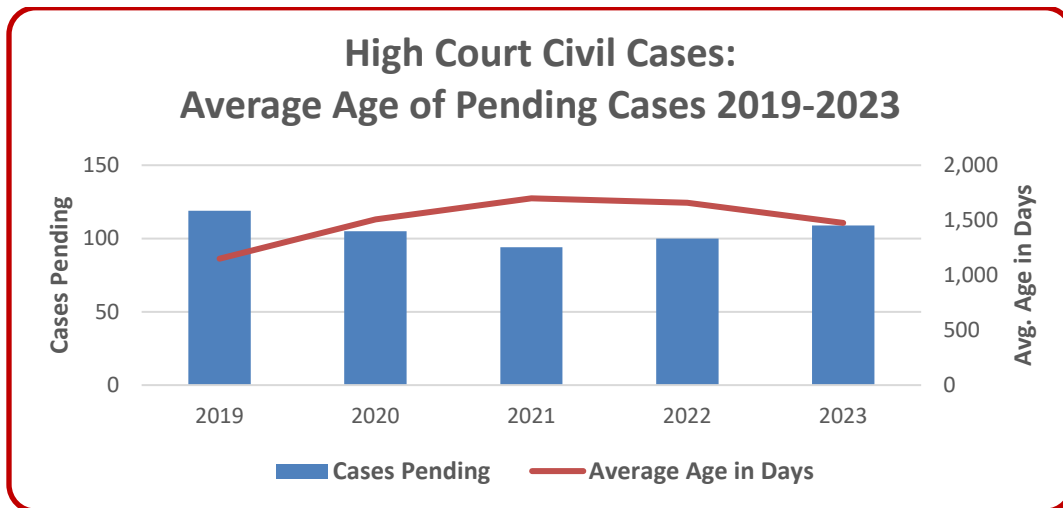
d. Time Standard: To Clear 75% of Cleared Cases Within 120 Days and 90% Within 360 Days

Each year the High Court seeks not only to meet its clearance goals, but also to meet its time standards. That is, the High Court seeks to clear 75% of its cleared civil cases within 120 days and 90% within 360 days. In 2023, the High Court met and surpassed its time standards for civil cases. The High Court cleared 75% of cases within only 87 days (33 days less than the 120-day standard) and 90% within only 194 days (166 days less than 360-day standard).

e. Number and Average Age of Pending Cases at the End of the Year and the Five-Year Trend

With respect to pending cases, the High Court tracks their number and average age. In 2023 the number of pending cases went up from 100 in 2022 to 109 in 2023. However, the average of pending cases went down: from 1,659 days in 2022 to 1,474 days in 2023. This is the result of clearing many older cases in 2021 and 2022.

High Court Civil Cases: Average Age of Pending Cases 2019-2023					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cases Pending	119	105	94	100	109
Average Age in Days	1,150	1,506	1,699	1,659	1,474



Of the 110 cases pending at the end of 2023, 49 cases or approximately 44.5% were land cases. This is a reduction of 3% over 2022. The High Court and the Traditional Rights Court continue to work hard to resolve the land cases without undue delay while affording the parties an opportunity to be heard.

f. Pending to Disposal Ratio

In addition to the number and average age of pending cases, as an indicator of efficiency, the High Court tracks the pending to disposal ratio (PDR). As noted earlier in this report, the PDR is the number of cases pending at the end the year divided by the number of cases disposed or cleared in the past 12 months. The High Court’s goal is to maintain a PDR of 1.0 or less. For 2023, the High Court’s PDR for civil cases was very good at 0.44 (109/243).

g. Distribution of Pending Cases, the “Tail”

In addition to the PDR, the High Court tracks the distribution of pending civil cases, the “tail.” At the end of 2023, there were 63 civil cases pending from 2010 through 2022. This relatively long “tail.” Most of these cases are customary land cases, which take longer than other cases to resolve. The High Court and the Traditional Rights Court continue to work hard to resolve the customary land cases without undue delay while affording the parties an opportunity to be heard.

h. Appeals

In addition to measuring efficiency, it is important to review the quality of judgments. Courts can measure the quality of their judgments in two ways: the percentage of cleared cases appealed and the percentage of cases overturned on appeal.

In 2023, only one High Court civil decision was appeal, a divorce case, which was dismissed. That is, one appeal of 243 cleared civil cases, 0.4%. Below is a table and chart showing the number of cleared cases appealed versus cases not appealed over the past five years.

Cleared High Court Civil Cases Not Appealed v. Appealed 2019-2023					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cases Cleared	253	152	232	243	243
Cases Appealed	4	4	3	6	1
% of Cases Appealed	1.6%	2.6%	1.3%	2.5%	0.4%
Cases Not Appealed	249	148	229	237	242
% of Cases Not Appealed	98.4%	97.4%	98.7%	97.5%	99.6%

In 2023, no High Court civil cases from 2023, or from previous years, were overturned on appeal. The percentage of cases overturned on appeal was 0%.

i. Affordability and Accessibility: Fee Waivers; Cases Heard on Circuit; Appearances by Contemporaneous Transmission; Legal Aid; Forms; and Access for Women and Those with Disabilities

It is not enough that courts be efficient and that the quality of judgments be high. The courts must be affordable and accessible. Affordability and accessibility to justice may be measured in

terms of the availability of fee waivers, lower fees for vulnerable parties, the number of cases heard on circuit, the availability of free legal service, and the availability of forms.

- **Fee Waivers.** By rule and statute, fee waivers are available upon a showing of need. In 2023, as in recent years, the High Court continued to aggressively publish fee waiver rules. However, no one requested a fee waiver in a High Court civil case.
- **Low Filing Fees.** The filing fee for most types of High Court civil cases remained low: only \$25. In 2016, the filing fee for child custody and support cases (usually filed by single mothers) was reduced from \$25 to \$5. To off-set the low fees for most users, fees for admiralty cases, enforcement of foreign judgments, non-resident corporate cases, international adoptions, and citizenship cases are substantially higher.
- **Cases Heard on Circuit.** As noted above, in 2023, 28 High Court cases were filed for the Ebeye circuit.
- **Proceeding Heard by Contemporaneous Transmission.** Also, in 2023 the CTS reveals that counsel, parties, or witnesses in civil cases appeared by contemporaneous transmission (i.e., via Zoom or Skype) in 70 out 626 conferences, hearings, or trials. At the request of a party with a mobility disability, as hearing was held in a ground floor courtroom.
- **Legal Aid Services.** In 2023, the use of free legal services remained high. In the 252 civil cases filed in 2023, 236 parties or persons were represented by MLSC or the OPD, both of which provide legal assistance for free. Also, in 2023, approximately 18 plaintiffs (or prospective plaintiffs) were assigned a free court-appointed attorney for their claims. In FY 2023, the Judiciary collected \$63,000 to pay court-appointed attorneys from private counsel who wished to opt-out of taking court-appointed cases.
- **Forms.** The Judiciary has long used forms in small claims cases, name-change petitions, and guardianship cases. Since 2013, the Judiciary has posted on its website and made available at courthouses forms for fee and cost waivers, confirmation of customary adoptions, guardianship petitions, divorce petitions, domestic-violence temporary protection orders, name-change petitions, and small claims cases.

2. Probate Cases

Set forth below are the High Court's 2023 case statistics for probate cases, covering:

- the number of cases filed;
- the annual clearance rate and the five-year clearance rate;

- the average age of cleared cases at the end of the year and the five-year trend;
- the time standard: 75% of cases cleared to be cleared within 90 days;
- the number and average age of pending cases at the end of the year and the five-year trend;
- the pending to disposal ratio;
- the percentage of cleared cases appealed and the percentage of cases overturned on appeal; and
- affordability and accessibility in terms of fee waivers, low fees for smaller cases, cases heard on circuit, appearances by contemporaneous transmission, legal aid, and access for women and those with disabilities.

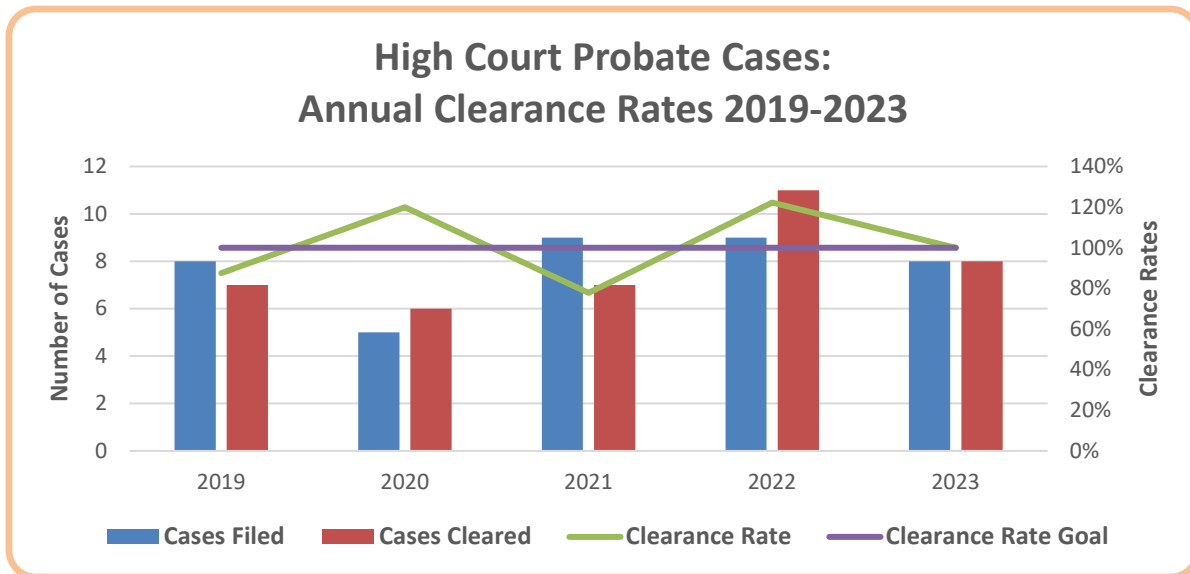
a. Number of Probate Cases

In 2023, eight probate cases were filed, one less than in 2022. Seven cases were filed in Majuro, and one case was filed in Ebeye.

b. Annual Clearance Rate and The Five-Year Clearance Rate

The High Court’s clearance goals for probate cases are to achieve an annual clearance rate of 100% and a five-year clearance rate of 100%. In 2023, the High Court cleared eight probate cases, seven Majuro cases and one Ebeye case, for an annual clearance rate of 100% (8/8). The five-year clearance rate for probate cases also was 100% (39/39). Given the relatively low number of probate cases filed each year, the annual clearance rate and five-year clearance rate should continue to fluctuate from around 80% to 120% as it has over the past five years.

High Court Probate Cases: Annual and 5-Year Clearance Rates 2019-2023						
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5-Year
Cases Filed	8	5	9	9	8	39
Cases Cleared	7	6	7	11	8	39
Clearance Rate	88%	120%	78%	122%	100%	100%
Clearance Rate Goal	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



c. Average Age of Cleared Cases at the End of the Year

The average age of the eight probate cases cleared in 2023 was 220 days, 136 days more than the 84 days in 2022. This increase was due to a September 2019 Ebeye case, which was finally dismissed in May 16, 2023, after the petitioner failed to appear of a hearing.

d. Time Standard: To Clear 75% of Cleared Cases Within 90 Days of the Day Filed

In addition to the annual clearance rate goal of 100%, the High Court seeks annually to clear 75% of its cleared probate cases within 90 days. In 2023, the High Court met this goal. Of the eight probate cases cleared in 2023, the High Court cleared six within 90 days, 75% (6/8). One case took 84 days to complete. With the very small number of probate cases filed each year, the goal of clearing 75% of the cases within 90 days can be stymied by one case.

e. Number and Average Age of Pending Cases at the End of the Year

Regarding the age of pending probate cases at the end of 2023, the one pending case, an Ebeye case filed in 2023, had been pending since April 19, 2023. The Court has given the petitioner an extension of time to give notice to survivors. The case should be resolved early in 2024.

f. Pending to disposal ratio

In addition to the above, as an indicator of efficiency, the High Court tracks the pending to disposal ratio for probate cases – that is, the number of cases pending at the end the year divided by the number of cases disposed or cleared in the past 12 months. At the end of 2023, there was only one probate case pending as opposed to eight cases cleared for a PDR of 0.125. The High

Court's goal is to maintain a PDR of 1.0 or less. The 0.125 PDR for probate cases was very good.

g. Appeals

In 2023, no probate cases were appealed, nor were any cases from previous years overturned on appeal. Accordingly, the percentage of probate cases appealed was 0%, and the percentage of appealed probate cases overturned on appeal was 0%. This has been the case for more than the past five years.

h. Affordability and Accessibility: Fee Waivers; Low Fees, Cases Heard on Circuit; Appearances by Contemporaneous Transmission; and Legal Aid

As noted above, affordability and accessibility to justice can be seen in the availability of fee waivers, low fees for smaller cases, the number of cases heard on circuit, appearances by contemporaneous transmission, the availability of free legal service, and access for women and persons with disabilities.

