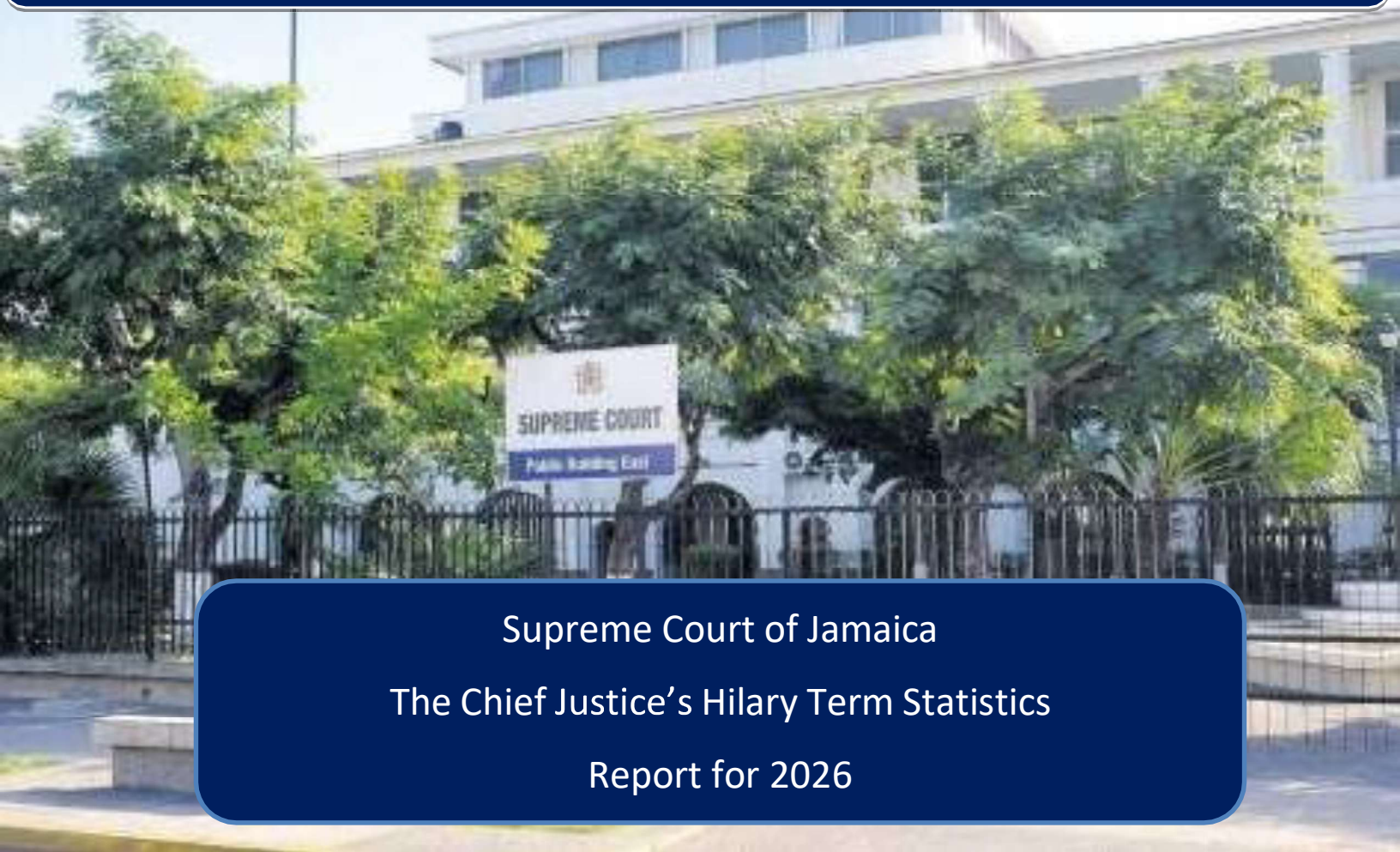


# THE CHIEF JUSTICE'S STATISTICS REPORT ON THE SUPREME COURT FOR THE HILARY TERM OF 2026



## Supreme Court of Jamaica The Chief Justice's Hilary Term Statistics Report for 2026

### OVERALL QUANTITATIVE HIGHLIGHTS (HILARY TERM)

	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Case clearance rate (%)	<b>75.92</b>	<b>74.94</b>	<b>76.96</b>
Hearing date certainty rate (%)	<b>78.21</b>	<b>76.96</b>	<b>76.91</b>
Case file integrity rate (%)	<b>97.39</b>	<b>97.30</b>	<b>97.36</b>
Average time to disposition of cases (years)	<b>2.78</b>	<b>2.62</b>	<b>2.59</b>
Clearance rate on outstanding Judgments (%)	<b>83.87</b>	<b>83.32</b>	<b>72.22</b>

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Supreme Court of Jamaica's statistics report for the Hilary Term of 2026 highlights a period of resilient institutional performance, driven by targeted procedural reforms and enhanced data-driven management. Globally, the court recorded a gross case clearance rate of 75.92%, which represents a fractional increase of approximately one percentage point over the 74.94% recorded in the corresponding term of 2025, though falling slightly behind the 76.96% achieved in 2024. Operational reliability showed encouraging progress, with the aggregate hearing date certainty rate climbing steadily to 78.21% in 2026, up from 76.96% in 2025 and 76.91% in 2024. Case file integrity remained exceptionally strong and stable at 97.39%. However, the overall average time to disposition for cases across the judiciary saw a slight upward trend, lengthening to 2.78 years from 2.62 years in 2025 and 2.59 years in 2024. On a more positive note, the clearance rate for outstanding civil judgments rose to 83.87%, demonstrating a consistent year-on-year improvement from 83.32% in 2025 and a substantial leap from the 72.22% documented in 2024.

Across the specific divisions, performance varied significantly based on caseload volume and structural readiness. The High Court Civil (HCV) Division continued to carry the heaviest burden of new litigation, accounting for 1,436 of the 3,496 total new cases filed across the reviewed divisions during the term. The division recorded a modest case clearance rate of 54.81%, which nevertheless marks a 1.54 percentage point improvement over the corresponding period in the prior year. This division also exhibited the longest average time to disposition at 53.64 months, heavily weighed down by a crude proxy case backlog rate of

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60.65%, indicating that a majority of its unresolved active cases have crossed the two-year threshold. In sharp contrast, the Commercial Division established itself as the top-performing pocket of productivity, securing an impressive case clearance rate of 134.55%, a massive 47 percentage point surge compared to the previous year. Commercial matters were resolved fairly rapidly with an average time to disposition of 24.31 months, and a commendable 72.30% of its cases were processed on time within the two-year judicial standard.

The Family and Estate Divisions also yielded stable and healthy outcomes. The Family Division received 974 new cases, down 5.60% from the previous year, and achieved a strong case clearance rate of 93.22%. Notably, 78.20% of its cases were disposed of within two years, representing a sharp 7.75 percentage point improvement in its on-time case processing rate. The Estate Division sustained its reputation for high efficiency, logging a case clearance rate of 82.26% on 778 new cases. It maintained an exceptionally brief average time to disposition of 18.26 months, with an outstanding 84.06% of its matters being completely resolved in two years or less, rendering its proxy case backlog rate the lowest in the Supreme Court at just 15.94%.

In the criminal sector, both the Home Circuit Court and the Gun Court faced ongoing delays primarily tied to external third-party variables, such as missing forensic or ballistic certificates and the absence of legal counsel. The Home Circuit Court managed a case clearance rate of 55.45% on 110 new cases, with an average disposition timeframe of 45.18

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months and a high crude proxy backlog rate of 75.41%. Meanwhile, the High Court Division of the Gun Court saw 86 new cases filed and achieved a clearance rate of 74.42%. Matters in the Gun Court moved relatively quickly once underway, registering the shortest average time to disposition at 15.84 months, though its on-time case processing rate dipped to 53.13%. Despite these constraints, the rollout and integration of the web-based Judicial Case Management System (JCMS) across the criminal, family, and estate registries are expected to further optimize scheduling metrics and mitigate backlogs as these digital practices mature throughout the remainder of 2026.

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See below Supreme Court case activity summary for the Hilary Term of 2026:

Division	New cases Filed	Aggregate number of cases disposed	Clearance Rate (%)	Average time To Disposition (months)	Hearing Date Certainty Rate (%)
<b>High Court Civil (HCV)</b>	1436	787	54.81	53.64	83.20
<b>Family</b>	974	908	93.22	43.13	81.24
<b>Estate</b>	778	640	82.26	18.26	78.09
<b>Commercial</b>	110	148	134.55	24.31	82.05
<b>Home Circuit Court</b>	110	61	55.45	45.18	71.88
<b>Gun Court</b>	86	110	74.42	15.84	72.79
<b>Revenue Division</b>	2	0	-	-	-
<b>Gross/Weighted Average</b>	<b>3496</b>	<b>2654</b>	<b>75.92%</b>	<b>33.39</b>	<b>78.21</b>

See below summary of the on-time case processing rate and the proxy case backlog rate (%)

Among other important performance metrics, which allow for the tracking of court performance are:

**(i) The on time case processing rate**

**(ii) Crude proxy case backlog rate**

The on time case processing rate provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which are being disposed within the predefined time standard. The case backlog rate provides an estimated measurement of the proportion of cases, which are unresolved for more than two years as at end of the Hilary Term of 2026. These measures are summarized in the table below:

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## Selected performances metrics for the Supreme Court in the Hilary Term of 2026

Division of the Supreme Court	Resolved/Disposed cases	Unresolved cases which had some administrative or court activity in the Hilary Term of 2024	Number of cases disposed within 2 years	On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy Case backlog rate (%)
High Court Civil (HCV)	787	6600	312	39.35	60.65
Family Division	908	3806	710	78.20	21.80
Estate Division	640	2328	538	84.06	15.94
Commercial Division	148	451	107	72.30	27.70
Home Circuit Court	61	756	15	24.59	75.41
Gun Court	64	471	34	53.13	46.87

### Vital Forecasts:

#### Forecast of case activity in the Divisions of the Supreme Court in 2026

Division	Forecasted number of new cases	Forecasted number of disposed cases	Forecasted Case Clearance Rate (%)
High Court Civil Division	5094	3783	74.32
Family Division	3940	4179	106.07
Estate Division	3276	3002	91.64
Home Circuit Court	275	146	53.09
High Court Division of the Gun Court	394	251	63.71
Commercial Division	425	500	117.65
Revenue Division	3	4	83.33
<b>Total/Weighted Average</b>	<b>13,407</b>	<b>11,865</b>	<b>88.50</b>

*Note: Forecasting done using the method of exponential smoothing*

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The above table provides a forecast of the number of cases filed and disposed in each division/section of the Supreme Court in 2026 as well as the projected case clearance rates. The forecasted number of new cases entering the Supreme Court in 2026 is 13,407 while the forecasted number of disposed cases across the divisions/sections is 11,865. These predicted values would produce a weighted case clearance rate of 88.50% in 2026.

## Forecast for Judgments Reserved and Delivered in 2026

Forecasted number of Judgments Reserved	Forecasted number of Judgments Delivered	Forecasted clearance rate on Judgments (%)
292	301	103.08

*Note: Forecasting done using the method of exponential smoothing*

The Supreme Court is expected to sustain its positive direction in clearing outstanding judgments in 2026. Using the method of exponential smoothing, with a smoothing constant of  $>0.50$ , it is forecasted that 292 judgments will be delivered by the Supreme Court in 2025 and 301 new ones will be reserved. This produces a forecasted clearance rate on judgments of 103.08% in 2026, which suggests that for every 10 judgments reserved in that year, roughly 10 judgments are expected to be delivered.

