

JUSTICE SECTOR SCORECARD: HIGH COURT JUDGE ACCESS TREND

Indicator:

By 2030, all administrative districts have more resident High Court Judges.

2017

3 / 14

Resident judge districts

Baseline: only Bo, Kenema and Bombali had resident High Court Judges.

2023

<= 9 / 19

Districts likely with resident judges

At least half of districts did not have a resident judge.

2025

14 / 16

Districts with access to High Court Judge services

Improved coverage, but shared judges are not the same as resident judges.

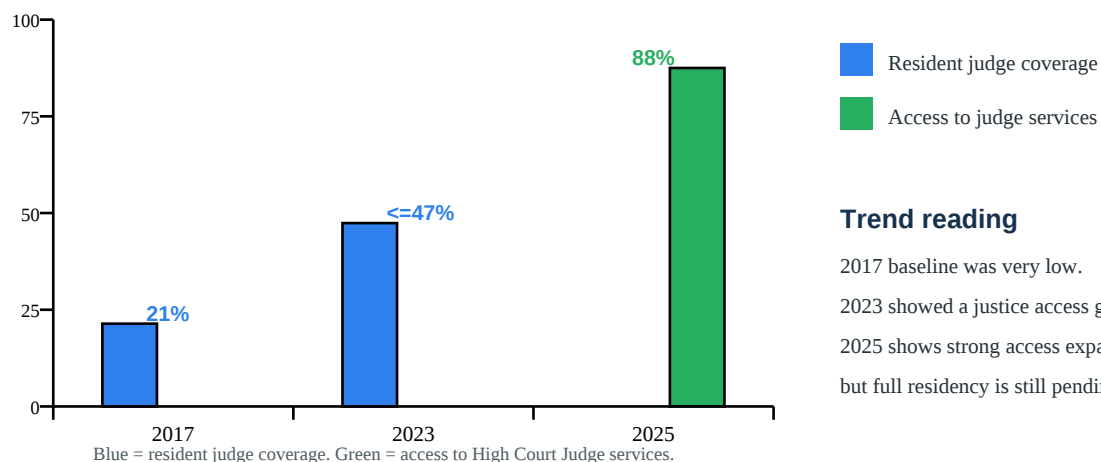
2030 target

All districts

Resident High Court Judges

Target remains achievable if reforms stay on track.

Coverage trend: resident judges vs access to High Court Judge services



Trend reading

2017 baseline was very low.
2023 showed a justice access gap.
2025 shows strong access expansion, but full residency is still pending.

Overall trend assessment

The justice sector shows a positive but incomplete trend. The 2017 baseline indicates a highly centralized High Court presence, with only 3 of 14 administrative districts having resident High Court Judges. By 2023, the system still had a major gap, as at least half of the expanded 19 districts did not have resident judges. By mid-2025, coverage improved significantly through appointments that expanded access to High Court Judge services across 14 of 16 districts reviewed.

Important distinction

The 2025 improvement should be recorded as increased access to High Court Judge services, not full resident judge coverage. A judge serving two districts improves case access and reduces pressure on citizens, but it does not meet the strict standard of each district having its own resident High Court Judge.

IGR scorecard judgement: Progress is visible and directionally positive, especially by 2025, but the indicator should be marked as **Partially Achieved / On Track** rather than achieved. The key evidence gap is the difference between access to a High Court Judge and the presence of a resident High Court Judge in every district.

JUSTICE SCORECARD: EVIDENCE NOTES AND REFORM PRIORITIES

Year	Status	Scorecard interpretation	Risk / Issue
2017	3 of 14 districts had resident High Court Judges: Bo, Kenema and Bombali.	Low baseline. Justice access was concentrated in few districts.	Citizens in most districts faced distance, cost and delay barriers.
2023	At least half of 19 districts did not have a resident judge, including Kambia, Kailahun, Kono, Moyamba, Magburaka, Port Loko, Falaba and Karene.	Limited progress against the resident judge target.	Persistent uneven access and likely backlog pressure.
2025	14 of 16 districts reviewed had access to High Court Judge services after appointments for Kono, Moyamba and Kenema coverage areas.	Strong access improvement, but not yet full residency.	Shared coverage may still limit court sitting frequency and local case management.

1. Separate resident presence from service coverage

Report two measures: districts with a resident High Court Judge and districts with access to High Court Judge services. This prevents overstating progress.

2. Prioritize uncovered or shared-service districts

Districts without resident judges should be ranked by caseload, population, travel distance to court, remand population, and backlog.

3. Build the operational package

Resident judge deployment should include courtroom availability, registry staffing, transport, digital case tracking, accommodation and security.

4. Track quarterly justice access metrics

Suggested metrics: number of resident judge districts, number of sittings per district, case clearance rate, median time to hearing, and backlog movement.

5. 2030 outlook

The target is achievable if current reforms continue, but the scorecard should monitor whether shared coverage is converted into true district residency.

Suggested IGR scorecard status



Current best-fit status

Recommended classification: Partially Achieved / On Track

Reason: 2025 access expansion is strong, but the exact 2030 indicator requires resident High Court Judges in all administrative districts, not only shared coverage.

Source notes: MTNDP 2024-2030 p.160; Judiciary Strategic Plan 2016-2021; author verification.