- **Fee Waivers.** As with other civil cases, fee waivers are available in probate cases. However, in 2023 (as in recent years) no one requested a fee waiver in a probate case. In 2023, the High Court widely published notice of the waivers, as it did in 2022.
- **Low Filing Fees.** In 2023, the fees for probate cases remained low. The filing fee for probate cases is \$25, \$100 for estates over \$7,000.
- **Cases Heard on Circuit.** Of the eight probate cases filed in 2023, one was filed for the Ebeye circuit. Of the eight probate cases cleared in 2023, one was an Ebeye circuit case.
- **Legal Aid Services.** In seven of the eight probate cases filed in 2023 (88%), the petitioner was represented by MLSC. One probate case was filed by private counsel. In most years, all but one or two probate petitioners are represented by MLSC.
- **Proceedings Hearing by Contemporaneous Transmission.** Upon request, the High Court conducts probate hearings by contemporaneous transmission to permit parties, counsel, and witnesses not able to appear in person to appear virtually. In 2023, at the request of a party, one of 11 probate hearings was conducted by via Zoom.
- **Access to Justice for Women.** The 2023 probate statistics disaggregated by gender reveals that four, that is half, of petitioners were women, widows, or daughters of the decedent. Usually, the petitioner will be the surviving spouse, the eldest surviving child, or, failing either, the most senior surviving child present in Majuro.
- **Access to Justice to Persons with Disabilities.** In 2023, none of the parties or witnesses requested that accommodations be made due to disability. Families usually select a

representative who is both physically and mentally in good health to serve as the petitioner or objector.

3. Criminal Cases

Set forth below are the High Court's 2023 case statistics for criminal cases. These statistics cover the following:

- the number and nature of criminal cases;
- the annual clearance rate and five-year clearance rate;
- the average age of cleared cases at the end of the year;
- the time standard: 90% percentage of cleared cases to be cleared within 550 days (18 months);
- the average age of pending cases at the end of the year;
- the pending to disposal ratio;
- the distribution of pending cases – that is, the “tail”;
- the percentage of cleared cases appealed and the percentage of cleared cases overturned on appeal; and
- affordability and accessibility (low or no fees, fee waivers, cases heard on circuit, appearances by contemporaneous transmission, free legal representation, and access for women and those with disabilities).

a. Number and Nature of Cases

In 2023, the Office of the Attorney-General (“OAG”) filed 24 criminal cases in the High Court. Of the 24 cases, 16 were filed in Majuro and eight were filed in Ebeye.

In Majuro, the 16 criminal cases filed in 2023 included the following (by most serious offense charged in the case): one murder; one sexual assault in the 1st degree; two aggravated assaults; one trafficking in persons; one sexual assault in 2nd degree; five thefts and/or forgery; one receiving stolen property; one perjury; one child abuse; one misconduct in public office; one forgery in the 2nd degree; one illegal importation of goods or smuggling; and one assault.

In the 16 Majuro cases, three of the defendants were women. One was charged with forgery, one was charged with assault another one, and one was charged with trafficking of person (babies).

Of the 16 Majuro cases, females were the victims in at least three cases: two women were victims of the sexual assault and one woman was the victim of an assault. In one case, a male child was the victim of child abuse. Counseling for victims of domestic violence and sexual violence is available through NGOs and government agencies, including Youth-to-Youth in Health, Women United Together Marshall Islands, the Mental Health Clinic, and the Ministry of Health and Human Services.

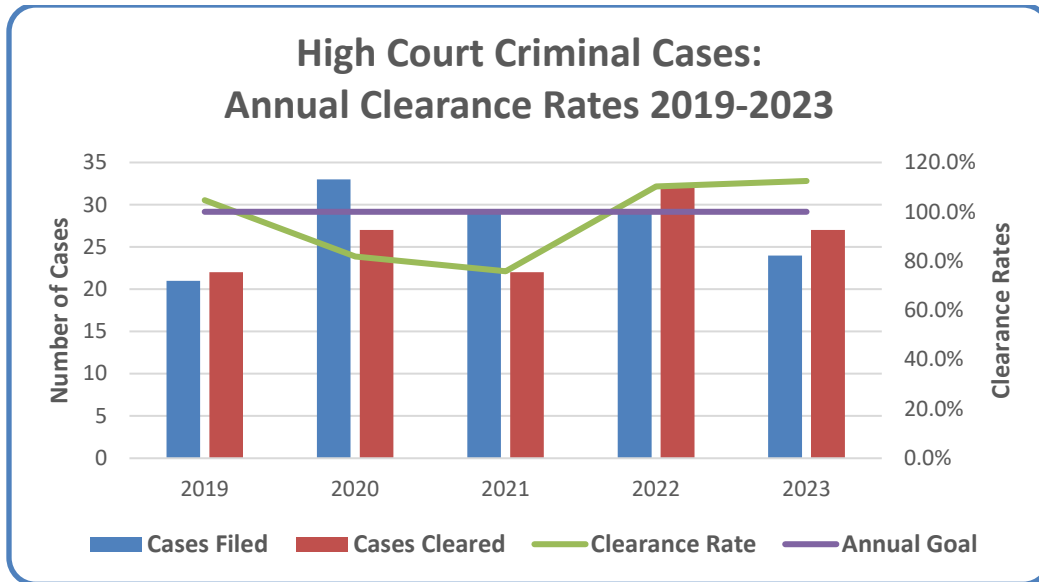
In Ebeye, the eight criminal cases filed in 2023 included the following (by most serious offense charged in the case): one aggravated assault; one sexual assault in the 1st degree; two sexual assaults in the 2nd degree; one burglary; one smuggling goods into the Republic; one employment of a non-resident worker; and one unlawfully remaining in the Republic. Of the nine defendants, eight were men and one was a woman. The victims of the three sexual assaults were three females, two women and one juvenile.

Other than as noted above, the High Court’s criminal case statistics, disaggregated by gender or disability, do not reveal any pattern or trend.

b. Annual Clearance Rate and Five-Year Clearance Rate

The High Court’s clearance goals for criminal cases are an annual clearance rate of 100% and a five-year clearance rate of 100%. In 2023, the High Court cleared 27 criminal cases from all years and added 24 new cases, resulting in a 2023 clearance rate of 112.5% (27/24). In three of the past five years the annual clearance rate was over than 100%. However, in 2023 the five-year clearance rate was only 95.6% (130/136). This was due to lower clearance rates in 2020 and 2021, COVID years.

High Court Criminal Cases: Annual and 5-Year Clearance Rates 2019-2023						
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5-Year
Cases Filed	21	33	29	29	24	136
Cases Cleared	22	27	22	32	27	130
Clearance Rate	104.8%	81.8%	75.9%	110.3%	112.5%	95.6%
Annual Goal	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



c. Average Age of Cleared Cases at the End of the Year

The average age of the 27 High Court criminal cases cleared in 2023 was 274 days. As the table below shows, this is a reduction of 28 days less than the average age of the 32 cases cleared in 2022 (302 days). This reduction was the of due to the OAG clear older cases in 2022.

Average Age of High Court Criminal Cases Cleared 2019-2023					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cases Cleared	22	27	22	32	27
Avg. Age of Cases Cleared	166	143	249	302	274

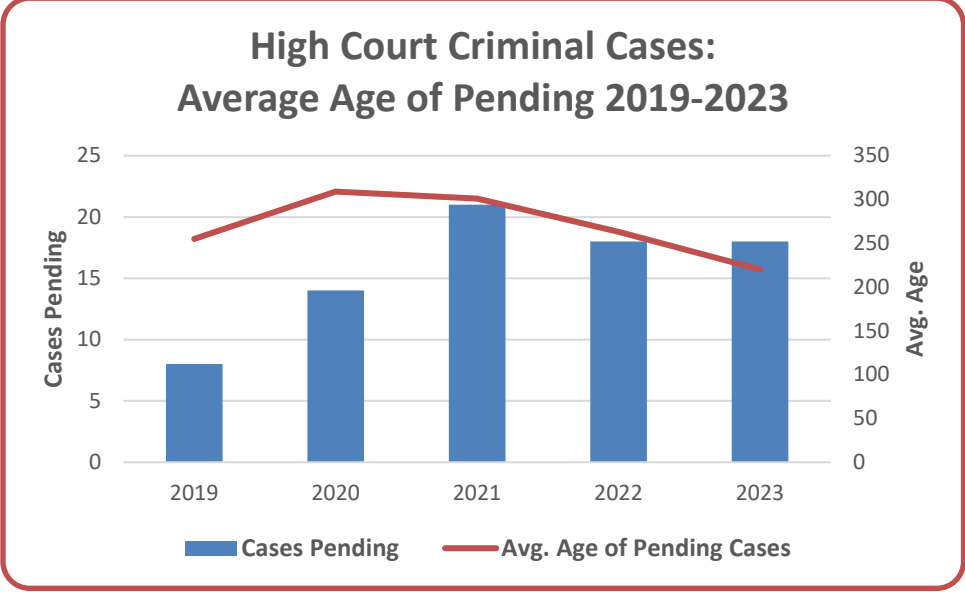
d. Time Standard: 90% of Cleared Cases Cleared Within 550 Days (18 Months)

In addition to the annual clearance rate, the High Court seeks to clear 90% of the cleared criminal cases within 550 days. In 2023, the High Court cleared 90% of the cleared cases in only 463 days, 84 days under the target of 550 days. Only two cases took more than 550 days to complete.

e. Average Age of Pending Cases

As the table below shows, by the end of 2023, 15 criminal cases remained pending, three less than the 18 cases pending at the end of 2022. Also, the average age of the pending cases was 220 days, down 43 days from 263 days at the end of 2022. The High Court continues to encourage prosecutors and defense counsel to resolve criminal cases, particularly older cases. At the end of 2023, of the remaining 15 cases, only one of the 15 cases was more than 550 days old and 14 cases were equal to or less than 365 days old.

High Court Criminal Cases: Average Age of Pending Cases 2019-2023					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cases Pending	8	14	21	18	15
Avg. Age of Pending Cases	255	309	301	263	220



f. Pending to disposal ratio

In addition to the above, as an indicator of efficiency, the High Court tracks the pending to disposal ratio (PRD) for criminal cases – that is, the number of cases pending at the end the year divided by the number of cases disposed, or cleared, in the past 12 months. The High Court’s goal is to maintain a PDR of 1.0 or less. In 2023, the High Court’s PDR for criminal cases was good at 0.56 (15/27).

g. Distribution of Pending Cases, the “Tail”

In addition to the clearance rates and the pending to disposal ratio, to track the High Court also tracks the distribution of pending criminal cases – that is, the “tail.” At the end of 2023, there was one criminal case pending from an earlier year: one from 2022. This is very short “tail,” reflecting the reduction or elimination of a backlog.

h. Appeals

The number of cases appealed and overturned on appeal reflects the quality of the High Court’s criminal decisions. In 2023, two of the 27 High Court criminal cases cleared were appealed. The percentage of cases appealed was 13% (2/15). Usually, one or two criminal cases are appealed each year.

One of the two criminal cases appealed in 2023 was reversed in part, affirmed in part, and remanded for re-sentencing. The defendant was promptly re-sentenced in 2023, and the defendant appealed the re-sentencing.

i. Affordability and Accessibility: Absence of Fees or Fee Waivers; Cases Heard on Circuit; Appearances by Contemporaneous Transmission; and Legal Aid

The Judiciary seeks to ensure its users affordability and accessible criminal justice through the absence of fees and the availability of fee waivers, circuit court sessions, appearances by contemporaneous transmission, and free legal representation.

Fee Waivers. That is, the Judiciary does not impose fees or court costs on criminal defendants at the trial level. On appeal, a defendant may apply for waiver of the filing fee and transcript costs. In the two 2023 criminal appeals, the High Court waived the cost of filing the notice of appeal and the transcript cost.

Cases Heard on Circuit. Usually, the High Court travels to Ebeye on circuit once a quarter to hear felony cases. However, in 2023, the High Court held only three in-court sessions in Ebeye. The fourth quarter circuit had to be canceled because of the OAG and the OPD could get their travel approved in time. The first 2024 Ebeye circuit was held in January.

Cases Heard by Contemporaneous Transmission. In 2023, the CTS reveals that counsel, parties, or witnesses in criminal cases appeared by contemporaneous transmission (that is, via Zoom) in six out of 172 conferences, hearings, or trials.

Legal Aid Services. Finally, criminal defendants have access to free legal counsel if they cannot afford to retain counsel. In 2023, as in other years, all or most criminal defendants who appeared in Court were represented by the OPD, the MLSC, or by private counsel paid by the Legal Aid Fund (“LAF”). In the 24 cases filed in 2023, the defendants were represented by the OPD in 20 cases. In four cases, the defendants retained private counsel to represent them. A few cases had more than two or three defendants.