**METHODOLOGY**

Guaranteeing the reliability and validity of the data used to produce the periodic statistics reports for the Jamaican Courts is of utmost importance as we seek to produce a data driven enterprise for policymaking and operational decisions. As a result, a robust and verifiable system of data production has been created in both the Parish Courts and the Supreme Court. In the Supreme Court, each Division has a set of data entry officers whose daily responsibility is to enter data on new cases and as necessary update all case activity and events as the matters traverse the courts. For the civil divisions, such updates are done electronically using the Judicial Enhancement Management Software (JEMS) software, which evolved to cater for a wider range of data capture and reporting needs. In the High Court Division of the Gun Court, the Home Circuit Court, the Revenue Court and now the Family and Estate Divisions, the new Judicial Case Management System (JCMS) is utilized. The High Court Civil Division will be added to this system by the end of 2026. In all divisions, live court data is also recorded in the systems from inside court by the Court Clerks. In order to assure the integrity of the data that is entered into the systems, data validators are specially assigned to scrutinize case files on a daily basis to ensure consistency with the electronic data and adequacy of data capture.

Once all data for the periods of interest are entered into the systems, and the necessary checks and balances completed, the data is then migrated to a Microsoft Excel friendly platform, from where it is extracted, the statistical data processed and reports generated, primarily using the RStudio, Maple and SPSS software. Statistical reports are generated for each of the three Terms, which constitutes the operating year for the Supreme Court, as well as for the vacation period

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mainly for the Civil Registries. These reports culminate with an Annual Statistics Report. Such reports are published on the website of the Supreme Court, however interim data required by stakeholders may be requested through the office of the Chief Justice.

## **Structure of Report**

This is a comprehensive statistical report on case activity in the various Divisions of the Supreme Court in 2025. Each of the first six chapters focus on case activity and performance metrics in the High Court Civil (HCV) Division, the Matrimonial Division, the Probate Division, the Commercial Division, the Home Circuit Court and the High Court Division of the Gun Court. The last chapter summarizes the aggregate case activity across the Divisions of the Supreme Court, presents the 2025 clearance rate for civil Judgements and the courtroom utilization rate estimates. In each chapter, a wide range of measurements and other information are presented which places case and court activity in each Division in their peculiar perspectives and context. A glossary of statistical terms and key performance measures used in his reports are also outlined at the end of the report. The report is meant to be more of an information piece for both internal and external stakeholders, forming the basis for interventions geared at enhancing efficiency and fostering a culture of court excellence.

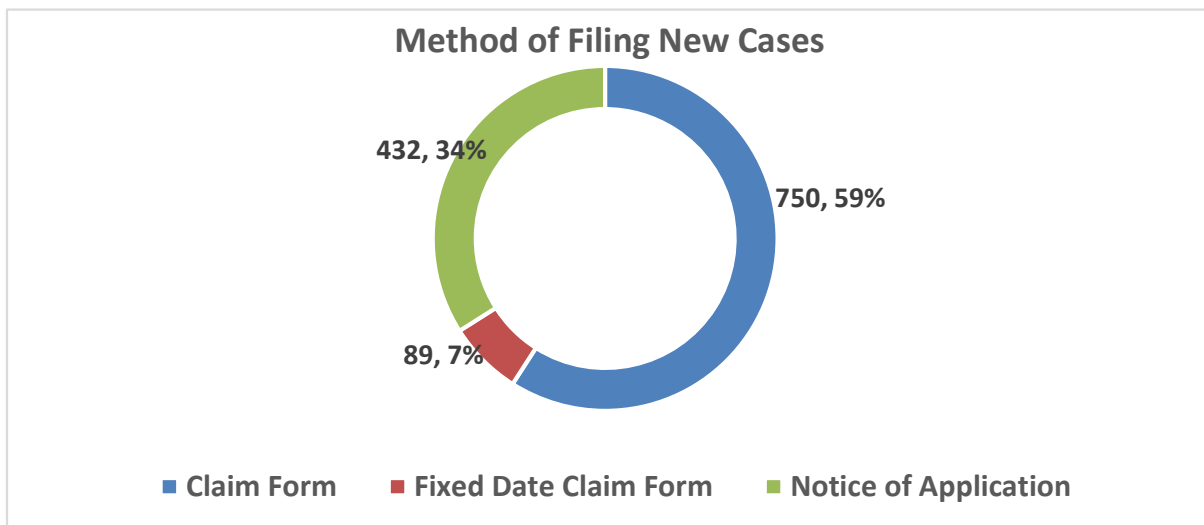
**Disclaimer:** The Estate and Family Divisions are currently being transitioned from the old JEMS system to the JCMS. The data transition process may have a small impact on the reported data that is not statistically significant. Any variances will be reconciled in the publication of the annual report for 2026.

**CHAPTER 1.0: HIGH COURT CIVIL (HCV) DIVISION**

The ensuing analysis examines the various measures of the efficiency of case handling in the High Court Civil (HCV) Division for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026.

A total of 1436 new cases were file in the High Court Civil Division during the Hilary Term of 2026, an increase of 10.21% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The below chart provides a summary of the breakdown of the new cases filed in terms of the primary methods of origin, that is, whether they were filed by way of a Claim Form, a Fixed Date Claim Form or a Notice of Application.

**Chart 1.0: Method of filing cases in the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**



**Sample Size = 1272**

The above chart highlights the proportional distribution of cases filed in the High Court Civil (HCV) Division in the Hilary Term of 2026 which originated either by way of a Claim Form, Fixed Date Claim Form or Notice of Application. This chart is generated using 1272 cases which were

filed in the Hilary Term of 2026 and the shows that 750 or 59% of this sample were filed by way of Claim Forms while 432 or 34% were filed by way of Fixed Date Claim Forms and the remaining 87 or 7% were filed by way of Notices of Application. In general, the number of matters filed by way of Claim Forms tend to outstrip those filed annually by way of Fixed Date Claim Forms while Notices of Application account for the minority of filings. The method by which a case is filed, be it by way of a Claim Form, Fixed Date Claim Form or Notice of Application has an impact on the path that the matters travel in the court. Matters filed by way of Claim Forms tend to have more processes along the case flow continuum and tend on average to take a longer time to be disposed than those filed by way of Fixed Date Claim Forms and Notices of Application, both of which tend to follow a very similar path.

Tables 1.0 below provides an analysis of the reasons for adjournment of High Court Civil cases in the Hilary Term of 2026.

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**Table 1.0a: Leading reasons for adjournment for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Reasons for adjournment	Frequency	Percentage
Claimant to file documents	754	22.08
Claimant to comply with order	221	6.47
Defendant to file document	199	5.83
No parties appearing	187	5.48
Claimant's documents not served or short served	181	5.30
Parties having discussions with a view to settlement	180	5.27
Letter indicating objection outstanding	121	3.54
Claimant not available	101	2.96
Pending settlement	97	2.84
Claimant attorney absent	95	2.78
Matter referred to mediation	83	2.43
Judge Ill	71	2.08
For mediation to be concluded	72	2.11
Referred to mediation	64	1.87
For application to be heard	61	1.79
Sub-Total	2487	72.83

**Total number of adjournments/continuances = 3415**

There were total of 3415 incidences of adjournments/continuance in the Hilary Term of 2026, a decline of 4.97% when compared to the corresponding Term in the previous year. The above table summarizes the top ten reasons for adjournment for the Hilary Term of 2026, using the contextual definition outlined above. It is seen that the three dominant reasons for adjournment were claimants to file documents with 754 or 22.08% of all events of adjournments, adjournments for claimants to comply with order with 221 or 6.47% and adjournments for defendants to file documents with 199 or 5.83%. Adjournments due to no parties appearing and due to parties having discussion with a view to settlement rounds off the top five reasons for

adjournment in the High Court Civil Division in the Hilary Term of 2026. The leading reasons for adjournment enumerated above, accounts for approximately 72.83% of the total reasons for case adjournment/continuance in the period. As with previous reports, it is evident that a significant proportion of the total adjournments were due to factors related to the lack of readiness or preparedness of case files and cases themselves and the absenteeism of parties and attorneys for court hearings. While some of the reasons for adjournment imply that there are weaknesses in case flow management, record keeping and scheduling practices, the overwhelming majority of the incidences of reasons for adjournment are associated with external factors which are not directly controllable by the High Court Civil Division. An example of a major reason for adjournment for which the court is directly responsible is the incidence of files not found which features consistently on the top five list of reasons for adjournment. Adjournments of this nature often contribute to the inefficient use of judicial time and hampers the timely delivery of justice. As indicated, the data shows that several of the reasons for adjournment are however due to external factors which have also featured prominently in all previous reports. It is clear that there will need to be deliberate policy undertaken to reduce the incidence of adjournments caused by the various factors listed. The delays resulting from these adjournments are evidently a big part of the current lengthy postponements being experienced in some cases in the High Court Civil Division of the Supreme Court.

A number of special intervention projects and process reforms are currently underway in the High Court Civil Division which should contribute markedly to improving overall process flow and in the very strictest sense, the case file integrity rate measures the proportion of time that a case file is fully ready and available in a timely manner for a matter to proceed. Hence,

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any adjournment, which is due to the lack of readiness of a case file or related proceedings for court at the scheduled time, impairs the case file integrity rate.

**Table 1.0b: Case File Integrity Rate for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

<b>Number of adjournments/continuances</b>	<b>Number of adjournments due to missing files, matters wrongly listed and matters left off the court list</b>	<b>Proxy Case File Integrity Rate (%)</b>
<b>3415</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>97.39</b>

Case file integrity is based on three pillars - availability, completeness and accuracy. In the above table, the number of adjournments resulting from missing files, matters wrongly listed for court and matters left off the court list is used to compute a proxy rate for the case file integrity. The table shows that there were 98 combined incidences of adjournments due to these deficiencies in the Hilary Term of 2026, resulting in a case file integrity rate of 97.39%, which means that roughly 2.61% of the total adjournments were due to one or more of factors that affect case file integrity. Using the same parameters, the case file integrity rate improved slightly by 0.09 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

The estimated overall Judicial Flexibility Index for the High Court Civil Division in 2026 was 0.60, an indication of a moderately high propensity of Judges to adjourn matters in Division for various reasons. This represents a 1 percentage point improvement compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

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**Table 2.0: Selected trial and pre-trial case counts for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Trial matters/hearings	Frequency	Percentage
Court Trials	154	47.83%
Motion Hearing	18	5.59%
Assessment of Damages	101	31.37%
Trial in Chambers	49	15.22%
<b>Total trial matters</b>	<b>322</b>	100.00%

The above table shows the breakdown of the case counts associated with selected HCV pre-trial and trial hearings in the High Court Civil Division in the Hilary Term of 2026. The table shows 322 combined cases which were heard across the four listed types of hearings, of trials in open court with 154 or 47.83% accounted for the largest share while assessments of damages with 101 or 31.37% of the total ranked next. The 49 cases or 15.22% of the total which had trials in chamber and the 18 cases or 4.85% which had motion hearings rounds off the list.

**Table 3.0 Sampling distribution of hearing date certainty for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Hearing dates set	Hearing dates adjourned (excluding adjournments for continuance)	Hearing date certainty (%)
3876	651	83.20%

The overall hearing date certainty of a court provides a good metric of the extent to which dates, which are scheduled for hearings are adhered to and therefore speaks to the reliability of the case scheduling process. A sample of 3876 dates scheduled for either trial or various pre-trial hearings, both in Court and in Chamber, revealed that 651 were 'adjourned' on the date set for commencement. The resulting estimated overall hearing date certainty figure of 83.20% suggests that there is a roughly 83% probability that a date set for a matter to be heard would proceed

without adjournment for reasons other than some form of ‘continuance’ or settlement. This is an increase of 1.53 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. When trials in open court is isolated, the trial certainty rate for the HCV Division for the Hilary Term of 2026 is estimated at 71.05%, an improvement of 1.95 percentage points and when trial in chambers is isolated the estimate rate is approximately 74.50%, an improvement of 1 percentage point when compared to the corresponding Term in the previous year. These results represent continued resilient outcomes as the High Court Civil (HCV) Division continues its aggressive reform agenda to improve the efficient processing of cases and the overall productivity of the registry.

