



## PRESS RELEASE (No. 8 of 2025)

### **ODPP warns against irresponsible commentary and harassment of witnesses**

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) expresses serious concern regarding the increasing trend of sensationalized and irresponsible online commentary surrounding witnesses' testimonies during ongoing criminal proceedings.

The Acting Director of Public Prosecutions, Ms Nancy Tikoisuva, issues a strong reminder to media outlets and social media users that misleading headlines, inflammatory narratives, sensationalized online commentary and public attacks on witnesses not only compromises the integrity of the justice process but may also constitute contempt of court proceedings.

"Witnesses play a vital role in the criminal justice system. We must respect and protect witnesses, as without their courage to come forward, the truth may remain hidden. Attacking or discrediting witness especially on social media can lead to intimidation, fear and can discourage future witnesses from coming forward and testifying in court," said Ms Tikoisuva.

While the ODPP upholds media freedom and the public's right to expression, these rights must be exercised with utmost care, responsibility and fair reporting.

"Freedom of expression is not a licence to harass, vilify, or intimidate individuals who are fulfilling their legal duty by appearing in court and giving evidence."

The ODPP reminds all involved; journalists, media organisations, content creators, social media users and the public that:

- Witnesses must be treated with respect and protected from intimidation;
- Sensational or biased reporting can jeopardize fair trials;
- Individuals are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law;
- The judicial process must proceed without external interference.

The Acting DPP has also issued a stern warning to all ODPP staff to refrain from commenting on ongoing matters on social media platforms.

Let the judiciary and the criminal justice system take its natural course, without interference or undue influence.

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**25 September 2025.**