4. Juvenile Cases

In 2023, the OAG did not file any juvenile cases in the High Court. Since 2006, when the Republic filed seven juvenile cases in Majuro, the Republic has filed no more than four High Court juvenile cases in a year. Most other juvenile cases (underage drinking) are heard by the District Court, a limited jurisdiction trial court. In recent years, all juvenile offenders were boys. None of the juveniles has been identified as disabled.

At the beginning of 2023, two juvenile cases were pending before the High Court. In one of the cases, the Court adjudicated the juvenile as delinquent by stipulation in January 2023. The other case remains pending. That case was cleared in 2024.

The High Court's annual and five-year clearance goals for juvenile cases are 100%. However, this is very difficult to achieve as the number of High Court juvenile cases is so low. In 2023, the five-year clearance rate was 87.5% (7/8). The High Court also seeks to clear 80% of juvenile cases within 180 days of filing. This too is a very difficult goal to reach with the very low number of juvenile cases.

In 2023, no juvenile cases were appealed.

To ensure juvenile offenders' access to justice, the Judiciary does not impose fees or court costs on juvenile offenders at the trial level, and on appeal a juvenile offender may apply for and receive a waiver for the cost of the trial transcript. Almost all juvenile offenders are represented by the OPD or private counsel appointed by the court. Additionally, High Court juvenile cases are heard on the Ebeye circuit. If necessary, juvenile proceedings can be conducted using Zoom. However, in 2023, no juvenile proceedings required the appearance of the parties or counsel via Zoom.

5. Caseloads for Judges and Clerks

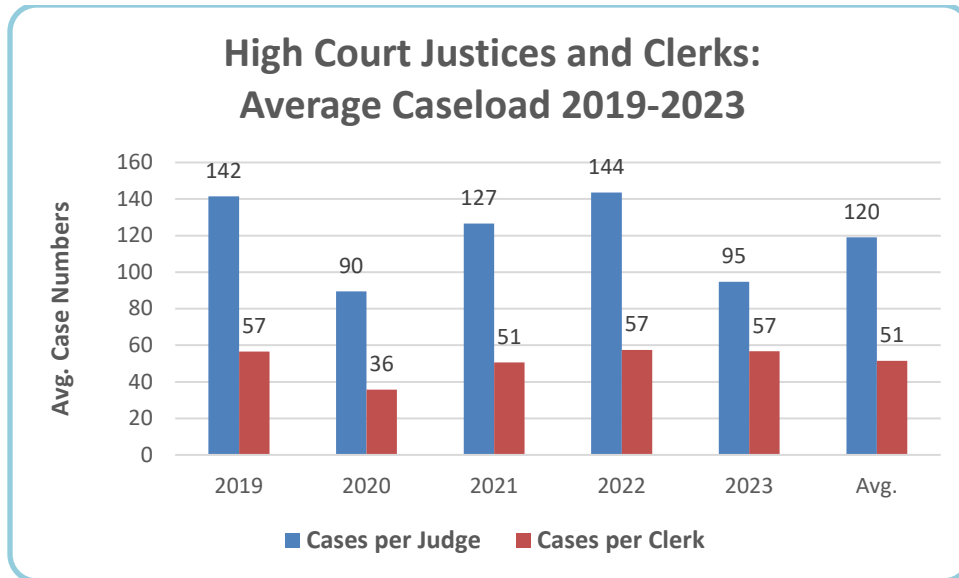
The total number of all High Court cases filed in 2023 was 284, three less than in 2022. Throughout the year, the total number of High Court justices was three. Based upon three justices, the caseload was increased on average by 95 cases per justice. In the four previous years, the total number of High Court justices was only two.

As to case assignments, generally cases are assigned between the justices on a rotating basis, subject to the need to balance the caseloads, conflicts, cases involving the same or related parties, and the absence of justice from country. With the third High Court justice available for in all of 2023, the case load of the chief justice was reduced to account for a heavier administrative load.

For the five clerks that regularly process High Court cases, their 2023 caseload included 57 new cases per clerk. As with the justices, the clerks' caseloads fluctuate from year-to-year within a limited range.

There is some specialization among the clerks, such as finance and interpretation; however, all clerks handle most functions, including customer service.

Below is a chart showing the five-year High Court caseload trend.



6. Selected Decisions

Selected High Court decisions can be found on the Judiciary’s website, <http://rmicourts.org/>, under the heading Court Decisions and Digests. The selected cases are the most noteworthy ones; ones that the Judiciary believes should be published for the benefit of the public and practitioners. The High Court will not publish a case unless it satisfies one or more of the following standards: (1) the opinion lays down a new rule of law, or alters, modifies an existing rule, or applies an established rule to a novel fact situation; (2) the opinion involves a legal issue of continuing public interest; (3) the opinion directs attention to the shortcomings of existing common law or inadequacies in statutes; (4) the opinion resolves an apparent conflict of authority. Most High Court decisions are routine in nature and generally are of interest only to the parties. The public can get copies of these decisions upon request to the Clerk of the Courts.

C. Traditional Rights Court

Assisting the High Court at the trial level is the Traditional Rights Court (“TRC”). The TRC is a special-jurisdiction court of record consisting of three or more judges appointed for terms of four to 10 years, but not to exceed age 72, and selected to include a fair representation of all classes of land rights: Irojilaplap (high chief); where applicable, Irojiedrik (lesser chief); Alap (head of commoner/worker clan); and Dri Jerbal (commoner/worker).

The jurisdiction of the TRC is limited to questions relating to titles to land rights or other legal interests depending wholly or partly on customary law and traditional practices. The jurisdiction of the TRC may be invoked as of right upon application by a party to a pending High Court proceeding, provided the High Court judge certifies that a substantial question has arisen within the jurisdiction of the TRC.

Customary law questions certified by the High Court are decided by the TRC panel and reported back to the High Court. Upon request by the TRC’s presiding judge, a party, or the referring High Court judge, the Chief Justice of the High Court may appoint a High Court or District Court judge to sit with the TRC to make procedural and evidentiary rulings. In such joint-hearing cases, the High Court or District Court judge does not participate with the TRC in deliberations on its opinion, but the High Court or District Court judge may, in the presence of the parties or their counsel, answer questions of law or procedure posed by the TRC. The TRC’s jurisdiction also includes rendering an opinion on whether compensation for the taking of land rights in eminent domain proceedings is just.



The Constitution states that the High Court is to give decisions of the TRC substantial weight, but TRC decisions are not binding unless the High Court concludes that justice so requires. The Supreme Court has held the High Court is to review and adopt the TRC’s findings unless the findings are clearly erroneous or contrary to law.



In January 2021, the Cabinet and Nitijela elevated Judge Leban (Dri Jerbal member) from associate judge to the chief judge. Her appointment was for a 10-year term. She had been an associate judge for more than 10 years. Associate Judge Nixon David (Iroij member) was reappointed for a third four-year term in 2021. In February 2021, the Cabinet appointed, and the Nitijela’s confirmed, another woman to the TRC bench, Claire T. Loeak. Judge Loeak (Alap member) is the first law-trained TRC judge. Her appointment was for 10 years. In 2022, all TRC judges attended judicial development training programs.

Although two of the three TRC judges are women, only four of the Judiciary's approximately 30 judges were women: one High Court justice; two Traditional Rights Court judges; and one Community Court judge.



In 2023, the TRC issued three decisions, four less than in 2022. At the end of 2023, approximately 21 of 49 pending land cases were before the TRC and another four were pending the outcome of related cases.

The TRC’s decisions can be found on the Judiciary’s website, <http://rmicourts.org/>, under the heading Court Decisions and Digests.

D. District Court



In addition to the TRC, the District Court is below the High Court at the trial level. The District Court is a limited-jurisdiction court of record. It consists of a presiding judge and two associate judges appointed for 10-year terms, not to exceed age 72. In 2020, the 3 incumbent judges were Presiding Judge Ablos Tarry Paul, Associate Judge Caios Lucky, and Associate Judge Davidson T. Jajo (Ebeye). Their 10-year terms expire in 2028, 2027, and 2026, respectively.



The current District Court judges are lay judges who receive specialized training. The District Court has original jurisdiction concurrent with the High Court:

- (i) in civil cases where the amount claimed or the value of the property involved does not exceed \$10,000 (excluding matters within the exclusive jurisdiction of the High Court by Constitution or statute, such as land title cases and admiralty and maritime matters) and small claim cases not exceeding \$2,500.
- (ii) in criminal cases involving offenses for which the maximum penalty does not exceed a fine of \$5,000 or imprisonment for a term of less than 3 years, or both.

The District Court also has appellate jurisdiction to review any decision of a Community Court.

The District Court's 2023 case statistics and case workload are set forth below.

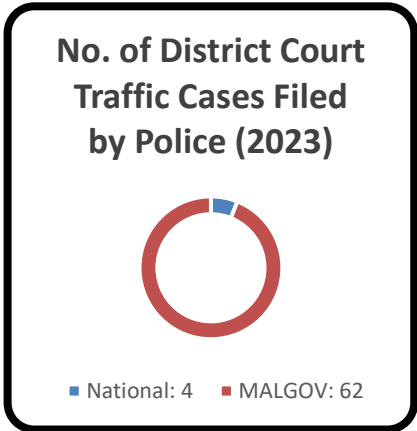
1. Traffic Cases (Majuro)

- the number and nature of traffic cases;
- annual clearance rates for the most recent five years;
- the average duration of cleared cases for the most recent five years;
- the percentage of cases appealed and the percentage of appealed cases overturned on appeal; and
- affordability and accessibility in terms of fee waivers, cases heard outside of Majuro (the Capital), legal aid, and forms.

a. Number and Nature of Cases Filed

In 2023, the National Police and Majuro Atoll Local Government Police prosecutors filed in the District Court a total of 897 traffic cases in Majuro.

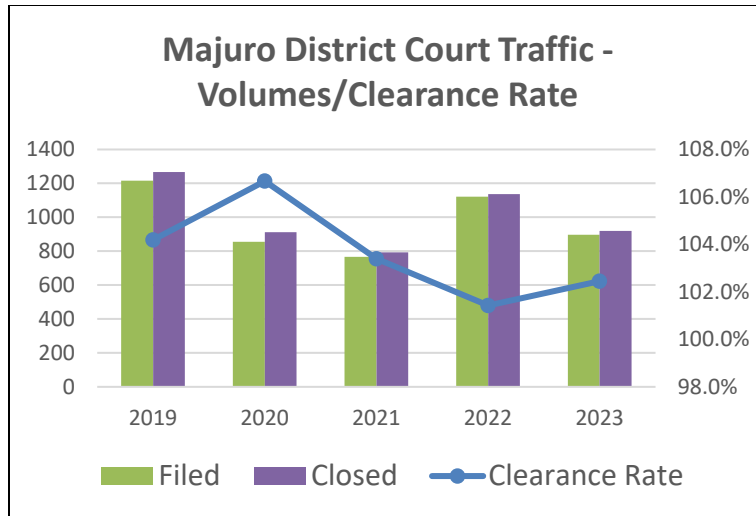
The 897 traffic cases filed in 2023 included the following (by most number of cases): 231 Driving without license in possession; 162 Driving under the influence; 159 Driving without registration card; 63 Improper Signal; 54 Faulty Head lights; 51 Failure to use seat belt; 33 Illegal stop or parking; 32 Disobeying traffic signs; 19 Faulty Tail Lamp; 17 Negligent Driving; 14 Unsafe Passing; 13 Obstructing driver’s view; 13 Faulty brakes; 8 Excessive speeding; 7 Driving without insurance card; 6 Failure to yield; 6 No license displayed; 4 Illegal riding; 3 Tinted windows; and 2 Failure to wear safety helmet. Of these 897 Majuro traffic cases, 172 were women.