The ensuing analysis will go further into explaining where on the continuum of a matter traversing the system are adjournments are most likely to occur. This will involve an analysis, termed a breakout analysis that will examine the incidence of adjournments particularly at assessment of damages and case management conference hearings.

The below tables provide indices of scheduling efficiency in the Supreme Court by measuring the number of days of matters being scheduled for assessment of damages and court trials respectively compared to the number of available court days.

**Table 4.0a: Index of scheduling efficiency for Assessment of Damages in the HCV Division for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

<b>Number of available court days in the period</b>	<b>Number of days’ worth of assessment of damages scheduled</b>	<b>Approximate ratio</b>
<b>58</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>1.81</b>

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An important indicator of the problems associated with the scheduling of HCV matters comes from an assessment of the number of court days which were available for the Supreme Court during the Hilary Term of 2026, 58 all told and the number of days' worth of assessment of damages which were scheduled (a total of 105). It is shown that for every court day available, approximately 1.81 days' worth of matters were scheduled, roughly the same as the corresponding period in the previous year and an indication of continued superior efficiency compared to past years which saw as many as 3 days' worth of assessment of damages matters being scheduled per day.

**Table 4.0b: Index of scheduling efficiency for court trials in the HCV Division for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

<b>Number of available court days in the period</b>	<b>Number of days' worth of court matters scheduled for court trial per court</b>	<b>Approximate ratio</b>
<b>58</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>1.47</b>

Another important indicator of the problems associated with the scheduling of HCV matters comes from an assessment of the number of court days which were available for the Supreme Court in the Hilary Term of 2026, 58 all told, and the number of days' worth of court trials which were scheduled per court (a total of 80). It is shown that for every day available, 1.47 days' worth of matters were scheduled, a decline of 0.03 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. In practical terms, this means that a relatively manageable number and duration of trials were scheduled on the Division's calendar during the

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**Table 5.0: Probability distribution of the incidence of adjournments/continuance for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Type of Incidence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Case Management Conference	256	7.14
Pre-Trial Review	217	6.05
Trial in open court	331	9.24
Trial in chamber	287	8.01
Assessment of damages	250	6.98
Judgment Summons Hearing	187	5.22
Applications	2056	57.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>3584</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table takes a large, representative sample of reasons for adjournment and records the stages of the case flow process at which they are observed. The results here are broadly similar to those which were observed in the previous three years. Trial hearings account for a combined 17.25% of the adjournments in the sample while case management conferences account for 7.14% but it was the incidence of adjournments at the applications stage which again took the spotlight, accounting for 57.37% of the total incidence of adjournments. Pre-trial reviews and judgment summons hearings 6.05% and 5.22% respectively of the sample rounds off the list. As stated earlier, continued improvements in the overall scheduling apparatus of the High Court Civil (HCV) Division will be crucial to reducing the persistently high incidence of adjournments which delay the disposition of cases and contribute to a sizeable case backlog.

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**Table 6.0: Hearing date certainty for Assessment of damages for the Hilary Term March 27, 2026**

Hearing dates set	Dates adjourned (excluding adjournments for continuance)	Hearing date certainty (%)
117	37	68.37

As noted above, there has been a noticeable reduction in the number of dates scheduled for matters of assessments of damages. It is therefore not surprising that there was a noticeable improvement of 5.12 percentage points in the hearing date certainty rate for these matters when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

**Table 7.0: Hearing date certainty for Case Management Conferences for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Hearing dates set	Dates adjourned (excluding adjournments for continuance)	Hearing date certainty
645	73	88.68%

Case management conferences form an important part of the preparation of cases for further judicial activities. Matters scheduled for case management conferences will typically be set for a fixed time and day in accordance with the available resources. These matters had a hearing date certainty of 88.68% in the Hilary Term of 2026, a slight improvement of 0.21 percentage points when compared to the comparable period in the previous year, representing a resilient outcome.

**Table 8.0: Requisitions for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Action	Frequency
Requisitions Issued	71
Responses to requisitions	82
Requisition clearance rate	115.49%
Requisitions per 100 case files (approximation)	1

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In considering the efficiency with which civil matters flow through the court system, the number of requisitions and the ratio of requisitions to case files is an important metric. The rate at which responses to requisitions are filed and the share quantum of requisitions issued can have a profound impact on the length of time that it takes for some civil matters to be disposed. In the table above it is shown that there were 71 requisitions for the Term. The requisition clearance rate for Hilary Term of 2026 was an unprecedented 115.49%, compared to 10.40% in the corresponding period in the previous year. Continuous interventions aimed at increasing public sensitization on the proper and timely completion of documents filed by litigants and their attorneys at the various stages along the civil case flow continuum are vital to creating and sustaining improved outcomes in this area.

**Table 9.0: Chamber hearing case count distribution for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Type of hearing	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Case Management Conference	539	20.75
Pre-trial review	523	20.13
Applications (Various)	1489	57.31
Judgment summons hearing	47	1.81
<b>Number of cases</b>	<b>2598</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table summarizes the distribution of case counts for matters heard in Chamber in the High Court Civil Division in the Hilary Term of 2026. It is seen that the total number of cases heard in Chamber hearings for the Term was 2598, the highest proportions of which were applications of various types with 1489 cases heard or 57.31% of the list. The general applications category speaks to a non-exhaustive list of various types of applications which come before the High Court

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Civil (HCV) Division. Case Management Conferences were a distant second with 539 cases or 20.75% of the listed case types heard in Chamber during the period while pre-trial reviews with 523 cases heard or 20.13% and Judgment summons hearings with 47 cases heard or 1.81% of the list rounds off the listed Chamber Hearings during the Hilary Term.

Among the leading types of applications filed in the Hilary Term of 2026 were applications to file annual returns, applications for injunction, applications for first hearing, applications for court orders and applications for extension of time to file defense.

**Table 10.0: Methods of disposition for the year Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percent
Application Granted	35	4.45
Application Refused	8	1.02
Attorney Admitted to Bar	1	0.13
Claim form expire	17	2.16
Claim Form Invalid	4	0.51
Company complied	6	0.76
Consent Judgment	6	0.76
Consent Order	19	2.41
Damages Assessed	26	3.30
Dismissed	58	7.37
Final Order	215	27.32
Fixed date Claim form expire	2	0.25
Judgment	6	0.76
Judgment Delivered	50	6.35
Matter Withdrawn	14	1.78
Notice of Discontinuance Noted	105	13.34
Order (Chamber Court)	4	0.51
Settled	131	16.65
Settlement Order	1	0.13
Struck Out	57	7.24
Transfer to Civil Division	5	0.64

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Transfer to Commercial Division	3	0.38
Transfer to Criminal Division	1	0.13
Transfer to Family Division	4	0.51
Transfer to Estate Division	4	0.51
Written Judgment Delivered	5	0.64
<b>Total Dispositions</b>	<b>787</b>	<b>100.00</b>

An understanding of the distribution of the methods of case disposal is an essential metric to gaining insights into the efficiency of case handling in the courts and into operational planning. It is seen that there were 787 HCV cases disposed in the Hilary Term of 2026, an improvement of 28.15% compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The largest proportion of the cases disposed, 215 or almost 27.32% were a result of final orders made, followed by matters settled with 131 or 16.65% and notices of discontinuance filed with 105 or 13.34%.

**Table 11.0: Time to disposition for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

### Descriptive Statistics (months)

Number of observations	787
Mean	49.8652
Median	41.9244
Mode	20.85
Std. Deviation	40.6228
Skewness	0.5864
Range	276.00
Minimum	.30
Maximum	276.30

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

One of the most important metrics, which can be used in assessing the efficiency of case handling, is the time to disposition. An understanding of this measure is crucial to influencing both internal and external policies, necessary to bolster the timely delivery of justice. The above table provides

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crucial insights on the average time to disposition of matters in the HCV Division for the Hilary Term of 2026. The 787 cases disposed in the year reveal an estimated average time to disposition was roughly 49.87 months or roughly 4 years and 2 months, a decrease of 2 months when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The oldest matter disposed in the year was roughly 276 months old or roughly 23 years old while the lowest time that a matter took to disposition was roughly two months. The median time to disposition was thirty-four months or approximately 42 months while the mode was approximately 21 months. The slight positive skewness suggests that there were proportionately more disposals, which took lower time to disposition than those which took higher than the average time.

**Table 12.0: Breakdown of time to disposition for the year ended March 27, 2026**

Time Interval (months)	Frequency	Percent
0 - 12	172	21.86%
13 - 24	140	17.79%
25 - 36	104	13.21%
37 - 47	84	10.67%
48 & over	287	36.47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>787</b>	<b>100%</b>

The above table provides a more detailed breakdown of the average time to disposition. It is seen that of the 787 cases disposed during the Hilary Term, the largest proportion, 287 or 36.47% took four years or more to be disposed. 172 cases or roughly 21.86% of the cases disposed took a year or less while 140 or 17.79% took between 13 and 24 months to be disposed. The remaining proportion of the cases disposed was accounted for by the intervals 25 - 36 months with 104 or 13.21% and the 37 - 47 months' interval with 84 or 10.67% of the disposals. It is of note that roughly 39.65% of the matters disposed of in the Hilary Term took two years or less, compared to approximately 60.35%, which took more than two years during the year. A number

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of special projects are currently underway to redress these and other structural deficiencies and in so doing produce a more sustainable system of operation which will eventually see cases being disposed much faster in years to come.

**Table 13.0: Clearance rate for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate
1436	787	54.81%

*\*9 or 1.14% of the cases disposed, originated during the Hilary Term of 2026*

The case clearance rate is an important metric, which complements the case disposal rate. It is calculated as the ratio of incoming active cases to disposed cases. A ratio of 100% is an indication that for every new case filed, a pre-existing case is also disposed. It is an important measure in placing the time to disposition of matters into context and to providing a deeper understanding the case carriage burden that is being faced by the different Divisions. In the Hilary Term of 2026, the High Court Civil Division recorded a case clearance rate of 54.81%, representing a 1.54 percentage points improvement when compared to the previous year. The current quantitative trend does not however suggest that such targets will realistically be attained anytime soon.

