

PRESS RELEASE

DJAG and Jiwaka Provincial Government Sign MoU to Establish First Solicitor General Branch in Minj

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The Department of Justice and Attorney General (DJAG), through the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG), has entered into a landmark partnership with the Jiwaka Provincial Government to establish the first-ever Solicitor General Branch Office in Minj.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signed today by Solicitor General Mr. George Akia, DJAG Secretary Dr. Eric Kwa, Governor Hon. Simon Kaiwi and Provincial Administrator Mr. Rick Kogen, marks a major step in improving access to legal services and strengthening State representation in one of the country's newest provinces.

Solicitor General Mr. George Akia said the establishment of the new office in Minj fills a long-standing gap, as Jiwaka has never had an OSG presence since its establishment.

“For years, all State matters for Jiwaka were handled from our Mt. Hagen office. With the expansion of the national judiciary and more regular court sittings across all provinces, including Jiwaka, the State must be fully represented on the ground,” Mr. Akia said.

He confirmed that the Jiwaka Provincial Government will provide office space, staff accommodation, and a designated vehicle to support the operations of the Solicitor General's Office in the province.

“This partnership will not only ensure State matters are attended to promptly, but will also support the provincial administration in managing their own legal matters—reducing their reliance on costly external legal services,” Mr. Akia said.

DJAG Secretary Dr. Eric Kwa highlighted the national importance of expanding OSG services to all provinces. He noted that the State faces up to K10 billion in legal claims, requiring strong legal defence capabilities at provincial levels.

“Our lawyers must be on the ground to support provincial governments, DDAs, and LLGs. This partnership with Jiwaka allows us to establish the presence we need while also saving the State significant costs in travel, logistics, and private legal fees,” Dr. Kwa said.

He also outlined recent legal reforms, such as amendments to the *Claims By and Against the State Act* and the *Wrongs Act*, which enforce clearer requirements for claims and allow for personal accountability of public servants involved in misconduct leading to legal penalties.

“We are increasing our lawyer numbers and partnering with provinces where we do not yet have offices. Jiwaka has shown leadership by stepping forward. This MoU greatly lightens our operational load and supports access to justice for people who cannot afford private legal representation,” he added.

Jiwaka Governor Hon. Simon Kaiwi welcomed the MoU, stating that the partnership addresses a critical need for legal guidance and timely support for the provincial government.

“With limited provincial funds meant for services and infrastructure, we cannot continue spending heavily on private legal firms. Having a government lawyer on the ground means better, immediate legal advice and reduced costs,” Governor Kaiwi said.

He confirmed the provincial government’s commitment to fully support the new office:

“We have prepared an office, accommodation, and transport for the Solicitor General’s officer. We will work as a team to ensure this service benefits the people of Jiwaka.”

The new Minj branch will enable the Solicitor General’s Office to:

- Represent the State in all court matters in Jiwaka
- Support the provincial government with legal advice
- Reduce reliance on external law firms and related costs
- Strengthen access to justice for communities
- Ensure timely response to the growing number of court cases affecting the province

Secretary Dr. Kwa and Solicitor General Mr. Akia expressed appreciation to the Jiwaka Provincial Government for its leadership and called on other provinces without OSG offices to consider similar partnerships.



Solicitor General Mr. Akia (2nd left), Secretary Dr. Kaw, Governor Hon. Kaiwi, PA Mr. Kogen and staff posing with the signed MoU.

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