Of the 897 traffic cases filed in Majuro in 2023, 882 cases were finalized in 2023, adding 15 cases to the pending workload at the end of the year. Cases are delayed because the defendants give false addresses or have fled the Republic for the United States or have fled Majuro for the neighboring islands.

b. Clearance Rates

The District Court’s efficiency can be measured by case clearance rates. The District Court’s 2023 annual clearance rate for traffic cases was 102.5% (finalized/ filed). During 2023, the District Court, counsel, and parties finalized 919 cases, 882 2023 cases, and 37 cases from previous years (2022-2020). And as noted above, the government filed 897 new cases in 2023. The District Court’s goal is to maintain an annual clearance rate for traffic cases of 100% or better, for each year. Over the past five years, the District Court has achieved a total clearance rate of 103.5%



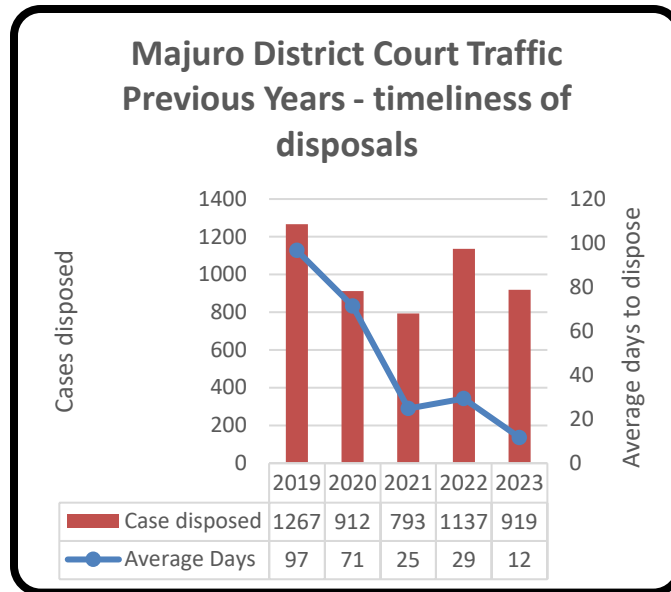
Previous Calendar Years	Filed	Closed	Clearance Rate
2019	1216	1267	104.2%
2020	855	912	106.7%
2021	767	793	103.4%
2022	1121	1137	101.4%
2023	897	919	102.5%
Total/clearance rate	4856	5028	103.5%

The District Court each month dismisses without prejudice abandoned cases that have been pending six months or more.

c. Average Duration of Traffic Cases Cleared

The average duration of District Court traffic cases cleared in 2023 was 12 days. A total of 882 2023 cases, 36 2022 cases, and 1 2020 cases were finalized in 2023.

For Majuro District Court traffic cases filed in the five years (2019-2023), the average durations of finalized cases in days are as follows:



d. Appeals

In addition to measuring efficiency, it is important to review the quality of judgments. The quality of judgments can be measured in two ways: the percentage of cases appealed and the percentage of appealed cases overturned on appeal.

In 2023, none of the 919 Majuro District Court traffic cases cleared in 2023 were appealed to the High Court and remanded back to the District Court. Furthermore, from 2019 to 2022, no traffic case was appealed to the High Court.

e. Affordability and Accessibility: Fee Waivers; Cases Heard Outside of Majuro; Legal Aid; and Forms

As noted earlier, it is not enough that courts be efficient and that the quality of judgment be high. The courts must be affordable and accessible. Affordability and accessibility to justice may be measured in terms of the availability of fee waivers, the number of cases heard outside of the capital Majuro, the availability of free legal service, and the availability of forms.

(i) Fee Waivers

As there are no filing fees for traffic cases, fee waivers are not applicable.

(ii) Cases Heard on Ebeye

A third District Court judge is stationed in Ebeye to handle District Court matters including traffic cases filed there.

(iii) Free Legal Services

At the District Court level, most traffic offenders are self-represented. Only in more serious cases, such as those involving DUI, do they seek legal assistance and representation by the MLSC or the OPD, which both provide free legal assistance. Of the 897 traffic cases filed in Majuro in 2023, only 67 defendants (7.48%) were represented by the OPD, 828 represented themselves (92.30%), and 2 were represented by private counsel (0.22%).

(iv) Forms

Consent judgment forms are available at the Clerk’s Office for traffic offenders who wish to plead guilty and pay a fine. Those who use the form do not have to appear in court.

2. Criminal Cases (Majuro)

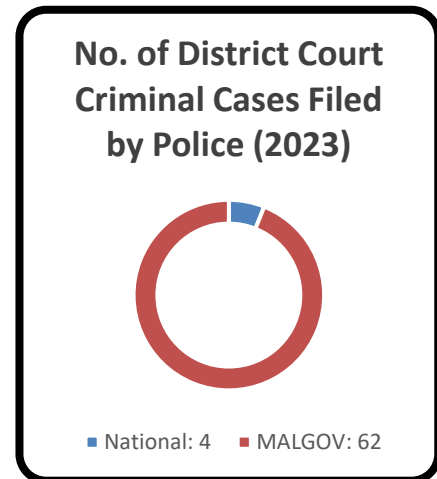
The District Court’s 2023 statistics for Majuro criminal cases cover the following:

- the number and nature of cases filed and finalized in 2023;
- the annual clearance rates for the most recent five years;
- the average duration of cleared cases in the most recent five years;
- the percentage of cases appealed and the percentage of appealed cases overturned on appeal; and
- accessibility in terms of fee waivers, cases heard outside of Majuro, legal aid, and forms.

a. Number and Nature of Cases Filed

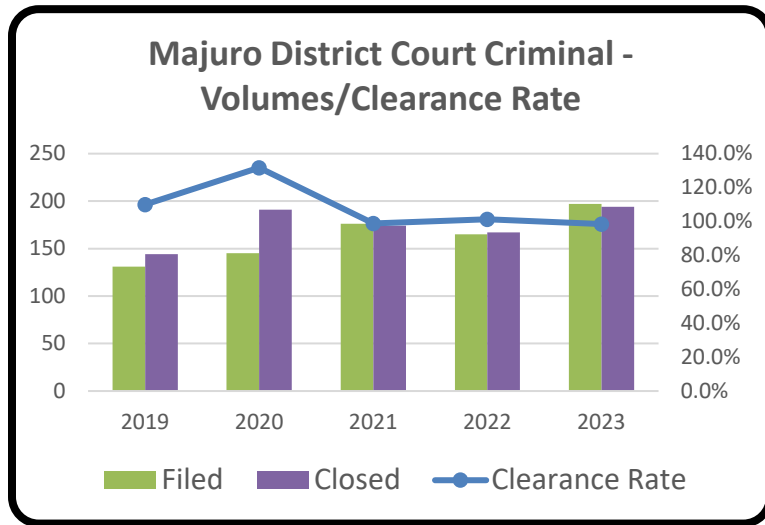
In 2023, the National Police and Majuro Atoll Local Government Police prosecutors filed in the District Court a total of 312 criminal cases in Majuro.

Of the 312 criminal cases, 302 were cleared in 2023, leaving 10 pending at the end of the year. The 10 cases remained pending due to serious nature, police having difficulty locating defendants who either relocated to the United States, or to the neighboring islands of the Republic, or gave false addresses.



b. Clearance Rates

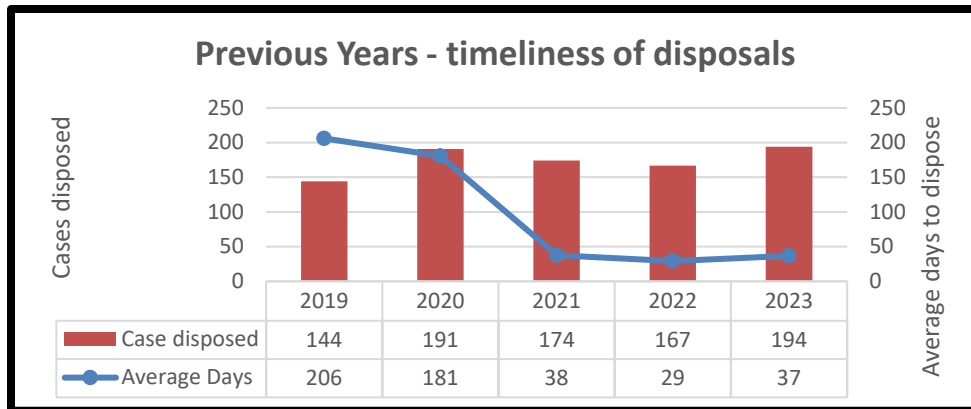
The District Court’s goal is to maintain an annual clearance rate for criminal cases of 100%, and a five-year clearance rate of 100%. As noted above, in 2023 the government filed 312 new cases. During 2023, the District Court, counsel, and parties closed only a total of 382 cases, for an annual clearance rate was 122.4% (382 over 312 cases). However, the clearance rate over five years was 102.3 %, an excellent rate.



Previous Calendar Years	Filed	Closed	Clearance Rate
2019	543	496	91.3%
2020	522	609	116.7%
2021	715	710	99.3%
2022	501	455	90.8%
2023	312	382	122.4%
Total/clearance rate	2593	2652	102.3%

c. Average Duration of Cleared Criminal Cases

In addition to annual clearance rates, the efficiency of a case management system can be measured by the age of cleared cases. The average duration of District Court criminal cases cleared in 2023 was 48 days.



d. Appeals

In addition to measuring efficiency, it is important to review the quality of judgments. The quality of judgments can be measured in two ways: the percentage of cases appealed and the percentage of appealed cases overturned on appeal.

In 2023, only one of the District Court criminal cases cleared in 2022 was appealed to the High Court. Similarly, from 2019 to 2022 one criminal case was appealed. Also, in 2023, there were two District Court criminal case or decisions from any years overturned.

e. Affordability and Accessibility: Fee Waivers; Cases Heard Outside of Majuro; Legal Aid; and Forms

The courts must be affordable and accessible. Affordability and accessibility to justice may be measured in terms of the availability of fee waivers, the number of cases heard outside of the capital Majuro, the availability of free legal service, and the availability of forms.

(i) Fee Waivers

As there are no filing fees for criminal cases, fee waivers are not applicable.

(ii) Cases Heard on Ebeye

A third District Court judge is stationed in Ebeye to handle District Court matters including criminal cases filed there.

(iii) Free Legal Services

At the District Court level, most defendants are self-represented. Only in more serious cases, such as those involving selling alcohol to minors and assault and battery, do defendants seek legal assistance and representation by the MLSC or the OPD, which both provide free legal assistance. Of the 312 criminal cases filed in 2023, there were 316 defendants. Of the 316

defendants, 21 (6.65%) were represented by the OPD, 292 represented themselves (92.40%), and 3 were represented by private counsel (0.95%).

(iv) Forms

Consent judgment forms are available at the Clerk’s Office for defendants who wish to plead guilty and pay a fine. Those who use the form do not have to appear in court.

3. Juvenile Cases (Majuro)

The District Court’s 2023 statistics for juvenile cases cover the following:

- the number and nature of cases filed and finalized in 2023;
- the annual clearance rates for the most recent five years;
- the average duration of cleared cases;
- the percentage of cases appealed and the percentage of cases overturned on appeal; and
- accessibility in terms of fee waivers, cases heard outside of Majuro, legal aid, and forms.

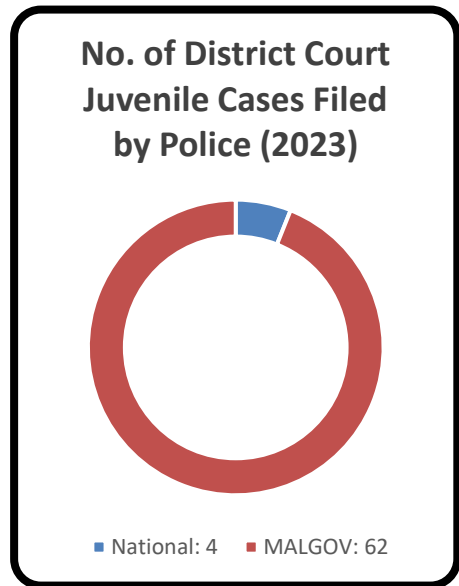
a. Number and Nature of Cases Filed

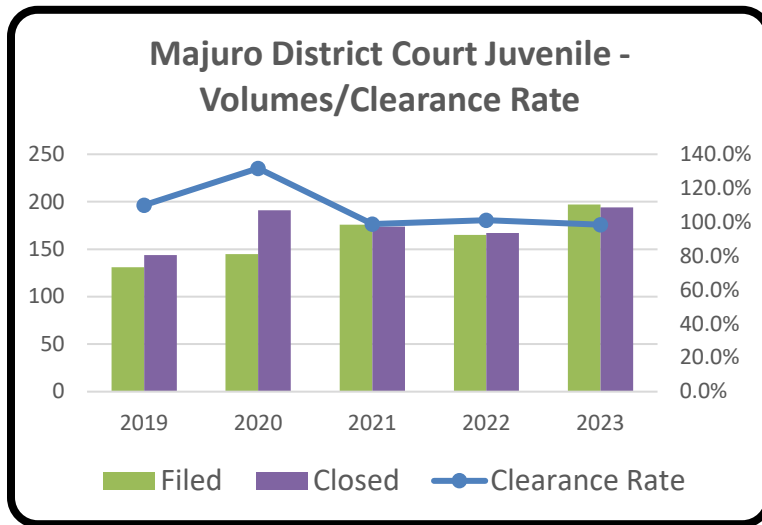
In 2023, the Majuro Atoll Local Government Police prosecutors filed in the District Court a total of 66 juvenile cases in Majuro. Of the 66 juvenile cases filed, 35 cases involved curfew violations, 16 involved underage drinking and alcohol related charges, and 15 cases involved traffic related charges.

The 66 juvenile cases filed in Majuro in 2023 were all cleared in 2023, leaving no pending cases at the end of the year.

b. Clearance Rates

The District Court’s efficiency in handling juvenile cases can be measured by case clearance rates. The District Court’s 2023 annual clearance rate for juvenile cases was 100%. During 2023, the District Court, counsel, and parties closed all 66 cases filed in 2023. And as noted below, 66 new cases were filed in 2023. The District Court’s goal is to maintain an annual clearance rate for juvenile cases of 100% or better, for each year.