## **Other performance measures**

Among other important performance, which allow for the tracking of court performance are:

**(i) The on time case processing rate**

**(ii) The case turnover ratio**

**(iii) The disposition days**

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## **(iv) The crude proxy case backlog rate**

The on time case processing provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which are being disposed within the predefined time standard. The case turnover rate is the number of cases resolved, for every unresolved case in a given period while the disposition days provide a measure of the estimated length of time that it will take the unresolved cases in that period to be disposed. Additionally, the crude proxy case backlog rate provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which have been active for over two years as at the end of the Hilary Term of 2026. These measures are summarized in the table below:

**Table 14.0: Selected performances metrics for the High Court Civil (HCV) Division in the Hilary Term of 2026**

Resolved cases	Unresolved cases	Case turnover rate (%)	Estimated disposal days for unresolved cases	Number of cases disposed within 2 years	Total number of cases disposed	On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy Case backlog rate (%)
<b>787</b>	<b>6,600</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>3042</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>39.35</b>	<b>60.65</b>

The results in the above table show a case turnover rate of 0.123, which is an indication that for every 100 cases, which were ‘heard’ in the Hilary Term of 2026 and still active at the end of the period, another 12 were disposed, an improvement of 1 percentage point when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

A case is considered to be in a backlog classification if it is unresolved in the courts for over two years. Based on this general criterion, a case that is resolved within two years is considered to have been resolved on time. The on time case-processing rate for the High Court Civil Division in

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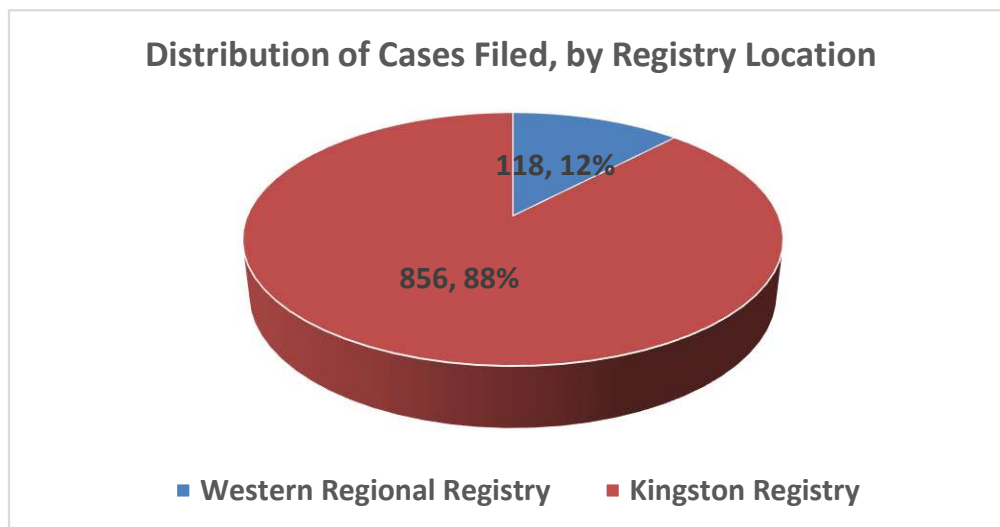
the Hilary Term of 2026 is roughly 39.35% which reflects the proportion of High Court Civil cases in the period which were disposed within 2 years. Conversely, the crude proxy case backlog rate is estimated at 60.65%, an indication that an estimated annual proportion of 60.65% of cases are likely to fall into a backlog classification based on the current case disposition and case clearance rates. The crude backlog rate improved by 0.95 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The results suggest that of the 6600 cases, which had some court activity in the Hilary Term of 2026 and were still active at the end of the period, roughly 4003 are expected to be in a backlog classification before being disposed.

**CHAPTER 2.0: FAMILY DIVISION**

The ensuing analysis examines the various measures of the efficiency of case handling in the Family Division for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026.

A total of 974 new cases were filed in the Kingston and Montego Bay Registries of the Western Regional Family Court during the Hilary Term of 2026. This represents a decline of 5.60% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

**Chart 2.0: Distribution of new cases filed in the Matrimonial Division, by Registry in 2026**



The above chart summarizes the distribution of new cases filed in the Family Division in the Hilary Term of 2026 at the Kingston and Western Regional Registries respectively. It is shown that 856 or 88% of the new cases filed took place at the Supreme Court Registry in Kingston while the remaining 118 or 12% were filed at the Registry in Montego Bay. When compared to the Hilary Term of the previous year, this output reflects a 12.25% decrease in the number of new cases filed at the Kingston Registry and a 14.25% increase in the number of new cases filed at the Western Regional Registry in Montego Bay.

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**Table 15.0a: Breakdown of cases filed in the Matrimonial Division in the Hilary Term of 2026**

	Frequency	Percent
Matrimonial FD Declaration of Paternity	1	0.10
Matrimonial FD Division of Property	33	3.43
Matrimonial FD Divorce	487	50.62
Matrimonial FD Divorce-children	291	30.25
Matrimonial FD Guardianship & Custody	17	1.77
Matrimonial FD Guardianship	2	0.21
Matrimonial FD Mental Health Act	7	0.73
Matrimonial FD Miscellaneous	3	0.31
Matrimonial FD Nullity	4	0.42
Matrimonial FD WR Divorce	84	8.73
Matrimonial FD WR Divorce-children	33	3.43
<b>Total New Cases Filed</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table provides a breakdown of the nature and location of new matters filed in the Family Division during the Hilary Term of 2026. As is typical, the largest proportion of the new cases filed were divorce matters (with or without children involved) which accounted for 895 or 93.04%. More specifically divorce matters filed involving children accounted for 315 or 30.55% of the divorce cases filed. Matters of guardianship and custody as well as division of property and those falling under the Mental Health Act accounted for the accounted for next highest proportion of divorce cases filed during the Hilary Term of 2026.

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**Table 15.0b: Petitions filed for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Type of petition	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Petition for dissolution of marriage*	895	58.77
Amended petition for dissolution of marriage	624	40.94
Petition for Nullity	4	0.26
<b>Total Petitions filed</b>	<b>1523</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Number of amendments per petition	<b>0.69</b>	

*\*Includes petitions involving children*

The above table summarizes petitions filed in the Hilary Term of 2026. It is shown that a total of 1523 Petitions (new or amended) were filed, 895 or 58.77% were petitions for dissolution of marriage, compared to 624 or 40.94% which were amended or further amended petitions for dissolution of marriage. The analysis further suggests that the ratio of petitions to amended petitions is 0.69 or in other words for every 100 Petitions for dissolution of marriage there is roughly 69 amended Petitions for dissolution of marriage during the Hilary Term of 2026, an increase of 2 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

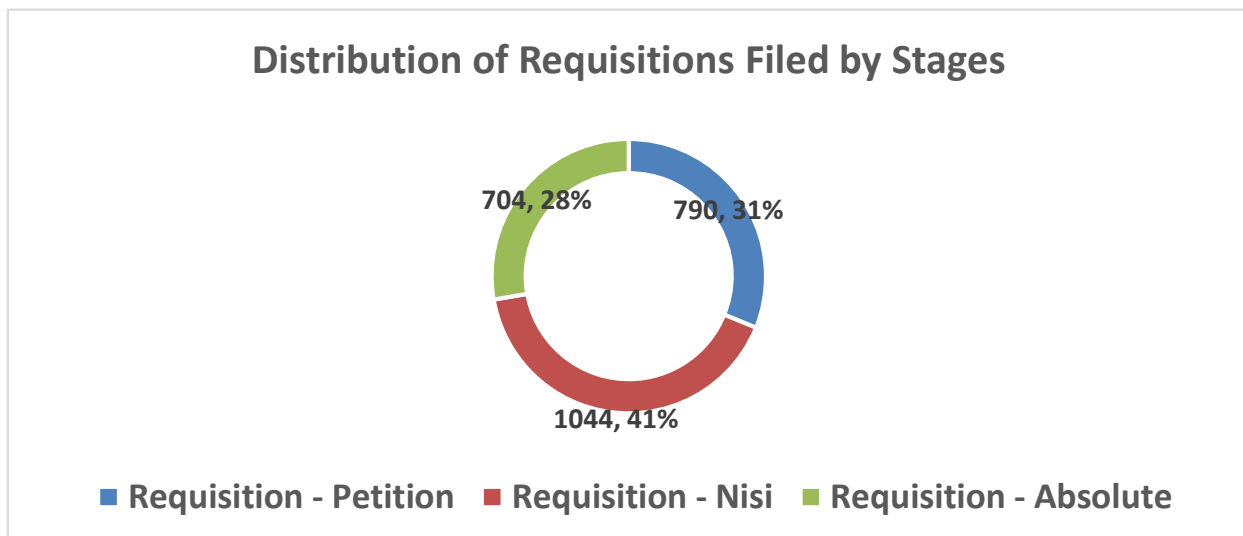
**Table 16.0: Decrees Nisi and Decrees Absolute filed for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Case Status	Frequency
Decree Absolute	1223
Decree Nisi for dissolution of marriage	1201
Decree Nisi for nullity of marriage	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2425</b>
<b>Ratio of Decrees Nisi to Decrees Absolute Filed</b>	<b>1.02</b>

It is seen in the above table that for every 100 Decrees Nisi filed there were roughly 102 Decrees Absolute filed during the Hilary Term of 2026, a decline of 3.5 percentage points compared to the previous year. One caveat to note is that Decrees Nisi and Decrees Absolute would have originated at various times outside of this specific period of analysis. The data suggests that the number of Decrees Absolute filed decreased by 8.56% while the number of Decrees Nisi filed decreased by 9.25 percentage points compared to the previous year. The stage of a matter at which requisitions have mostly occurred has an impact on the production rate for both Decrees Nisi and Decrees Absolute Granted.

A sampling distribution of the incidence of requisitions at the key stages of the typical lifecycle of a matrimonial matter - Petition, Decrees Nisi and Decrees Absolute is shown in the chart below.

**Chart 3.0: Distribution of the stages of requisitions for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**



The data suggests that a total of 2538 requisitions were issued at the three primary stages of a divorce case at the Kingston and Western Regional Supreme Court Registries combined, a decline

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of 8.35 percent when compared to the corresponding Term in the previous year. The number of requisitions filed at the petition stage decreased by 9.04% when compared to the corresponding Term in the previous year, while the number filed at the Decree Nisi stage decreased sharply by 12.21%. The number of requisitions filed at the Decree Absolute stage decreased by 10.40% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. As with previous reports, it is seen in the above chart that there is a greater probability that a requisition will be made at the stage of Decree Nisi, with an estimated 41% incidence, while roughly 31% each of the proportion of requisitions were filed at the petition and 28% at Decree Nisi stages. The overall decline in the incidence of requisitions across all stages is a positive sign for the overall productivity of the Family Division and the potential for continued improvements in case clearance rates and lower average times to dispositions in the near term.

**Table 17.0: Methods of Disposals for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percent
Decree Absolute Granted	684	69.80
Dismissed	1	0.10
Matter Discontinued	2	0.20
Notice of Discontinuance noted	103	10.51
Struck Out	93	9.49
Disposed*	42	4.29
<b>Total Disposition</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*\*Method unspecified*

The above table reveals that 908 Family cases were disposed during the Hilary Term of 2026, a decline of 2.15% when compared to the corresponding Term in the previous year. A proportion of 69.80% or 684 were attributable to Decrees Absolute Granted while 103 or 10.51 % were due to Notices of Discontinuance filed, accounting for the top two methods of disposition in the Hilary

Term of 2026.

**Table 18.0: Requisitions summary for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Action	Frequency
Requisitions Issued	2538
Number of requisitions issued per 100 files	54
Number of responses to requisitions	1970
Requisition response rate	77.62%

The incidence of requisitions is especially important in assessing the efficiency with which Matrimonial matters move through the court system. A total of 2538 requisitions were issued during the Hilary Term of 2026. This produces a ratio of cases handled to requisitions issued of 0.54 which suggests that for every 100 cases handled on which there was activity during the Hilary Term there were 54 requisitions issued, a decline of 7 requisitions per 100 case files handled when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The requisitions response rate registered for the Hilary Term was 77.62%, the highest on record for a single Term.

Below is an outline of the ideal delivery standard and process flow for the disposition of divorce matters in the Matrimonial Division of the Supreme Court.

