

Dear Lusia,

1. I can answer your question by giving the full complement numbers and the actual numbers now.

For High Court Judges our complement is 18; presently we have 11

For Magistrates our complement is 28; presently we have 15.

2. By the end of the year we should have filled most of those vacancies.

3. Recommendations for appointment have been made from amongst sitting judges in Sri Lanka, but they will be made as well from amongst members of the Bars of Australia, New Zealand, England and Hong Kong. They will be drawn from amongst the Fiji Bar also. Senior members of overseas Bars apply in spite of neighbouring Governments and the more politically active members of Bar Associations seeking to influence their decisions by the imposition of penalties. In spite of the denial of individual democratic choice for their own citizens that that would appear to involve, and the interference with another State's judiciary and sovereignty, neighbouring States, when it suits them, come to our courts for orders. If such States require our courts occasionally for their own interests, what about the needs of the people of Fiji who have a right to seek the assistance of their own courts? Fortunately these attitudes and actions have not deterred candidates from applying for appointment to our Bench and thereby to assist in keeping our justice system in operation and indeed to help it grow.

4. From what I have seen and read of the judgments of the new judicial officers, a high standard has been set. Nowadays a good deal of time and effort is put into continuous training for all judicial officers. We no longer have any resistance to that. We had a 2 day workshop on the new Crimes, Procedure, and Sentencing Decrees. All officers have contributed and have benefitted from it, that is the Fiji based judicial officers as well as the expatriates. There will be a further 3 day workshop in mid June. Improvements in necessary skills for the Bench are taken very seriously and I am impressed by the willing commitment and input of all officers.

I hope this assists you with your story.

Anthony Gates

CJ

**From:** Lusia Brennan [mailto:[lusiav@fjijisun.com.fj](mailto:lusiav@fjijisun.com.fj)]  
**Sent:** Monday, 10 May 2010 2:34 PM  
**To:** Anthony Gates  
**Subject:** Sri Lankan Judges and Magistrates

Good Day Sir,

We were hoping for an update from you regarding the recruitment and performance of judges and magistrates from Sri Lanka.

1. How many more judges and magistrates are needed for the judiciary?
2. Is there any other country that Fiji is looking to recruit from?
3. How have the appointed ones fared so far under Fiji's judiciary?
4. Does the judiciary intend to appoint more from this country if they show interest?

Sir, any information on this issue would be greatly welcomed.

Vinaka.