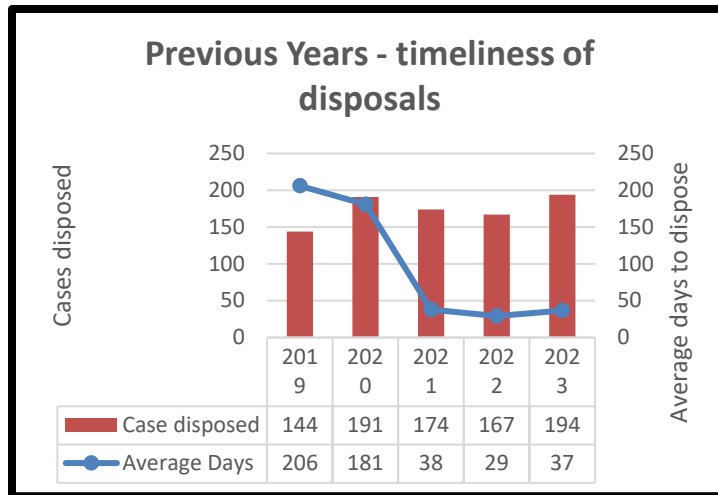


Previous Calendar Years	Filed	Closed	Clearance Rate
2019	103	125	121.4%
2020	91	102	112.1%
2021	38	37	97.4%
2022	45	47	104.4%
2023	66	66	100.0%
Total/clearance rate	343	377	109.9%

The District Court each month dismisses without prejudice abandoned cases that have been pending six months or more.

c. Average Duration of Cleared Juvenile Cases

In addition to annual clearance rates, the efficiency of a case management system can be measured by the age of cleared cases. The average duration of District Court juvenile cases cleared in 2023 was 6 days.



d. Appeals

The quality of judgments can be measured in two ways: the percentage of cases appealed and the percentage of appealed cases overturned on appeal.

In 2023, none of the 66 District Court juvenile cases cleared in 2023 were appealed to the High Court. Similarly, from 2013 to 2022 no juvenile cases were appealed.

Furthermore, in 2023, there were no District Court juvenile cases or decisions from earlier years overturned on appeal.

e. Affordability and Accessibility: Fee Waivers; Cases Heard Outside of Majuro; Legal Aid; and Forms

The courts must be affordable and accessible. Affordability and accessibility to justice may be measured in terms of the availability of fee waivers, the number of cases heard outside of the capital Majuro, the availability of free legal service, and the availability of forms.

(i) Fee Waivers

As there are no filing fees for juvenile cases, fee waivers are not applicable.

(ii) Cases Heard on Ebeye

A third District Court judge is stationed in Ebeye to handle District Court matters including juvenile cases filed there.

(iii) Free Legal Services

At the District Court level, most juvenile offenders are self-represented. Only in more serious cases do they seek legal assistance and representation by the MLSC or the OPD, which both provide free legal assistance. Of the 66 juvenile cases filed in 2023, all 66 represented themselves (100%). Similarly, in previous years, the number of juvenile offenders represented by the OPD or by private counsel has been very low.

(iv) Forms

Although consent judgment forms are available at the Clerk's Office for offenders who wish to plead guilty and pay a fine, these forms are not applicable for juvenile matters as juvenile cases are treated differently. It is a requirement that all juvenile offenders must attend Court with the presence of a parent and counsel.

4. Small Claims Cases (Majuro)

The District Court's 2023 statistics for Majuro small claims cases cover the following:

- the number and nature of cases filed and finalized in 2023;
- the annual clearance rates for the most recent five years;
- the average duration of cleared cases;
- the percentage of cases appealed and the percentage of cases overturned on appeal; and
- affordability and accessibility in terms of fee waivers, cases heard outside of Majuro, legal aid, and forms.

a. Number of Cases Filed

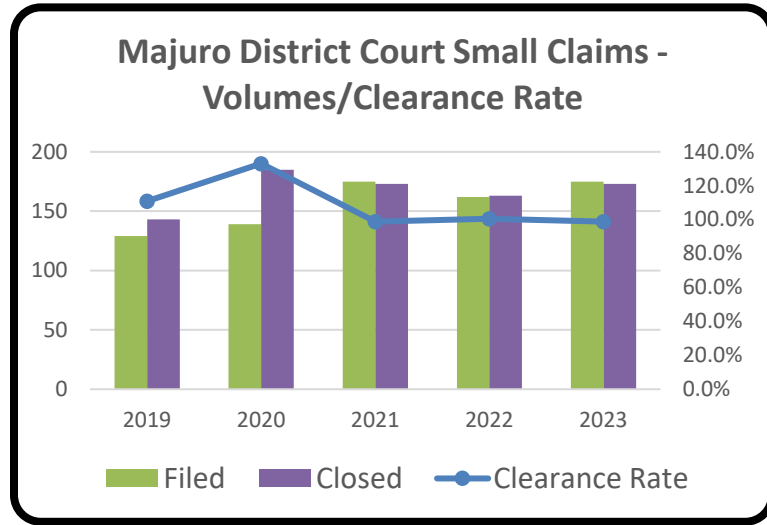
In 2023, a total of 175 small claims cases were filed in Majuro.

Of the 175 small claims cases filed in Majuro in 2023, 163 were cleared in 2023, leaving 12 pending cases at the end of the year.

b. Clearance Rates

The District Court's 2023 annual clearance rate for small claims cases was 98.9%. However, the clearance rate over five years was 107.3 %, an excellent rate. During 2023, the District Court, counsel, and parties closed 163 2023 cases, 8 2022 cases, and 2 2021 cases. And as noted

in the chart below, 175 new cases were filed in 2023. The District Court’s goal is to maintain an annual clearance rate for small claims cases of 100% or better, for each year.

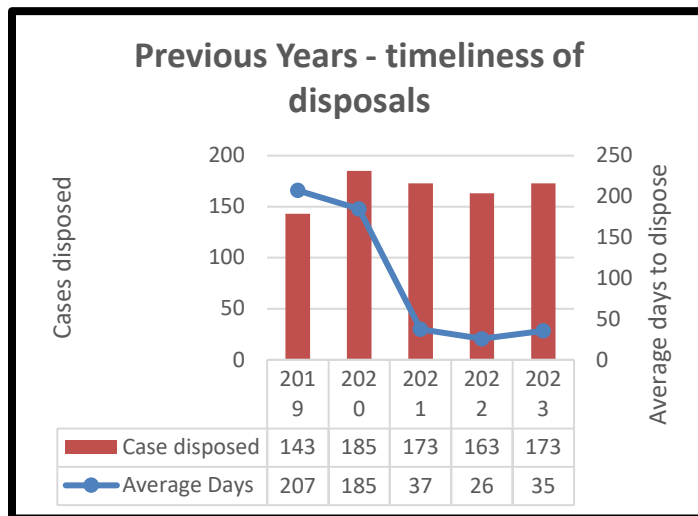


c. Average Duration of Cleared Small Claims Cases

In addition to annual clearance rates, the efficiency of a case management system can be measured by the age of cleared cases.

The average duration of District Court small claims cases cleared in 2023 was 35 days.

For Majuro District Court small claims cases cleared in the past five years (2019-2023), the average duration of cleared cases in days were as follows:



d. Appeals

In addition to measuring efficiency, it is important to review the quality of judgments. The quality of judgments can be measured in two ways: the percentage of cases appealed and the percentage of appealed cases overturned on appeal.

In 2023, one of the 173 District Court small claims cases cleared in 2023 were appealed to the High Court. From 2013 to 2022 no small claims cases were appealed.

Furthermore, in 2023, there were no District Court small claims cases or decisions from any years overturned on appeal.

e. Affordability and Accessibility: Fee Waivers; Cases Heard Outside of Majuro; Legal Aid; and Forms

It is not enough that courts be efficient and that the quality of judgment be high. The courts must be affordable and accessible. Affordability and accessibility to justice may be measured in terms of the availability of fee waivers, the number of cases heard outside of the capital Majuro, the availability of free legal service, and the availability of forms.

(i) Fee Waivers

Although, by rule and statute, fee waivers are available upon a showing of need, plaintiffs did not request a fee waiver in any of the 2023 District Court small claims cases. The filing fee for small claims cases remains low at only \$5 dollars.

(ii) Cases Heard on Ebeye

A third District Court judge is stationed in Ebeye to handle District Court matters including small claims cases filed there.

(iii) Free Legal Services

At the District Court level, most plaintiffs and defendants in small claims cases are self-represented. Only in a few cases do defendants seek legal assistance and representation by the MLSC or the OPD, which both provide free legal assistance or private attorneys. Of the 175 small claims cases filed in 2023, 6 of the plaintiffs were represented by a private attorney (3.4%), all others appeared *pro se* (96.6%). Of the 175 cases filed, there were 181 defendants. Of the 181 defendants 5 (2.8%) were represented by the OPD and all others appeared *pro se* (97.2%).

(iv) Forms

Small claims forms are available on the court's website (www.rmicourts.org) or at the Clerk's Office.

In summary, a total of 1,472 cases were filed in the Majuro District Court: 897 traffic cases; 312 criminal and local government ordinance cases; 66 juvenile cases; 175 small claims cases; 21 other civil cases (collection), and 1 criminal appeal from the Ailinglaplap Community Court.

5. Caseload for Judges and Clerks (Majuro)

In 2023, the average number of new cases heard by the two District Court judges in Majuro was 736 cases, and the average number of new cases per court clerk was the same.

6. Ebeye

In 2023 on Ebeye, 62 cases were filed in the District Court:

- 17 traffic cases (14 cleared and 3 pending);
- 12 criminal & local government ordinance cases (11 cleared and 1 pending);
- 19 juvenile cases (19 cleared and 0 pending);
- 7 small claim cases (7 cleared and 0 pending); and
- 7 civil cases (0 cleared and 7 pending).

The average number of cases heard per District Court judge in Ebeye was 62 and the average number of cases per court clerk was 31 (one Judiciary clerk and one Kwajalein Atoll Local Government court clerk).

No 2023 Ebeye District Court cases were appealed or overturned on appeal.

In all Ebeye District Court small claims cases, traffic cases, criminal and local government ordinance cases, the parties were self-represented.

E. Community Courts

On the neighboring islands (excluding Kwajalein Atoll, which has a District Court), the Judiciary has Community Courts. A Community Court is a limited-jurisdiction court of record for a local government area, of which there are 22. Each Community Court consists of a presiding judge and such number of associate judges, if any, as the Judicial Service Commission may appoint. Appointments are made for terms of up to six years, but not to exceed age 72. Community Court judges are lay judges with limited training. A Community Court has original jurisdiction concurrent with the High Court and the District Court within its local government area:

(i) in all civil cases where the amount claimed or the value of the property involved does not exceed \$1,000 (excluding matters within the exclusive jurisdiction of the High Court by Constitution or statute, such as land title cases and admiralty and maritime matters) and

(ii) in all criminal cases involving offenses for which the maximum penalty does not exceed a fine of \$400 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or both.

At the end of 2023, there were 21 serving Community Court judges and nine vacancies. At the date of this report, there were 13 vacancies for which the Commission is waiting recommendations from local government councils: Ailinglaplap (2 positions); Enewetak; Lib; Likiep; Mejit; Mili; Namdrik; Namu; Rongelap; Ujae; Wotho; and 1 unallocated position.

Community court judges receive training when they come to Majuro for biennial summer conferences and on other occasions. The Judiciary encourages all Community Court judges who are in Majuro for other business to stop by the courthouse and arrange for training opportunities with the District Court judges. The Judiciary intends to continue providing such trainings for Community Court judges.

F. Travel to the Neighboring Islands and Ebeye

The Judiciary also travels to the neighboring islands on an as-needed basis.

If the OAG, the OPD, and the MLSC were to station attorneys on Ebeye full time, the Ebeye caseload would increase as in the past providing greater access to justice.

If the Government cannot afford to station attorneys full-time on Ebeye, the Judiciary would request that at the very least the Office of the OAG and OPD receive funding to employ trial assistants on Ebeye. This was the practice until relatively recently. Defendants brought before the District Court on Ebeye on criminal charges have a constitutional right to legal counsel.

G. Other Services: Births, Deaths, Marriages, Notarizations, etc.

In addition to deciding cases, the courts help the people through confirming delayed registrations of births and death, performing marriages, notarizing, and certifying documents, and issuing record checks. The courts offer these services on no or little notice. However, couples usually schedule marriages one to three days in advance. Marriages by non-citizens must first be approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



1. Majuro. In 2023 on Majuro, the High Court and the District Court processed 169 delayed registrations of birth, 3 delayed registrations of death, and performed 29 marriages. The clerks notarized 685 documents, of which 4 were notarized off site to accommodate disabled persons. Upon request, clerks will go to the hospital or homes to notarize documents for those who cannot travel to the courthouses. Also, the clerks issued 12 apostilles, certified 196 documents, 189 criminal record checks, no civil record checks, and 291 corporate litigation checks.