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**Table 19.0: Outline of ideal delivery time standard and process flow for the disposition of divorce matters**

Stage 1	Task	Existing Staff	Current time (days)	Proposed Staff	Proposed Time (days)
	Receive document and record skeleton party and document information in JEMS	2	3	3	1
	Enter and scanning of documents in JEMS  Update of case party information in JEMS	3		3	
<b>Petition/</b>					
	Retrieve file and maintain filing room (Records officer)	0		2	
<b>Decree Nisi/</b>					
	Sorting of manual documents – punching and placing of documents on file, writing of party information and suit number on file jacket	0	3	4	1
<b>Decree absolute</b>					
	Record in JEMS file location and move manual file to physical location.  Updating and scanning of signed petition in JEMS.  Issuing notice via email.	0	3	2	1

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	Vetting and signing of petition by Deputy Registrar	1	5	1	2
	Mandatory waiting period for service of petition and filing of application for decree nisi (14-84 days)		14		14
<b>Stage 2</b>					
<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Task</b>				
<b>Decree Nisi</b>	Vetting of Decree Nisi by Deputy Registrar & legal officers	1	40	2	20
	Vetting and signing of Decree Nisi by Judge		14		1
	Mandatory waiting period between granting of decree nisi and application for decree absolute		30		30
<b>Stage 3</b>					
<b>Stage 3</b>	<b>Task</b>				
<b>Decree Absolute</b>	Vetting of Decree Absolute by Senior officer	0	14	2	7
	Vetting and signing of Decree Absolute by Judge		5		1
<b>Total</b>			131 (26wks)		78 (16wks)

### Notes

1. At stage one the current staff and proposed staff is the same three, this is so as formally the matrimonial department has three data entry clerks. However, these clerks are

currently assigned to attend court and chambers full time. The proposed is with the view of these data entry clerk be relived of court duties.

2. At stage two in addition to the existing deputy registrar and legal officer, the proposal is for one additional legal officer (GLG/LO1) for the proposed time line to be achieved.
3. At stage two, if the signing of decree nisi by judge/master within one day is to be achieved, files must be processed by judge/master on the day and within the time the decree nisi is scheduled and return to the matrimonial registry on the same day.
4. At stage two – for the processing decree nisi with 20 days is to be achieved it is proposed that two senior officers are available at stage one, sorting and vetting, to pre vet application for decree nisi
5. At stage three, if the signing of decree absolute by judge within one day is to be achieved, judges must process files on the day and within the time the decree absolute is scheduled and return to the matrimonial registry on the same day.
6. The proposal supports the following standards
  - a. Upon filing of petition, the matrimonial department will respond within **5 working days**. The response will be communicated by email if available or manual notice in the notice box, for the signed petition to be collected or to collect requisition to petition.
  - b. Upon filing of application for decree nisi, the matrimonial department will respond within **23 working days**. The response will be communicated by email if available or manual notice in the notice box, for the signed decree nisi to be collected or to collect requisition to decree nisi.
  - c. Upon filing of application for decree absolute, the matrimonial department will respond within **11 working days**. The response will be communicated by email if available or manual notice in the notice box, for the signed decree absolute to be collected or to collect requisition to decree absolute.
7. This model is built on the assumption of expeditious responses from the attorneys and their clients so as to eliminate delays.

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**Table 20.0: Court/Chamber hearings for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Action	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Applications	351	69.64%
Case Management Conference	94	18.65%
Motion Hearing	7	1.39%
Pre-Trial Hearing	11	2.18%
Trial	41	8.13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table shows the distribution of the types of matters brought before the Court for the period under examination. The data shows that an incidence of 504 hearings either before open court or chamber, an increase of 11 percentage points when compared to the Hilary Term of the previous year. The largest proportion, 351 or 69.64% were applications followed by 94 or 18.65%, which were Case Management Conference (CMC) matters. The hearing event with the third highest incidence in this category is trials which accounts for 41 or 8.13% of the total.

Among the dominant types of applications filed in the Family Division during the Hilary Term were applications for custody and maintenance, including spousal maintenance, applications to declare entitlement to property, applications to appoint legal guardian and applications for substituted service.

**Table 21.0: Leading for adjournment for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Reasons for Adjournment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Claimant to file documents	81	31.03
Parties having discussions with a view to settlement	34	13.03
Defendant to file documents	25	9.58
For Mediation	20	7.66
Claimant to comply with order	17	6.51
Defendant's Attorney Absent	11	4.21
Claimant's documents not served or short served	11	4.21
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>76.25</b>

*Total incidence of adjournments (N) = 261*

As with all Divisions of the Supreme Court, an important metric of court efficiency are the reasons for adjournment of court matters. The data suggests that there were 261 incidences of adjournments in the Family Division for chamber and open court hearings in the Hilary Term of 2026, an increase of 2.60% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The largest proportion of these adjournments were for claimants to file documents with 81 or 31.03%, parties having discussions with a view to settlement with 34 or 13.03% and defendant to file documents with 25 or 9.58%, rounding off the top three. The listed reasons for adjournment account for 76.25% of the total incidence of adjournments in the Hilary Term of 2026. The Family Division continues to make efforts to improve internal efficiency, enhance overall case management and to bolster external stakeholder engagement which is critical to reducing delay and improving the timely resolution of cases which are heard in chamber or open court.

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**Table 22.0a: Hearing date certainty for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Court/Chamber hearing dates set	Hearing dates Date adjourned (excluding continuance)	Hearing date certainty rate (%)
485	91	81.24

It is seen that of the 485-combined incidence of Court and Chamber hearings in the Hilary Term of 2026, 91 were adjourned for reasons other than intrinsic procedural factors. This produces a moderate 81.53% hearing date certainty rate, an increase of 0.45 percentage points compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. For every 100 hearing dates scheduled, the approximate number that proceeded without adjournment in the Term is 81. When trial matters are isolated, the trial date certainty rate is 75%, an increase of 1 percentage point when compared to the Hilary Term of the previous year.

**Table 22.0b: Judicial flexibility Index for the Family Division for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Number of cases heard	Incidence of adjournment	Overall Judicial Flexibility Index (%)
485	207	<b>0.57</b>

The **Judicial flexibility index (JFI)** provides a measurement of the relative ease with which cases are adjourned for various reasons. The closer the rate is to 1 the more flexible the court or Judges are in granting adjournments, however the closer the result is to 0, the less flexible the court/Judges in granting adjournments. In the Hilary Term of 2026, the Family Division registered an overall approximate Judicial Flexibility Index of 0.57, an improvement of 2 percentage points

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when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. This suggests that there was an average propensity for cases heard to be adjourned in the Family Division during the Hilary Term of 2026.

**Table 23.0: Time to disposition for the year ended March 27, 2026**

## Descriptive Statistics (in months)

Number of observations	908
Mean	43.1342
Median	18.0000
Mode	9.00
Std. Deviation	81.6713
Skewness	0.9233
Range	333
Minimum	<=3
Maximum	336

The overall average time to disposition of all cases resolved in the Family Division during the Hilary Term of 2026 is roughly 43.13 months. The modal/most frequently occurring time to disposition was however nine (9) months and the median is 18 months. The positive skewness suggests that a proportionately larger portion of the cases disposed were resolved in less than the overall average time.

The oldest matter disposed was approximately 28 years old while on the other end of the spectrum there a few matters filed which were matters filed which disposed within three months, due to discontinuances filed.

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**Table 24.0: Breakdown of times to disposition for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Date Interval	Frequency	Percent
0 - 12	503	55.40
13 – 24	207	22.80
25 – 36	45	4.96
37 – 47	30	3.30
48 & over	123	13.55
<b>Total</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table provides a more detailed breakdown of the estimated times to disposition for Family matters in the Hilary Term of 2026. It is seen that of the 908 matters disposed during the Term, the largest proportion, 503 or roughly 55.40% were disposed within a year, followed by the 207 or 22.80% which were disposed in 13 – 24 months. Taken together this result suggests that 710 or 78.20% of Family Division matters which were disposed during the Term were done in two years or less from the time of initiation, a sharp improvement of 7.75 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. 45 or roughly 4.96% of all family matters disposed in the Hilary Term of 2026 took between 25 and 36 months to be disposed. It is of note that 123 or 13.55% of the cases disposed in the Family Division in the Hilary Term of 2026 took four or more years to be resolved, largely on account of lengthy delays in external filings from case parties. As with the previous 5 years, the estimates however clearly suggest that a decidedly larger proportion of matters, which were disposed of during the period, took two years or less. It has been established that under near ideal circumstances, Family cases can be disposed within 4-6 months after filing, however in the Hilary Term of 2026, less than 5% of the cases resolved met this standard.

**Table 25.0: Case clearance rate for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate
<b>974</b>	<b>908*</b>	<b>93.22%</b>

*\* Only 3 or 0.31% of the cases disposed during the Hilary Term, originated during said Term*

The above table shows that there were 974 new cases filed during the Hilary Term of 2026 while 908 were disposed. This produces a case clearance rate of 93.22% suggesting that for every 100 new cases; roughly 93 were disposed in the Term. The result represents a roughly 1.55 percentage points increase when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

**Other performance measures**

Among other important performance, which allow for the tracking of court performance are:

- (i) **The on time case processing rate**
- (ii) **The case turnover ratio**
- (iii) **The disposition days**
- (iv) **The crude proxy case backlog rate**

The on time case processing provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which are being disposed within the predefined time standard. The case turnover rate is the number of cases resolved, for every unresolved case, in a given period while the disposition days provide a measure of the estimated length of time that it will take the unresolved cases in that period to

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be disposed. Additionally, the crude proxy case backlog rate provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which have been active for over two years as at the end of the Hilary Term of 2026. These measures are summarized in the table below:

**Table 26.0: Selected performances metrics for the Matrimonial Division in the Hilary Term of 2026**

Resolved cases	Unresolved cases	Case turnover rate (%)	Estimated Disposition days for unresolved cases	Number of cases disposed within 2 years	Total number of cases disposed	On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy Case backlog rate (%)
<b>908</b>	<b>3806</b>	<b>0.24</b>	<b>1520 days</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>78.20</b>	<b>21.80</b>

The results in the above table show a case turnover rate of 0.24, which is an indication that for every 100 cases, which were handled in the Hilary Term of 2026 and still active at the end of the Term, another 24 were disposed. This result forms part of the computation of the case disposal days which reveals that the cases that went to court which were unresolved at the end of the Term will on average take 1520 days or 4.28 more years to be disposed, barring special interventions. This metric does not however always have significant practical meaning when focusing on a single Term of court activity.

A case is considered to be in a backlog classification if it is unresolved in the courts for over two years. Based on this general criterion, a case that is disposed within two years is considered to have been resolved on time. The on time case-processing rate for the Family Division in the Hilary Term of 2026 is approximately 78.20%, which reflects the proportion of Family cases in the Hilary Term of 2026, which were disposed within 2 years. Conversely, the proxy case backlog rate is 21.80%, an indication that an estimated annual proportion of roughly 22% of cases are likely to

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fall into a backlog classification based on the current case disposition and case clearance rates.

This further suggests that of the 3806 cases, which had some court activity during the Hilary Term and were still active at the end of the period, 830 are expected to be in a backlog classification before being disposed. This is a fractional improvement by 0.75% when compared to the corresponding Term in the previous year.

**CHAPTER 3.0: ESTATE DIVISION**

This section turns to the analysis of the progression of matters in the Probate and Administration Division for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026.

A total of 778 new Estate Cases were filed in the Estate Division during the Hilary Term, representing an increase of 4.50% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

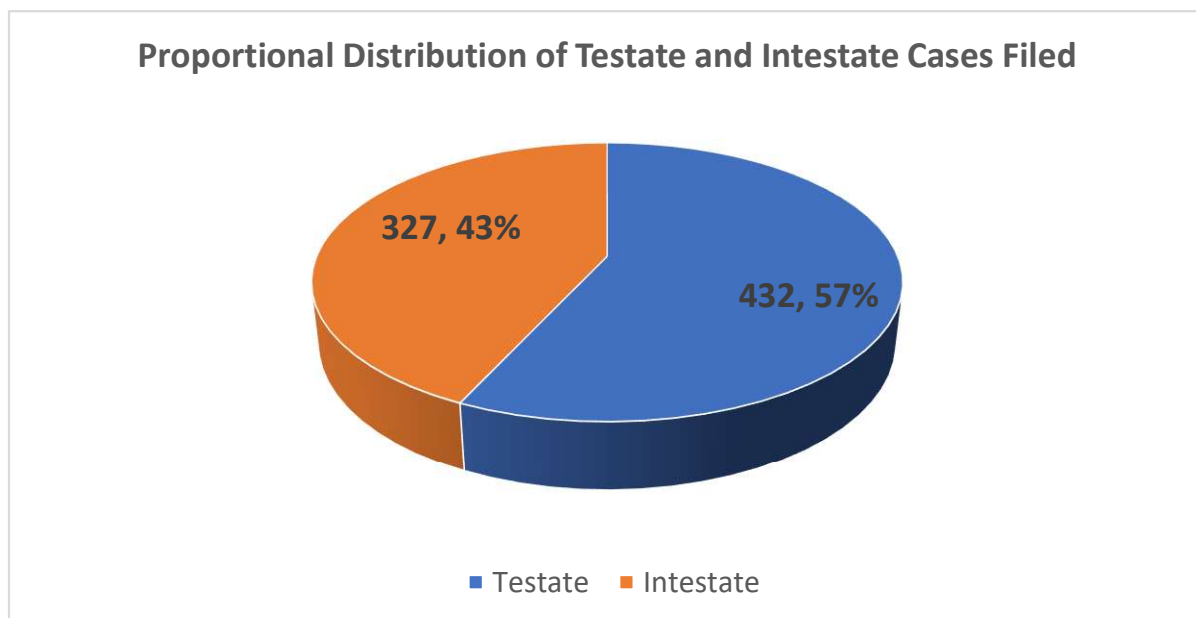
**Table 27.0: Summary of Oaths filed during the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Oaths	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Supplemental Oaths	710	47.72
Oaths	778	52.28
<b>Total</b>	<b>1488</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Ratio</b>	<b>0.91</b>	

The above table suggests there were a total of 1488 combined Oaths and supplemental Oaths filed in the Hilary Term of 2026, of which 778 or 52.28% were initial Oaths filed, compared to 710 or 47.72% which were Supplemental Oaths. The ratio of Oaths to Supplemental Oaths is 0.91, which suggests that for every 100 Oaths there were 91 Supplemental Oaths filed during the Term, an increase of 1 percentage point when compared to the Hilary Term of the previous year. It is of note that the Supplemental Oaths in this data set are not all related to the cases filed during the Hilary Term of 2026 and also includes further Supplemental Oaths filed. Continued interventions are needed to reduce the number of Supplemental Oaths filed for each Oath (the ratio) which could potentially further bolster case clearance rate and total efficiency in the Estate Division.

Over the past five years, the Probate Division has established itself as a model of efficiency in the Supreme Court, with consistent performances ranking them among the highest case clearance rates and lowest times to disposition. Continued process flow re-engineering will ensure that the efficiency of the Probate Division continues to improve over the course of the rest of the year, guaranteeing high service levels to the Jamaican public.

**Table 5.0: Sampling Distribution of Testate and Intestate cases filed during the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**



**Sample size = 759**

Using a sample of 759 cases, the above chart shows that an estimated 57% of the new cases filed in the Estate Division during the Hilary Term of 2026 were Intestate (having no Will in place) while Testate matters (matters with Will in place) accounted for the remaining 43%. This was roughly similar to the distribution observed in the previous year.

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**Table 28.0: Action sequence for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Action Status	Frequency
*Granted	471
*Grants Signed	577
<b>Ratio of Granted Applications to Grants Signed</b>	<b>0.82</b>

*\* Some of these relate to cases originating before 2026*

In the process of disposing a typical matter handled by the Deputy Registrar, a case will be granted after satisfactory review and then the Grant is signed which closes the case. In the above data we elucidate the ratio of granted applications to Grants signed which reveals a ratio of 0.82, suggesting that for every 100 granted applications, there were 82 Grants signed (though not necessarily from the number granted). This is a decline of 2 percentage points when compared to the previous year.

**Table 29.0: Case action and requisitions summary for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2027**

Action Status	Frequency
Number of cases actioned	2968
Requisitions Issued	949
Number of responses to requisitions	624
Number of requisitions issued per 100 case files	43
Requisitions clearance rate	65.75
Average days between final requisition filed and Grant of Probate/Administration	20

The number of requisitions made, the length of time that it takes for requisitions to be returned and the time to disposition after issuing requisitions, are important to understanding the efficiency of the flow of matters in the Estate Division. It is seen that there were 949 requisitions issued while 2968 individual matters were actioned in the period, representing a ratio of 32 requisitions 100 per case file actioned, a decline of 3 requisitions per 100 case files actioned when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. There were 624 responses to

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requisitions in the Estate Division in the Hilary Term of 2026, producing a requisitions response rate of 65.75%, an improvement of 8.25 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. Further analysis suggests that the average time from the issuing of final requisitions to the Grant of Probate was 20 days, an improvement of 1 day when compared to the similar period in the previous year. The number of requisitions issued in the Estate Division during the Hilary Term decreased by 4.18% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

**Table 30.0: Methods of Disposal for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Methods of Disposition	Frequency	Percent
Application Granted	15	2.34
Consent Order	4	0.63
Fixed date Claim form expire	2	0.31
Grant of Admin De Bonis Non signed	2	0.31
Grant of Admin De Bonis Non W/A signed	3	0.47
Grant of administration signed	249	38.91
Grant of probate signed	246	38.44
Grant of Resealing signed	18	2.81
Judgment	2	0.31
Judgment Delivered	2	0.31
Letters of Administrator with W/A signed	17	2.66
Matter Withdrawn	1	0.16
Notice of Discontinuance noted	31	4.84
WR Grant of administration signed	30	4.69
WR Grant of probate signed	14	2.19
WR Grant of Resealing signed	2	0.31
WR Notice of Discontinuance noted	2	0.31
<b>Total</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>100.00</b>

WR is Western Registry, \*\*W/A is with Will Annex

The summary of the methods of disposal for the Estate Division for the year are contained in the above table. It is shown that of the 640 cases disposed during the Hilary Term of 2026, a decrease of 2.25% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The largest

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proportion, 559 or 87.34% was a result of various Grants Signed. Notices of Discontinuance and matters disposed by applications granted account for the next highest proportions of the methods of disposition. 48 or 7.66% of the cases disposed originated at the Western Regional Registry.

**Table 31.0: Dominant reasons for adjournment of Probate matters for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Reasons for adjournment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Claimant to file documents	56	37.84
Defendant to file documents	17	11.49
Claimant to comply with order	13	8.78
Claimant documents not served or short served	9	6.08
No parties appearing	8	5.41

**Total number of adjournments = 148**

The leading reasons for adjournment for Estate matters that went to court in the Hilary Term of 2026 are summarized in the above table above. It is shown that of the 148 incidences of adjournments in the period, the largest proportion were for the reasons of 'claimant to file documents' which accounted for 56 or 37.84% of the total. This was followed by adjournments for defendants to file documents and adjournments for claimants to comply with order with 11.49% and 8.78% respectively of the total number of adjournments. The overall incidence of case adjournments increased by 21.50% when compared to the corresponding rates in the previous year.

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**Table 32.0: Applications for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Type of Hearing	Frequency	Percent
Application	221	75.17
Case Management Conference	9	3.06
Pre-Trial Review	18	6.12
Motion Hearing	3	1.02
Trial in Chamber	24	8.16
Trial in Open Court	19	6.46
<b>Total</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table provides a summary of the types of hearings conducted in Chamber and Open Court in the Estate Division during the Hilary Term of 2026. The hearing of applications with roughly 75.17% of the total was dominant followed by trials in chamber and trials in open court with 8.16% and 6.46% respectively. Applications to prove copy will and applications for directions account for the highest shares of applications filed.

**Table 33.0: Judicial flexibility Index for the Estate Division for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Sample of cases heard	Incidence of adjournment	Overall Judicial Flexibility Index (%)
214	132	<b>0.62</b>

The **Judicial flexibility index (JFI)** provides a measurement of the relative ease with which cases are adjourned for various reasons. The closer the rate is to 1 the more flexible the court or Judges are in granting adjournments, however the closer the result is to 0, the less flexible the court/Judges in granting adjournments. In the Hilary Term of 2026, the Estate Division registered an overall approximate Judicial Flexibility Index of 0.62. This suggests that there was a moderately

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high propensity for cases heard to be adjourned in the Estate Division during the Hilary Term of 2026.

**Table 34.0: Hearing date certainty for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

<b>Court and Chamber hearing dates set</b>	<b>Hearing dates adjourned (excluding continuance)</b>	<b>Hearing date certainty (%)</b>
283	62	78.09

The above table addresses the extent of adherence with dates set for court/chamber matters in the Estate Division for the Hilary Term of 2026. It is shown that there were 283 incidences of dates scheduled for Chamber or Court, 62 of which were adjourned for reasons other than 'continuance'. This produces an overall hearing date certainty rate of 78.09%, an indication that for the Hilary Term there was a roughly 78% chance that a matter set for court would proceed without the date being adjourned. This is an improvement of 2 percentage points when compared to the similar period in the previous year. When trial matters are isolated, the trial date certainty rate is roughly 70.05%, roughly 1.52 percentage points above the corresponding figure in the Hilary Term of the previous year.

**Table 35.0: Age of matters disposed for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

**Descriptive Statistics (months)**

Number of observations	640
Mean	18.256
Median	9.00
Mode	8.00
Std. Deviation	21.09
Skewness	1.32
Range	263.00
Minimum	< 2.00
Maximum	270.00

The above table provides a summary measure of the overall estimated times to disposition for the 640 cases disposed during the Hilary Term. The estimated average time to disposition is approximately 18.26 months or approximately the same as that of the Hilary Term of the previous year. The observed positive skewness suggests that the larger proportion of the times to disposition were below the overall average time. This is supported by the results for the estimated median and modal times to disposition for the Hilary Term are 9 and 8 months respectively. The reasonably large standard deviation of 21.09 months supports the deduction that there were scores that varied widely from the mean, in this case skewing the average upwards. The oldest Estate matter disposed in the Hilary Term was approximately 270 months or roughly 22.5 years old while there were a few matters, which took under two months to be disposed, representing the lowest times to disposition in the Term. Of the 640 Estate cases disposed during the Hilary Term of 2026, only fourteen (14) originated in 2026. The Estate Division has managed to sustain one of the lowest average times to disposition in the Supreme

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Court over much of the past eight years.

**Table 36.0: Breakdown of times to disposition for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Time Interval (months)	Frequency	Percent
0 - 12	387	60.47
13 - 24	151	23.59
25 - 36	37	5.78
37 - 47	24	3.75
48 & over	41	6.41
<b>Total</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table shows that of the 640 Estate matters disposed in the Hilary Term, the majority, 387 or 60.47% were disposed in 12 months or less, followed by 151 or 23.59%, which were disposed within a time interval of 13 to 24 months. Taken together this data suggests that an impressive approximated 84.06% of Estate matters which were disposed of in the Hilary Term took two years or less. 6.41% of the cases disposed took 48 months or more to be resolved while 5.78% took between 25 and 36 months and 3.75% took between 37 and 47 months. The relatively high proportion of cases disposed within a year and two years respectively continues to augur well for the current efforts to significantly reduce the length of time that it takes for cases to be disposed and potentially eliminate case backlog in the foreseeable future. These gains should continue to improve public confidence in judicial processes geared towards resolving Estate matters in the country and also have a positive effect on economic activity through higher real estate investments in shorter period of time.