2. Ebeye. In 2023 on Ebeye, the District Court processed 96 delayed registrations of birth, 0 delayed registrations of death, and performed 10 marriages. The Ebeye clerks also notarized 191 documents, of which 10 were notarized off site at a chief’s home/meeting or to accommodate disabled/sick persons.

The five-year totals for birth, deaths, marriages, and notarizations are as shown below.

Birth, Deaths, Etc. 2019-2023					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Births	319	270	248	269	265
Deaths	3	3	4	3	3
Marriages	42	38	29	36	39
Notarizations	1,041	1,449	1,552	912	876
Apostille Cert’s	3	19	5	6	12
Criminal Checks	35	28	29	40	189
Corporate Checks	202	146	304	188	291

H. Court Staff



In 2023, the Judiciary’s staff included the following: a chief clerk of the courts, seven assistant clerks (one in Ebeye), three bailiffs (seconded from the National Police), and two maintenance workers. The chief clerk and four of the seven assistant clerks were women. A listing of the judiciary personnel at the end of the year is attached as Appendix 2.

In addition to their administrative responsibilities, the clerks also serve as interpreters from Marshallese to English and English to Marshallese. The clerks also assist unrepresented court-users in completing forms.

The Office of the Clerk of the Courts is open 8:00 a.m. to noon and 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. In case of emergencies, the courts will open on weekends and holidays. The contact information for the Majuro and the Ebeye Courthouses is as follows:

Majuro Courthouse
P.O. Box B
Majuro, MH 96960
Tel.: (011-692) 625-3201/3297
Email: Marshall.Islands.Judiciary@gmail.com

The Majuro Courthouse is in Uliga Village, Majuro Atoll, across from the Uliga Dock.

Ebeye Courthouse
P.O. Box 5944
Ebeye, Kwajalein Atoll, MH 96970
Tel.: (011-692) 329-4032
Email: ebeyecourthouse@gmail.com

The Ebeye Courthouse is located behind the Police Station on the Oceanside.

I. Professional Development and Regional Conferences

Managing the Judiciary’s personnel in accordance with sound leadership and management practices is the fourth goal of the Judiciary’s 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. In most years, all permanent justices and judges of the Supreme Court, the High Court, the Traditional Rights Court, the District Court, and court clerks attend at least one workshop and conference each year to further develop their knowledge and skills. Funding for such programs come from the Judiciary’s annual operating budget, the Compact of Free Association, New Zealand, and Australia. The Judiciary’s 2023 professional development activities are set forth below.

From January 30 through February 1, 2023, Supreme Court Chief Justice Cadra and High Court Chief Justice Ingram attended as guests the 2023 Mid-Winter Workshop for Judges of the Ninth Circuit held in Tucson, Arizona. The workshop activities included the following: Movie Night: Screening “Marshall”; Welcome, Opening Remarks & Introductions; We the People, the Press, and High-Profile Case; Nationwide Injunctions; Writing Workshop Stylish Opinions: What Do Readers Want?; Law, Justice, and the Holocaust: How the Courts Failed Germany; Transparency, Democracy, and the Justiciary; Nuts and Bolts of Ninth Circuit Case Processing: Motions, Calendaring, Capital Cases, En Banc Proceedings, and more; Law and Corpus Linguistics; Part II--Writing Workshop Point Taken: Top Tips for Readable and Convincing Opinions; Supreme Court Review; Pacific Islands Committee Meeting; and Closing Remarks and Adjournment.

From March 6 through 10, 2023, Chief Clerk of the Courts Ingrid Kabua and Assistant Clerk of the Courts Hainrick Moore attended the Pacific Justice Sector Program’s Court Performance Management and Annual Reporting Workshop in Wellington, New Zealand. The workshop, designed for judges and senior registry staff who are responsible for court performance management and reporting, aimed at developing skills and abilities to use court data for effective and efficient court performance management and for producing reliable and accurate annual reports.



From March 15 through 17, 2023, Assistant Clerk Melissa Joe, Assistant Clerk James Reimers, and IT/Systems Officer Bobby Andrew attended the Pacific Judicial Integrity Program (PJIP) sponsored Managing and Reporting on Fraud and Corruption Cases Workshop in Brisbane, Australia. This pilot workshop focused on Fraud and Bribery - two of the five most prevalent related case typologies in the Pacific as identified by the twelve participating jurisdictions. The training was designed to assist Registrars, Judicial Associates, and other court staff who directly support judges to manage fraud and corruption-related cases. The objectives of the workshop: share, exchange and develop competence in case management principles, standards and approaches; identify and explain the nuances and differing processes involved in managing related offences; identify the documents and evidence required for related cases; identify and record important data about cases; apply ethical principles in practice, efficiently; and build a collegiate network among the region's legal professionals.



From May 22 through 25, 2023, District Court Presiding Judge Ablos Tarry Paul attended the National Judicial College The Traffic Case: A Course for Nonlawyer Judges in 2023, Reno, Nevada. The four-day course gives nonlawyer judges a solid foundation in evidence admissibility, the flow of a trial from beginning to end, case management, sentencing and more. In this course judges learn to: (i) Recognize the important roles of Judges play in efficiently, ethically, and effective handling impaired driving cases; (ii) Identify, analyze, and rule on Fourth Amendment issues that arise during the trial of impaired driving cases; (iii) Cite the current practices and the role of forensic toxicology in impaired driving cases; (iv) Examine the basic of Rules of Evidence; and (v) Utilize pre-trial motions, hearings and streamline your trial procedure.

From June 20 through 22, 2023, Traditional Rights Court Chief Judge Grace L. Leban attended the Pacific Judicial Council (PJC) Custom and Traditional Law Conference in collaboration with Ka Huli Ao Center for Excellence in Native Hawaiian Law at the William S.



Richardson School of Law, UH Manoa, Hawaii. During the conference the judges (i) discussed opportunities and challenges that custom presents for the courts and society; (ii) explored constitutional and other related legal regimes for custom in the jurisdictions; (iii) discussed the challenges faced in resource management and other community issues; (iv) discussed opportunities and challenges that custom presents for the courts in the area of civil and criminal law, human rights, and other international law frameworks (for example environmental and climate change concerns); (v) reviewed the challenges and

opportunities that customary and traditional law may present for marine, ocean, and other natural

resources; (vi) explored the evolution of tradition and custom in Hawai'i State law and the role of judges in operationalizing the public trust doctrine to protect natural and cultural resources and promote proactive stewardship; (vii) and explored the customary dispute resolution processes and institutions that exist in the jurisdictions outside the court system. During the conference, Chief Judge Leban delivered a presentation on the role and function of the Traditional Rights Court in the Republic.

From July 30 through August 3, 2023, Supreme Court Chief Justice Cadra and High Court Chief Justice Ingram attended as guests the 2023 Mid-Winter Workshop for Judges of the Ninth Circuit, in Portland, Oregon. The workshop activities included the following: (i) Welcome Reception by the District of Oregon; (ii) Opening and Welcome to the Conference; (iii) the Supreme Court review; (iv) Interpreting the Constitution: A Debate on Originalism and Its Alternatives; (v) Opening Ceremony; (vi) Welcome Reception; (vii) How the Colorado River Runs or Runs Out: A Look Beneath the Surface; (viii) U.S. Sentencing Commission: Current Issues; (ix) Empaneling a Jury: Joint Criminal/Civil Breakout Session; (x) Nothing to See Here: First Amendment Privacy Advice for Judges and Attorneys; (xi) Regulating Big Tech; (xii) Lunch and Keynote Speaker, What Happened to You? A Conversation on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing; (xiii) Pacific Islands Committee Business Meeting; (xiv) What Are Potential Solutions to the Homelessness Crisis?; (xv) History — What Is It Good For?; and (xvi) Conversation with The Honorable Elena Kagan Associate Justice, United States Supreme Court.

From August 28 through September 1, 2023, Assistant Clerks-Finance Officers Tany Lomae and Melissa Joe attended the Association of Pacific Islands Public Auditors 2023 Conference & Workshop, Shining a Light on Public Accountability. The at the workshop the clerks: (i) learned to identify the financial statements for a government entity and understand the accounting equation and the accounting cycle; (ii) looked into the recent GASB updates that have been issued and have become applicable; (iii) looked at Single Audits findings and corrective action plans and how to read and understand audit opinions, reports, and findings; (iv) learned the new standards and consider the effects of the requirements on Audit Offices; and (v) learned to promote efficiency and accountability in the use of public resources.

From September 18 through 21, 2023, Associate Justice Witten T. Philippo attended the National Judicial College's Judicial Writing course (online). During the course, judges learned to: diagnose and revise difficult and unclear writing; identify the audience and styles of judicial writing; master three levels of style necessary to strong judicial work; define the relationship between writing and decision-making; and master a series of tasks necessary to writing complete, effective, and efficient judicial documents.

From September 18 through 20, 2023, the High Court justices and Traditional Rights Court and District Court judges, along with the Clerks of the Courts attended a Social Media Workshop in Majuro. As guardians of sensitive information for individuals and organizations, courts need to properly protect data assets, courts must coordinate internally, and with the executive and legislative branches, in cyberattack prevention and response. Further, with appropriate protections in place, the RMI Judiciary can use social media to expand and ensure greater access to justice. The two-and-a-half-day workshop covered the following important topics: (i) Judicial Ethics and Social Media; (ii) Independent Factual Research on the Internet; (iii) Cyber Security and Cyber Hygienics for Judges; (iv) Disinformation in the Justice System; (v) Practical Hands-on Technology Laboratory; and (vi) Generative Artificial Intelligence and the Judiciary.



From October 5 through 7, 2023, Linda S. Murnane, Associate Justice, High Court; Grace Leban, Chief Judge, Traditional Rights Courts; and Claire T. Loeak, Associate Judge, Traditional Rights Courts, attended the National Association of Women Judges, 45th Annual Conference, Setting the Pace for Justice, in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA. The session topics included the following: (i) Neuroscience; (ii) Well-Being in the Law; (iii) About Damn Time: Women Leading Complex Cases; (iv) Rural Courts Issues; Human Trafficking; (v) Are We Losing Independent Courts?; (vi) Cultural Considerations in Judging; (vii) The Crime of Genocide: Understanding the Legal Concept Through Current Threats; (viii) Legislation Affecting LGBTQ+ Rights Across the Country; (ix) Helping Judges Understand Artificial Intelligence; (x) Justice for All; (xi) Cyber Violence – When a Leader Becomes the Victim; (xii) Religious Freedom; Tea and Ethics; and (xiii) Title IX Issues.



From October 9 through 12, 2023, TRC Judge Nixon David and District Court judges Tarry Paul, Davidson Jajo, and Caios Lucky attended the National Judicial College course Mindfulness for Judges in Incline Village, Nevada. The four-day program was an opportunity from the judges to pause from the many complexities of being a judge and find some space to breathe and reflect. It is a practice of learning to pay attention to their thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations and acknowledging whatever is present and using that information to respond to the unfolding of the judges work and lives. During this course, judges learned to: (i) Define “mindfulness”; (ii) Describe why mindfulness is especially important for judges to employ; (iii) Summarize the benefits of mindfulness for both your personal and professional life; and (iv) Apply mindfulness to assist you in decision making.

On October 24, 2023, Supreme Court Chief Justice Cadra, High Court Chief Justice Ingram, and High Court Associate Judge Murnane attended a Westlaw Training conducted by Shannon

Lashbrook, Digital Services Librarian, Ninth Circuit. The training session included using the Client Id feature to save a research session; a draft Marshall Islands Judiciary page with numerous features, including Find & Print, Search Black's Law Dictionary, Secondary Sources, editing the page and editing features, e.g. Secondary Sources, setting Home Page as start page, Primary Law options in the center of the Home Page (including cases, statues, rules, and jury instructions); using Terms and Connectors (e.g., selecting Advance from Cases), using Key Numbers from Head Notes, using Si Dy field under Cases plus Adv., using Words and Phrases field, saving cases and snippets to Folder, using Improve WestLaw to address needs, selecting History from the top and use all, and introduction to Westlaw Drafting Assistant for future training.