**Table 37.0: Case clearance rate for the Hilary Term March 27, 2026**

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate
778	640	82.26%

*\*14 or 1.45% of the new cases filed during the Hilary Term of 2026 were disposed*

Using the data on the number of cases filed and disposed in the period under examination, a case clearance rate of approximately 82.26% is derived, which is 1.25 percentage points higher than the corresponding period in the previous year. The result suggests that for every 100 cases filed and active in the Hilary Term, roughly 82 were disposed. Although the rate falls outside of the desired annualized standard of 90% - 110%, it is a reflection of the consistency of the Estate Division in producing output which prevents any significant backlog build up. A return to its traditional standard of having case clearance rates that meets the required targets is however of imminent importance at this time in order to sustain relatively low net case backlog rate.

**Other performance measures**

Among other important performance, which allow for the tracking of court performance are:

- (i) **The on time case processing rate**
- (ii) **The case turnover ratio**
- (iii) **The disposition days**
- (iv) **The crude proxy case backlog rate**

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The on time case processing provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which are being disposed within the predefined time standard. The case turnover rate is the number of cases resolved, for every unresolved case, in a given period while the disposition days provide a measure of the estimated length of time that it will take the unresolved cases in that period to be disposed. Additionally, the crude proxy case backlog rate provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which have been active for over two years as at the end of the Hilary Term of 2026. These measures are summarized in the table below:

**Table 38.0: Selected performances metrics for the Probate and Administration Division in the Hilary Term of 2026**

Resolved cases	Unresolved cases	Case turnover rate	Estimated case disposition days for the unresolved cases	Number of cases disposed within 2 years	Total number of cases disposed	On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy Case backlog rate (%)
640	2328	0.27	1352 days	538	640	84.06	15.94

The results in the above table shows a case turnover rate of 0.27, which is an indication that for every 100 cases, which were ‘heard’ during the Hilary Term of 2026 and still active at the end of the period, another 27 were disposed, a decline of 1 percentage point when compared to corresponding period in the previous year. This result forms part of the computation of the case disposal days which reveals that the cases that went to court which were unresolved at the end of the year will on average take 1352 days or just over 3.7 years, barring special interventions.

A case is considered to be in a backlog classification if it is unresolved in the courts for over two years. A case that is resolved within two years is considered to have been resolved on time. The on time case-processing rate for the Estate Division in the Hilary Term of 2026 is roughly 84.06%, which reflects the proportion of cases in the Hilary Term of 2026, which were disposed within 2 years. Conversely, the case backlog rate is 15.94%, an indication that an estimated annual proportion of roughly 16% of cases are likely to fall into a backlog classification based on the current case disposition and case clearance rates. This output is roughly the same as the previous year. The data further suggests that of the 2328 cases, which had some court activity in the Hilary Term of 2026 and were still active at the end of the period, 371 are expected to be in a backlog classification before being disposed.

**CHAPTER 4.0: THE HOME CIRCUIT COURT**

The analysis now turns to a look at case activity in the Home Circuit Court for the Hilary term of 2026.

**Table 40.0: Distribution of the top six new charges brought for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

A total of 110 new cases were filed in the Criminal Division of the Supreme Court during the Hilary Term of 2026. This is a slight increase of 2.15% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

**Table 39.0: Leading reasons for adjournment for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Adjournment	Frequency	Percentage
Defence Counsel Absent	115	7.47
Matter not reached	61	3.96
For file to be completed	51	3.31
Defence and Prosecution to Engage in Discussions	49	3.18
For Investigating Officer to Attend	47	3.05
Crown to Take Instructions	36	2.34
For Disclosure	34	2.21
Statement Outstanding	32	2.08
For bail application	27	1.75
Witness cannot be located	27	1.75
Forensic Certificate Outstanding	26	1.69

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Defence Counsel needs time to take instructions	25	1.62
CFCD Outstanding	22	1.43
Awaiting DNA Sample	19	1.23
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>571.00</b>	<b>37.08</b>

*Number of observations = 1540*

The above table provides a summary of the leading reasons for adjournments and continuance in the Home Circuit Court for the Hilary Term of 2026. An examination of the leading reasons for adjournment in the period reveals that the dominant reasons for delay were a result of absence of defence counsel with 115 or 7.47%, followed by adjournments due to matter not reached with 61 or 3.96% and adjournments for file to be completed with 51 or 3.31% rounding off the top three reasons. The top five reasons for adjournments in the Hilary Term of 2026 in the Home Circuit Court was rounded off by adjournments for the defence and prosecution to engage in discussions and adjournments for the investigating officer to attend with 3.18% and 3.05% respectively. The reasons for adjournment enumerated in the table above account for 37.08% of the total adjournments and continuances in the Hilary Term of 2026.

When the data is further disaggregated, it is revealed that the main reasons for delay at the Plea and Case Management and Mention are those due to outstanding ballistic certificates, outstanding forensic certificates, statements outstanding, CFCD outstanding, accused absent, the defence needing time to take instructions and for the defence and prosecution to engage in discussions. The data further reveals that there was moderate incidence of repeats of the reasons for adjournment at the trial stage which would have occurred previously at the plea and case management stage for cases making that progression. The data reveals that the dominant

reasons for adjournment at the trial stage were adjournments for investigating officer to attend, accused absent and defence counsel absent. The overall evidence here suggests that the overall management of the plea and case management court during the Hilary Term was fair.

There continues to be compelling evidence from the above list of reasons for adjournment, suggesting that third party entities, namely the defence bar, the police, the prosecution, the state lab services contribute significantly to the delays experienced in the progression of cases in the Home Circuit Court. Indeed, the data suggests that only a small share of the reasons for adjournment listed are attributable to deficits in the court's operational procedures. In fact, in many ways the data strongly suggests that once criminal cases are ready, they tend to move at a fairly rapid pace towards disposition and many of the roadblocks to case progression are primarily due to the named third party entities. The Supreme Court continues to work assiduously on improving the skill sets of its case progression officers and in bolstering the general efficiency of the operating procedures and scheduling apparatus of the criminal registry. Over the past two years, the Plea and Case Management Court has for example being strengthened and the incidence of adjournments in this court reduced. The overall incidence of reasons for adjournment suggests that external parties are directly responsible for over 85% of the reasons for delay as operationalized by this measurement. The Criminal Registry of the Supreme Court continues to work on improving its overall efficiency in an effort to improve case management and to expedite case outcomes within the desired overall standard of two years or less. It is clear however that the core causes of delays in the Home Circuit Court are largely due to factors concerning external parties. The traditional claim that the inadequacy of courtrooms is a significant cause of delays should also be refuted as the courtroom utilization rate of under 63%

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suggests that there is some spare resource capacity, albeit in limited proportion in the Supreme Court. The ability of the Home Circuit Court to effectively and efficiently schedule cases requires some improvement and the attention of the court's leadership is fully invested in finding scientific resolutions in this regard. The overall effectiveness of the scheduling science in the Home Circuit Court continues to be constrained by a high incidence of adjournments which can be largely associated with third party inefficiencies.

The data suggest that there were roughly 2 adjournments per case heard in the Home Circuit Court in during the Hilary Term of 2026.

**Table 40.0: Hearing date certainty summary for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Hearing	Hearing date certainty rate (%)
Mention and/Plea and Case Management Hearing	80.5
Bail Applications	75
Sentencing hearings	72
Trial hearings	60
<b>Total/Overall Average</b>	<b>71.88</b>

The date scheduling certainty for each Division of the Supreme Court is an important metric, which examines the extent to which dates, which are set for various types of hearings, are adhered. A low result has implications for the capacity of the court to adequately estimate the duration of a matter, for the capacity of courtrooms and Judges to absorb certain caseload and for the general system of scheduling. The data suggests that between 28 and 29 of every 100 hearing dates set in the Home Circuit Court during the Hilary Term of 2026 were adjourned.

This suggests an overall hearing date certainty rate of roughly 71.88% which is another way of saying that for every 100 criminal matters scheduled for court, roughly 71 or 72 were able to proceed without adjournment for reasons other than those procedural, for example for Trial, Bail Application, Pre-trial hearing, Sentencing and Plea and Case Management. This represents an overall decline of 2.50 percentage points when compared to the Hilary Term in the previous year. When trial matters are isolated, the trial certainty rate revealed is 60%, an improvement of 1.5 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year while Plea and Case Management Conferences had a hearing date certainty rate of 80.50%, a fractional decline of roughly 0.25 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year

Continuously improving the trial and overall hearing date certainty rates are of utmost importance to improving the efficiency of the court system. The court continues to work on improving the mechanism used to schedule cases for hearings and in so doing aid in reducing the incidence of adjournments. A major step taken at the end of 2021 is the introduction of an advanced web based case management system called the Judicial Case Management System (JCMS) in the Criminal Division of the Supreme Court. This software will progressively aid in improving the effectiveness of the scheduling apparatus in the Division and in bolstering the overall efficiency of case management.

As illustrated and discussed earlier, the cooperation and preparation of the prosecution, defence attorneys and other stakeholders as well as improved case management within the Home Circuit Court are also crucial the attainment of fostering the required gains. The modest hearing and trial

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date certainty rates that currently obtains in the Home Circuit Court is at least partly a function of the lack of adequate compliance with court orders and some weaknesses in pre-case management practices. The speed and adequacy of compliance with orders such as those for outstanding documents to be furnished, for the defence and prosecution to agree on facts and for plea and case management forms to be returned so that issues can be understood are impediments to case progression and hearing date certainty. The diligence of the Case Progression Officers in doing the necessary follow-ups is also a vital support cast in this regard and should be effectively supported with the aid of the new Judicial Case Management System (JCMS).

**Table 41.0: Sampling Distribution of Criminal conviction rate for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

<b>Sample of charges disposed</b>	<b>Total number of guilty outcomes</b>	<b>Estimated Conviction rate (%)</b>
134	37	<b>27.61</b>

The above table shows that of the sample of 134 criminal charges disposed in the Home Circuit Court, 37 were because of guilty outcomes, whether by way of a verdict or a plea. This represents a conviction rate of 27.61% which suggests that there is a roughly 28% probability that a matter could end in a guilty outcome, using the Hilary Term of 2026 as a proxy. This represents a decline of 1.55 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

**Table 42.0: Descriptive statistics on the times to disposition of cases for Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

**Descriptive Statistics (months)**

Number of observations	61
Mean	45.1780
Median	30.5200
Mode	25.38
Std. Deviation	31.3519
Skewness	1.402
Range	154.92
Minimum	.38
Maximum	155.30

The above table provides a descriptive statistical summary on the times to disposition for cases resolved in the Home Circuit Court in the Hilary Term of 2026. The overall average time to disposition seen is approximately 45.18 months or roughly 3.77 years, a marginal increase of 2 months when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The median time to disposition was 30.52 months or roughly 2.54 years while the most frequently occurring time to disposition in the period was 25.38 months from entering the Home Circuit Court. The standard deviation of the distribution is relatively large which is an indication that there is relatively large dispersion of the times to disposition during the year. The skewness of the distribution is moderately positive which is an indication that a proportionately larger share of the times to disposition fell below the overall mean time to disposition. The maximum time taken to dispose cases in the Home Circuit Court during the year was 155.30 months or roughly 5.18 years while the minimum time to disposition was approximately under a month.