From October 30 through November 2, 2023, Supreme Court Chief Justice Daniel Cadra attended Advanced Skills for Appellate Judges and from November 2 through 5, 2023, attended Appellate Judges Education Institute ("AJEI"), in Washington, D.C. The Advanced Skills course included the following: (i) opinion writing; (ii) small group dynamics and collaborative decision-making; (iii) how to get the most during oral argument; (iv) civility and professionalism; (v) ethics issues pertinent to the appellate bench; (vi) judicial deference to executive branch agency decisions; (vii) trends in judicial security; (viii) a re-examination of the death penalty 50 years after *Furman v. Georgia*; and (ix) standards of review and writs. The AJEI course included the following: A Fireside Chat with Hon. Brett Kavanaugh, Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and Hon. J. Michelle Childs, U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit; The Supreme Court and the American Constitutional System; A Fireside Chat with the U.S. Solicitor General; Why "BOT" her Writing?; Law, Justice, and the Holocaust (with an optional additional tour of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum); The Importance and Impact of U.S. Appellate Courts of Special Jurisdiction; Disqualification of Judges & Lawyers: Ethics of Recusal; DEI: Bench and Bar Pipeline; Historical Facts: Past, Present, and Future; Update on Key Decisions of October 2022 SCOTUS Term; Preview of October 2023 SCOTUS Term; The Lexicon is Not a Fortress: Law and Linguistics; Making Non-Argument Sections of a Brief Persuasive; Building and Maintaining an Appellate Practice; *McCulloch v. Maryland*: One-Stop Shopping for Textual Interpretive Methods; Other Side of the Lectern: Trading Places Between Practitioner and Judge and Back; The Fine Art of Rebuttal at Oral Argument; Increasing Diversity in the Appellate Bench and Bar: Building the Talent Pipeline through Appellate Mentoring; No Laughing Matter: Pop Culture References and Humor in Appellate Writing; Key Decisions of October 2022 SCOTUS Term – Criminal Update; Changing Voir Dire Standards; A Joinder of Inspiration and Greatness in Civil Rights Legislation: The Words of Lincoln and King on the Anniversaries of the Gettysburg Address and the "I Have a Dream" Speech; and Victims' Rights, Sentencing Reform, and a Civilian-Military Dialogue on the Implementation of Criminal Justice Initiatives.

J. Court Rules and Relevant Statutes

To enhance access to justice, the Judiciary regularly reviews and amends or seeks amendments of its rules of procedure, Evidence Act, and other statutes.

Over the past 10 years, the Judiciary has proposed more than 37 amendments to Acts. In 2023 the Judiciary was able to secure an amendment to the Domestic Relations Act to expressly provide that the High Court may confirm customary marriages, as well as annulments, divorces, and adoptions, to confirm the validity thereof and to avoid serious embarrassment to or affect the rights of the parties or their children.

The Judiciary also regularly updates rules of Marshall Islands Rules of Civil Procedure, the Marshall Islands Rules of Criminal Procedure (“MIRCrP”), and the Supreme Court Rules of Procedure (“SCRp”). In 2023, the Judiciary updated both the rules of MIRCrP and the SCRp. The MIRCrP were amended to change references from “video teleconferencing” to “contemporaneous transmission from a different location” consistent with changes in technology and to change age for a “child” and a “child witness” from 14 and 16 years of age to 18 consistent with the definition of "child" with the definition now found in Title 26, Chapter 10, Child Rights Protection Act 2015 (found at Section 1002(a)). That statute defines a "child" as any person who is below 18 years. The SCRp were amended to streamline the process for hearing motions and to delete references to fax.

III. THE JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION: JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

Along with the courts, the Constitution provides for a Judicial Service Commission (“JSC”), which consists of the Chief Justice of the High Court, as chair, the Attorney-General, and a private citizen selected by the Cabinet. The private member is Jennifer Hawley. The JSC nominates to the Cabinet candidates for appointment to the Supreme Court, High Court and Traditional Rights Court, and the Commission appoints judges to the District Court and the Community Courts. In appointing Community Court judges, the Commission takes into consideration the wishes of the local communities as expressed through their local government councils. The Commission also may make recommendations to the Nitijela regarding the qualifications of judges. In the exercise of its functions and powers, the Commission does not receive any direction from the Cabinet or from any other authority or person but acts independently. The Commission may make rules for regulating its procedures and generally for the better performance of its functions. The Commission also reviews complaint against judges.

In 2023, the Commission appointed acting TRC judges for seven cases where a member of the permanent TRC panel had a conflict, and the Commission appointed Community Court judges for Aur. The Commission also voted unanimously to recommend to the Cabinet the appoint the Honorable J. Michael Seabright, United States District Judge for the District of Hawaii, and the Honorable Richard Seeborg, United States District Judge for the Northern District of California, associate justices of the Supreme Court for calendar years 2024 and 2025. Additionally, the Commission voted unanimously to recommend to the Cabinet the re-appoint the Honorable Nixon David as an associate judge of the Traditional Rights Court and the judge representing Iroij interests.

IV. ACCOUNTABILITY: CODES OF CONDUCT AND COMPLAINTS

The third goal of the Judiciary’s Strategic Plan includes “*to be accountable.*” To enhance its transparency and accountability, the Judiciary has adopted internationally recognized standards for judicial conduct and attorney conduct. These standards are available to the public as are the procedures for lodging complaints against judges, attorneys, and court staff.

With respect to judicial conduct, the Judiciary has adopted the Marshall Islands Code of Judicial Conduct 2008 (revised as of May 9, 2023). The Code is based principally upon the Bangalore Principles and the American Bar Association Model Code of Judicial Conduct. A copy of the Judiciary’s code can be found on its website, www.rmicourts.org/ under the heading “The Marshall Islands and Its Judiciary.” The provisions for lodging and processing complaints against judges start on page 12 of the code. Late in 2023, a complaint lodged against a District Court judge accused of submitted a false receipt for reimbursement. The Commission appointed counsel to investigate the matter, which will be reviewed in 2024.

With respect to attorney conduct, the Judiciary has adopted the American Bar Association’s Rules of Professional Conduct. Provisions for lodging and processing complaints against attorneys can be found on the Judiciary’s website under the heading “Rules of Admission and Practice.” The Supreme Court and High Court have appointed an attorney-committee to hear complaints. In 2023, no complaints were lodged or pending against attorneys.

With respect to court staff, the Judiciary maintains a complaint box at the courthouses. In 2023, no complaints were lodged against court staff.

V. FACILITIES, TECHNOLOGY, AND LIBRARY

Administering the Judiciary’s buildings and equipment in accordance with sound management practices is the fifth goal of the Judiciary’s Strategic Plan.

A. Facilities



Over the past decade, the Judiciary, with funding from court fees and from the Cabinet, the Nitijela, and the Republic of China (Taiwan), has renovated the Majuro Courthouse and the Ebeye Courthouse to make them safe, secure, and accessible. The projects have included renovating the Ebeye Courthouse, adding a

ground-floor courtroom at the Majuro Courthouse, renovating of the chambers of the Traditional Rights Court in



Majuro, repainting the Majuro Courthouse and replacing the roof, installing a 100KVA backup generator for the Majuro Courthouse, and constructing a police substation next to the Majuro Courthouse.

Also, since 2017, the Judiciary has sought funding for a new courthouse on Kwajalein Atoll. The Ebeye Courthouse building has deteriorated to the point where it needs to be replaced. It is in very bad condition and cannot be expanded to meet the Judiciary’s and Kwajalein community’s needs. Unfortunately, funds initially allocated for this project in 2023 were diverted to other projects. The Judiciary has continued to request funding for a new Kwajalein courthouse.

B. Technology

The courthouses on Majuro and Ebeye are equipped with computers, printers, and photocopiers and have Internet access at around 40-100 Mbps depending on the international connections. However, the Judiciary urges visiting counsel to purchase Internet access from the local telecommunications company, the National Telecommunications Authority (“NTA”). Also, the courts permit the filing and service of documents via email attachment. The computers in Majuro are linked together in a network, and the Majuro Courthouse has five scanners with OSC software permitting the courts to scan documents and send them almost anywhere in the world.

Currently, the High Court permits off-island counsel to attend status and scheduling conferences via telephone, Skype, and Zoom. Occasionally, evidence in uncontested matters is taken via Skype or Zoom. While COVID-19 restrictions were in place, the Judiciary also heard contested non-evidentiary proceedings via Zoom.



C. Library

The Judiciary has a small, but functional, law library. However, the Judiciary relies upon WestLaw for up-to-date access to United States case law and secondary sources.

VI. ANNUAL BUDGET AND AUDIT REPORT

Managing the Judiciary’s financial resources in accordance with sound financial practices is the sixth goal of the Judiciary’s Strategic Plan. This is evidenced not only by the work of the courts, but also by the Judiciary’s management of the funds made available to it.

For FY 2023, the Nitijela appropriated \$1,186,253 for the Judiciary: \$948,508 for salaries and wages and \$228,329 for all others. Less audit expenses of \$9,416 paid out by the Ministry of Finance, a total of \$228,329 was paid to the Judiciary for its operational funds.

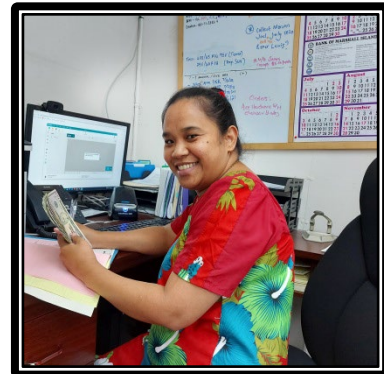
Of the \$948,508 appropriated for personnel in FY 2023, the Judiciary only expended \$859,907.26 due to unexpended Community Court judge salaries and an unexpended High Court justice salary resulting from COVID travel restrictions and quarantines. The unspent personnel funds from FY 2023, \$88,600.74 remained in the General Fund with the Ministry of Finance.

Of the \$237,745 appropriated in FY 2023 for all other expenses, \$9,416 was retained by the Ministry of Finance for audit expenses and the Judiciary expended or obligated the remaining \$228,329.

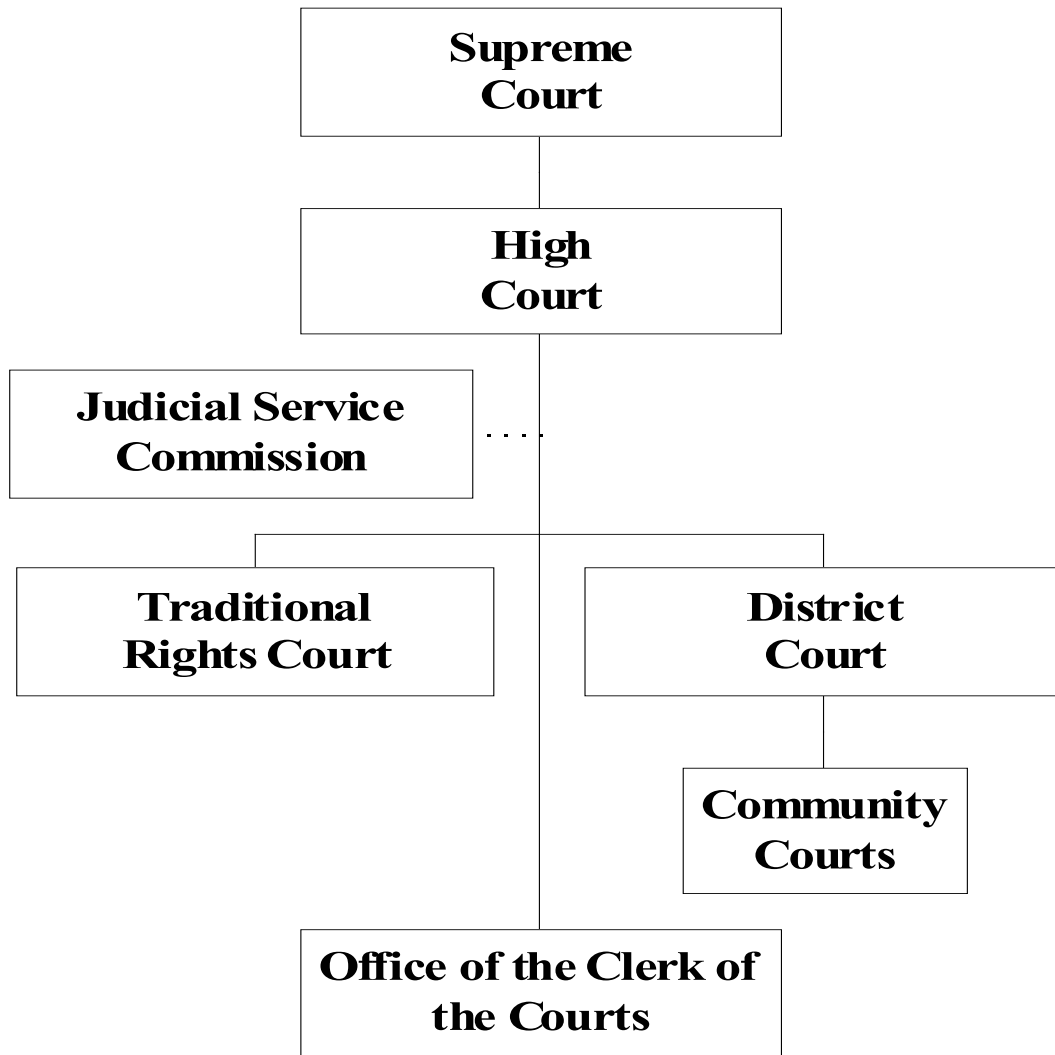
From operations funds, the Judiciary has segregated moneys the collected from annual attorney fees for the Legal Aid Fund (“LAF”). As of September 30, 2023, the Judiciary had \$237,137.98 in its LAF account, much of which had been obligated for payment to attorneys to represent those who cannot offer an attorney and cannot be represented by the Micronesian Legal Aid Services Corporation and the OPD.

Apart from Nitijela appropriations, the Judiciary by Act has its own special revenue fund (“Judiciary Fund”). Court fines and fees (excluding national criminal fines and local government fines) collected by the Office of the Clerk of the Courts are deposited into this fund, as are funds from other sources. Collections by the Office of the Clerk of the Courts and deposited into the Judiciary Fund in FY 2023 totaled \$83,789.27. The fund balance at the end of FY 2023, \$11,945 and monies collected in FY 2024 will be reserved for furnishing the new Ebeye courthouse. The Ebeye Courthouse project is in the planning stage and most certainly will need much more additional funding.

For FY 2023, the Judiciary contracted with Ernest and Young (EY) to audit the Marshall Islands Judiciary Fund and LAF. The audit was completed in October 2024, which EY reported a clean audit with no findings. Attached as Appendix 3 are the Balance Sheets for years ending September 30, 2022 and 2023, the statement of revenues, expenditures, and changes in the fund balance for years ended September 30, 2023 and 2022, and the statement of no audit findings.



**ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
FOR THE
MARSHALL ISLANDS JUDICIARY**



JUDICIARY PERSONNEL

Justices and Judges

Supreme Court Chief Justice Daniel N. Cadra (09/21/13-09/20/23)

High Court Chief Justice Carl B. Ingram (10/05/13-10/04/23)

High Court Associate Justice Witten T. Philippo (10/29/17-01/31/30)

High Court Associate Justice Linda S. Murnane (11/02/22-11/02/24)

Traditional Rights Court Chief Judge Grace L. Leban (02/30/20-12/30/30)

Traditional Rights Court Associate Justice Nixon David (04/07/21-04/06/25)

Traditional Rights Court Associate Justice Claire T. Loeak (05/17/21-05/16/31)

Presiding District Court Judge A. Tarry Paul (12/26/18-12/25/28)

Associate District Court Judge Davidson T. Jajo (Ebeye) (04/18/16-04/17/26)

Associate District Court Judge Caios Lucky (01/20/19-08/28/27)

Ailinglaplap Community Court Presiding Judge Canover Katol (05/04/18-05/03/24)

Ailinglaplap Community Court Associate Judge Mannu Rakin (07/13/18-07/12/24)

Ailinglaplap Community Court Associate Judge Lawday Kelen (12/12/22-12/11/28)

Ailuk Community Court Presiding Judge Tilly Menuna (02/25/18-02/24/24)

Arno Community Court Presiding Judge Batle Latdrik (08/05/18-08/04/24)

Arno Community Court Associate Judge (vacant)

Arno Community Court Associate Judge Benjinej Kawe (08/05/18-08/04/24)

Aur Community Court Presiding Judge Benty Jikrok (03/03/17-03/02/23) (03/03/23-03/02/29)

Bikini and Kili Community Court Presiding Judge Swinton Jakeo (03/09/20-03/08/26)

Ebon Community Court Presiding Judge Jurelon Alik (09/17/17-09/16/23)

Enewetak and Ujelang Community Court Presiding Judge (vacant)

Jabat Community Court Presiding Judge Tari Jamodre (08/07/22-08/06/28)

Jaluit Community Court Presiding Judge Hertina Mejjena (12/03/18-12/02/24)

Jaluit Community Court Associate Judge Junior Helmi Morris (01/22/17-01/21/23)

Lae Community Court Presiding Judge Island Langbata (12/03/18-12/02/24)

Lib Community Court Presiding Judge (vacant)

Likiep Community Court Presiding Judge Riten Erakdrik (07/25/22-07/24/28)

Maloelap Community Court Presiding Judge Elji Lelwoj (02/25/18-02/24/24)

Maloelap Community Court Associate Judge Jobo Lauror (02/25/18-02/24/24)

Mejit Community Court Presiding Judge David Boyce (01/20/19-01/19/25)

Mili Community Court Presiding Judge Jiton John (01/22/17-01/21/23)

Namdrik Community Court Presiding Judge Reio Lolin (08/26/18-08/25/24)

Namu Community Court Presiding Judge Liston Albious (03/09/20-03/08/26)

Rongelap Community Court Presiding Judge (vacant)
Ujae Community Court Presiding Judge Area Jibbwa (08/26/18-08/25/24)
Utrik Community Court Presiding Judge Kobobo Kios (03/12/20-03/11/26)
Wotho Community Court Presiding Judge Carlmai Antibas (09/23/22-09/22/28)
Wotje Community Court Presiding Judge Anjain Helbi, (05/27/18-05/26/24)
Wotje Community Court Associate Judge (vacant)
Unallocated (vacant)

Judicial Service Commission

High Court Chief Justice Carl B. Ingram, Chair
Attorney-General Bernard Adiniwin, Member
Jenifer Hawley, Member Representing the Public

Staff

Chief Clerk of the Courts Ingrid K. Kabua
IT Officer Bobby Andrew
Assistant Clerk of the Courts Hainrick Moore
Assistant Clerk of the Courts Armen Bolkeim (Ebeye)
Assistant Clerk of the Courts Tanya Lomae
Assistant Clerk of the Courts Kristen Kaminaga
Assistant Clerk of the Courts Kaiboke Iseia
Assistant Clerk of the Courts Melissa Joe
Assistant Clerk of the Court James Reimers
Maintenance James Milne
Part-time Custodian Bersina Stephen
Bailiff Carlson Jacklick, Lieutenant
Bailiff Moses Lautiej, Police Officer II
Bailiff Clay Mielson, Officer II
Bailiff Noland Tash, Policer Officer I
Part-time Security Guard Henry Hiram
Part-time Security Guard Dial Gideon, Jr.

Appendix 3

Marshall Islands Judiciary
(A Governmental Fund of the Republic of the Marshall Islands)

Balance Sheets
Governmental Fund

	September 30,	
<u>ASSETS</u>	2023	2022
Cash	\$ 251,893	\$ 212,446
Time certificates of deposit	421,521	413,158
Accounts receivable	5,846	5,731
Total assets	\$ 679,260	\$ 631,335
<u>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</u>		
Liabilities:		
Unearned revenue	\$ 13,500	\$ 7,962
Payable to affiliates	4,911	4,025
Other liabilities and accruals	4,510	5,837
Total liabilities	22,921	17,824
Contingencies		
Fund balance:		
Committed:		
Judicial operations	178,347	177,765
Legal aid	477,992	435,746
Total fund balance	656,339	613,511
Total liabilities and fund balance	\$ 679,260	\$ 631,335

See accompanying notes.

Marshall Islands Judiciary
(A Governmental Fund of the Republic of the Marshall Islands)

Statements of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance
Governmental Fund

	Year ended	
	September 30,	
	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Revenues:		
Nitijela appropriation	\$ 1,089,434	\$ 1,021,570
Court fines and fees	136,847	135,386
Interest	8,633	10,510
Other	47,864	2,509
Total revenues	<u>1,282,778</u>	<u>1,169,975</u>
Expenditures:		
Salaries, wages and benefits	859,907	784,408
Leased housing	80,250	72,252
Supplies and materials	64,936	139,126
Travel	54,654	23,207
Communications	46,170	50,850
Utilities	42,662	36,501
Professional and contractual services	30,376	49,178
Repairs and maintenance	16,722	11,552
Petroleum, oil and lube	14,898	13,718
Capital outlay	8,961	23,875
Rentals	5,061	2,782
Insurance	4,047	4,410
Food stuff	3,463	1,532
Training	3,178	1,259
Subscriptions	1,155	1,369
Freight	103	55
Miscellaneous	3,407	1,005
Total expenditures	<u>1,239,950</u>	<u>1,217,079</u>
Net change in fund balance	42,828	(47,104)
Fund balance at the beginning of the year	<u>613,511</u>	<u>660,615</u>
Fund balance at the end of the year	<u>\$ 656,339</u>	<u>\$ 613,511</u>

See accompanying notes.

Marshall Islands Judiciary
(A Governmental Fund of the Republic of the Marshall Islands)

Statements of Fiduciary Net Position
Fiduciary Fund - Custodial

	September 30,	
	2023	2022
<u>ASSETS</u>		
Cash	\$ 1,044,239	\$ 3,706,036
Time certificates of deposit	90,373	90,364
Total assets	\$ 1,134,612	\$ 3,796,400
<u>NET POSITION</u>		
Restricted for:		
Individuals, organizations and other governments	\$ 1,134,612	\$ 3,796,400
Total net position	\$ 1,134,612	\$ 3,796,400

See accompanying notes.

Marshall Islands Judiciary
(A Governmental Fund of the Republic of the Marshall Islands)

Statements of Fiduciary Net Position
Fiduciary Fund - Custodial

	September 30,	
	2023	2022
<u>ASSETS</u>		
Cash	\$ 1,044,239	\$ 3,706,036
Time certificates of deposit	90,373	90,364
Total assets	\$ 1,134,612	\$ 3,796,400
<u>NET POSITION</u>		
Restricted for:		
Individuals, organizations and other governments	\$ 1,134,612	\$ 3,796,400
Total net position	\$ 1,134,612	\$ 3,796,400

See accompanying notes.

Marshall Islands Judiciary
(A Governmental Fund of the Republic of the Marshall Islands)

Statements of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position
Fiduciary Fund - Custodial

	Year ended	
	September 30,	
	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Additions:		
Litigation deposits	\$ 58,725	\$ 56,725
Interest	2,895	791
Total additions	<u>61,620</u>	<u>57,516</u>
Deductions:		
Release of bail deposits	2,722,703	3,653
Administrative	705	612
Total deductions	<u>2,723,408</u>	<u>4,265</u>
Net change in fiduciary net position	(2,661,788)	53,251
Net position at the beginning of the year	<u>3,796,400</u>	<u>3,743,149</u>
Net position at the end of the year	<u><u>\$ 1,134,612</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 3,796,400</u></u>

See accompanying notes.

Marshall Islands Judiciary
(A Governmental Fund of the Republic of the Marshall Islands)

Combining Balance Sheet
Governmental Fund

September 30, 2023

	<u>Operations</u>	<u>Legal Aid</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>ASSETS</u>			
Cash	\$ 14,755	\$ 237,138	\$ 251,893
Time certificates of deposit	181,054	240,467	421,521
Accounts receivable	2,511	3,335	5,846
	<u>\$ 198,320</u>	<u>\$ 480,940</u>	<u>\$ 679,260</u>
<u>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</u>			
Liabilities:			
Unearned revenue	\$ 13,500	\$ ---	\$ 13,500
Payable to affiliates	4,911	---	4,911
Other liabilities and accruals	1,562	2,948	4,510
	<u>19,973</u>	<u>2,948</u>	<u>22,921</u>
Fund balance:			
Committed	178,347	477,992	656,339
Total liabilities and fund balance	<u>\$ 198,320</u>	<u>\$ 480,940</u>	<u>\$ 679,260</u>

Marshall Islands Judiciary
(A Governmental Fund of the Republic of the Marshall Islands)

Combining Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance
Governmental Fund

Year ended September 30, 2023

	<u>Operations</u>	<u>Legal Aid</u>	<u>Total</u>
Revenues:			
Nitijela appropriation	\$ 1,089,434	\$ ---	\$ 1,089,434
Court fines and fees	83,789	53,058	136,847
Interest	4,925	3,708	8,633
Other	46,242	1,622	47,864
	<u>1,224,390</u>	<u>58,388</u>	<u>1,282,778</u>
Expenditures:			
Salaries, wages and benefits	859,907	---	859,907
Leased housing	80,250	---	80,250
Supplies and materials	64,936	---	64,936
Travel	54,654	---	54,654
Communications	46,170	---	46,170
Utilities	42,662	---	42,662
Professional and contractual services	12,211	18,165	30,376
Repairs and maintenance	16,722	---	16,722
Petroleum, oil and lube	14,898	---	14,898
Capital outlay	8,961	---	8,961
Rentals	5,061	---	5,061
Insurance	4,047	---	4,047
Food stuff	3,463	---	3,463
Training	3,178	---	3,178
Subscriptions	1,155	---	1,155
Freight	103	---	103
Miscellaneous	3,223	184	3,407
	<u>1,221,601</u>	<u>18,349</u>	<u>1,239,950</u>
Excess of revenues over expenditures	<u>2,789</u>	<u>40,039</u>	<u>42,828</u>
Other sources (uses):			
Transfer in	---	2,207	2,207
Transfer out	(2,207)	---	(2,207)
	<u>(2,207)</u>	<u>2,207</u>	<u>---</u>
Net change in fund balance	582	42,246	42,828
Fund balance at the beginning of the year	177,765	435,746	613,511
Fund balance at the end of the year	<u>\$ 178,347</u>	<u>\$ 477,992</u>	<u>\$ 656,339</u>