**Table 43.0: Breakdown of time to disposition of cases for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

<b>Time Interval (in months)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
0 – 12	9	14.75
13 – 24	6	9.84
25 – 36	19	31.15
37 – 47	4	6.56
48 & over	23	37.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The above table provides a summary of the estimated time to disposition for the 61 cases disposed in the Home Circuit Court during the Hilary Term of 2026. It is shown that the largest proportion of cases disposed took four or more years, accounting for 37.70% of the disposals. This is followed by matters taking 25 – 36 months with 31.15% of the disposals and 14.75% which were disposed within 12 months. Approximately 9.84% of the disposals took 13 - 24 months to be resolved, rounding off the intervals with the highest frequency for the Term. Cumulatively, 24.59% of the matters disposed in the period took two years or less, a slight decline of 1.80 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The remaining 80.90% of cases disposed took over two years to be disposed. Using 2026 Hilary Term data as a proxy, there is a roughly 75.41% chance that a case entering the Home Circuit Court will fall into a state of backlog, using the 24 months’ definition of reasonable time which is established in the Jamaican judiciary. Improvements in the science that is applied to scheduling and case management as a whole, paired with significant improvements in third party delay factors discussed earlier has enormous potential to reduce the probability of a case backlog to a

remote incidence.

**Table 44.0: Case clearance rate for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate (%)
110	61	55.45

*Note: 3 or 12.50% of the new cases entered during the Hilary Term were disposed.*

In the Hilary Term of 2026, the Home Circuit Court recorded an overall case clearance rate of 55.45%, representing a decline of 2.15 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

**Other performance measures**

Among other important performance, which allow for the tracking of court performance are:

- (i) **The on time case processing rate**
- (ii) **The case turnover ratio**
- (iii) **The disposition days**
- (iv) **The crude proxy case backlog rate**

The on time case processing provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which are being disposed within the predefined time standard. The case turnover rate is the number of cases resolved, for every unresolved case, in a given period while the disposition days provide a

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measure of the estimated length of time that it will take the unresolved cases in that period to be disposed. Additionally, the crude proxy case backlog rate provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which have been active for over two years as at the end of the Hilary Term of 2026. These measures are summarized in the table below:

**Table 45.0: Selected performances metrics for the Home Circuit Court in the Hilary Term of 2026**

Resolved cases	Unresolved cases	Case turnover rate (%)	Estimated Disposition days	Number of cases disposed within 2 years	Total number of cases disposed	On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy Case backlog rate (%)
<b>61</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>4563</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>24.59</b>	<b>75.41</b>

The results in the above table shows a case turnover rate of 0.05, which is an indication that for every 100 criminal cases, which were active in the Hilary Term of 2026 and still active at the end of the year, another 5 were disposed.

A case is considered to be in a backlog classification if it is unresolved in the courts for over two years. A case that is resolved within two years is considered to have been resolved on time. The on time case-processing rate for the Home Circuit Court in the Hilary Term of 2026 is 24.59%, which reflects the proportion of cases resolved during the Term which were disposed within 2 years. Conversely, the proxy case backlog rate is 75.41%, an indication that an estimated proportion of 75% of cases are likely to fall into a backlog classification based on the current case disposition and case clearance rates. This further suggests that of the 756 cases, which had some court activity during the Term and were still active at the end of the period, 570 are expected to be in a backlog classification before being disposed.

**CHAPTER 5.0: HIGH COURT DIVISION OF THE GUN COURT**

The ensuing analyses provides an overview of case activity in the High Court Division of the Gun Court in the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026. In particular, this section outlines data related to matters initiated, matters disposed, adjournments and the distribution of trial and mention matters during the year.

Eighty six new Gun Court cases were filed during the Hilary Term of 2026, a decrease of 3.80% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The dominant charges filed in the period were illegal possession of firearm, illegal possession of ammunition and shooting with intent.

**Table 46.0a: Most frequently occurring reasons for adjournment for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Reason for Adjournment	Frequency	Percent
For file to be completed	420	14.44
Ballistic Certificate Outstanding	210	7.22
For disclosure	152	5.23
Statement Outstanding	143	4.92
DNA result outstanding	123	4.23
Crown not ready	117	4.02
Scene of Crime Report (SOC) CD Outstanding	108	3.71
Scene of Crime Report (SOC) Statement Outstanding	99	3.40
Medical Certificate Outstanding	74	2.54
Forensic Certificate Outstanding	65	2.24
Subpoena Witnesses	56	1.93
Statement Outstanding	54	1.86

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DNA result outstanding	51	1.75
Crown not ready	45	1.55
Scene of Crime Report (SOC) CD Outstanding	43	1.48
Scene of Crime Report (SOC) Statement Outstanding	41	1.41
Medical Certificate Outstanding	39	1.34
Forensic Certificate Outstanding	38	1.31
Subpoena Witnesses	36	1.24
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>1914.00</b>	<b>65.82</b>

Total number of adjournments and continuances (N) = 2908. *NB: Other documents outstanding include scene of crime reports, police officer statistics and outstanding miscellaneous certificates.*

The above table outlines the leading reasons for adjournment in the Gun Court for the Hilary Term of 2026, including continuances. At the top of the list were adjournments for file to be completed with 420 or 14.44%, ballistic certificate outstanding with 210 or 7.22%, adjournments for disclosure with 152 or 5.23%. As with previous reports, a significant proportion of the reasons for adjournment are due to third party factors. The situation continues to necessitate targeted interventions.

**Table 46.0b: Stages of Adjournment**

Type of Hearing	Percent
Hearing - Application for Bail	14.1
Hearing – Mention	30.28
Hearing - New (first before Court)	11.12
Hearing - Part Heard	8.08
Hearing - Plea and Case Management	16.19
Hearing – Sentence	3.75
Hearing - Trial Readiness Hearing	1.28
Hearing - Trial with Judge Only	15.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

*Number of observations = 2908*

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The above dataset provides a summary of the stages of adjournments (including continuances) for matters adjourned during the Hilary Term of 2026. It is seen that the largest proportion of these adjournments took place at the mention stage accounting for 30.28%, followed by adjournments at the trial stage with 18.15% and adjournments at the plea and case management stage with 15.20% and adjournments for bail application with 14.10%.

**Table 47.0: Hearing date certainty summary for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Type of hearing dates	Estimated Hearing Date Certainty
Mention hearings	78.25
Plea and Case Management hearing	80.58
Bail Applications	77.35
Sentencing hearings	75.25
Trial hearings	52.5
<b>Total/Overall Average</b>	<b>72.79</b>

The date scheduling certainty for each Division of the Supreme Court is an important metric, which examines the extent to which dates, which are set for various types of hearings, are adhered. A low result has implications for the capacity of the court to adequately estimate the duration of a matter, for the capacity of courtrooms and Judges to absorb certain caseload and for the general system of scheduling. In the table above it is shown that an overall hearing date certainty rate of roughly 72.79% was recorded which is another way of saying that for every 100 criminal matters scheduled for court, roughly 73 are able to proceed without adjournment for reasons other than those procedural, for example for Trial, Bail Application, Sentencing and Plea and Case Management. This represents a 4.25 percentage points decline compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. When trial matters are isolated, the trial certainty rate

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revealed is 52.50%, a decline of 3.95 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

**Table 48.0: Methods of case disposition for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Methods of Disposition	Frequency	Percent
Accused Deceased	3	1.63
Found Guilty	18	9.78
Found Not Guilty	45	24.46
No Case Submission Upheld	22	11.96
No Evidence Offered	39	21.20
No Further Evidence Offered	37	20.11
No Verdict Taken	2	1.09
Not Indicted	8	4.35
Plead Guilty	7	3.80
Remitted to Parish Court	3	1.63
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The above table summarizes the methods of disposition for the charges disposed in the High Court Division of the Gun Court for the Hilary Term of 2026. It is seen that there were 184 charges which were disposed, the largest proportion of which were a result of defendants found not guilty and no evidence offered with 24.46% and 21.20% respectively, followed by no further evidence offered with 37 or 20.11%. The 184 charges disposed (the significant minority is the equivalent of 64 unique cases), representing a decrease of 24.45% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

**Table 49.0: Estimated Conviction rate in the Gun Court for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

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Number of charges disposed	Number of Guilty outcomes (i.e., guilty verdicts and guilty pleas	Conviction rate (%)
184	25	13.59

The overall conviction rate in the Gun Court is summarized in the above table. It is seen that of the 184 disposed charges in the Hilary Term of 2026, 25 were a result of either a guilty plea or a guilty verdict. This produces an overall conviction rate of 13.59% for Gun Court charges resolved during the Term, approximately 2.50 percentage points below the rate in the corresponding period in the previous year. The following table delves further into the conviction rate, by the substantive matter.

**Table 50.0: Time to disposition (from case file date) for charges disposed of in the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

### Descriptive Statistics (in days)

Number of observations	184
Mean	475.2567
Median	346.0000
Mode	105.00 <sup>a</sup>
Std. Deviation	245.0674
Skewness	1.577
Range	13,115
Minimum	25.00
Maximum	13,140

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The above table summarizes the time taken to dispose of cases in the Gun Court in the Hilary Term of 2026, counting from the date cases were filed. It is seen that the estimated average time to disposition from the date of case is approximately 15.84 months, which is roughly the same as that of the previous year. The data set for this measure is positively skewed, indicating

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that proportionately more of the times to disposition fell below the overall series mean. The estimated maximum time to disposition for the data set is 432 months or roughly 36 years. The estimated minimum time to disposition from the date of filing was 25 days. The modal and median times to disposition were approximately 11.53 and 3.50 months respectively, promising signs for the ability of the Gun Court in light of the considerable reduction in the number of guilty pleas over the past four years, largely as a result of legislative changes which have reduced the incentives for the early entry of guilty pleas. The standard deviation was relatively high, indicating that the individual scores were widely dispersed around the mean. The 64 cases disposed in the High Court Division of the Gun Court in the Hilary Term represents a 19.50% decrease when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

**Table 51.0: Breakdown of times to disposition (from case file date) for the cases disposed in the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Date Intervals	Frequency	Percent
0 - 12	15	23.44
13 - 24	19	29.69
25 - 36	11	17.19
37 - 47	4	6.25
48 & over	15	23.44
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table provides a further breakdown of the estimated time to disposition for the charges disposed in the Hilary Term of 2026, counting from the case file date. The data shows that the largest proportion of the disposals using this method took between 13 and 24 months. This interval accounted for 19 or 29.69% of the disposals and was followed by charges taking 48 months and over and 0 – 12 months respectively to be disposed each with 15 cases or 23.44%. A further 17.19% of the cases were disposed in 25 - 36 months, while 6.25% took 37 – 47 months

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to be disposed. Cumulatively, 53.13% of the cases disposed took two years or less from the case file date, a decline of 10.15 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

**Table 52.0: Case clearance rate for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Cases filed	Cases resolved	Case clearance rate
86	64	74.42%

Ninety-seven new cases were filed in the High Court Division of the Gun Court in the Hilary Term of 2026 while 64 cases were also disposed or inactivated (including many which originated before the Term) leading to an impressive case clearance rate of approximately 74.42% for the period. This output represents a 1.25 percentage points improvement when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

## **Other performance measures**

Among other important performance, which allow for the tracking of court performance are:

- (i) The on time case processing rate**
- (ii) The case turnover ratio**
- (iii) The disposition days**
- (iv) The crude proxy case backlog rate**

The on time case processing provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which are being disposed within the predefined time standard. The case turnover rate is the number of cases

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resolved, for every unresolved case, in a given period while the disposition days provide a measure of the estimated length of time that it will take the unresolved cases in that period to be disposed. Additionally, the crude proxy case backlog rate provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which have been active for over two years as at the end of the Hilary Term of the previous year. These measures are summarized in the table below:

**Table 53.0: Selected performances metrics for the Gun Court in the Hilary Term of 2026**

Resolved cases	Unresolved cases	Case turnover rate (%)	Estimated disposition days for unresolved cases	Number of cases disposed within 2 years	Total number of cases disposed	On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy case backlog rate (%) *
64	471	0.14	2607	34	64	53.13	46.87

The results in the above table shows a case turnover rate of 0.14, which is an indication that for every 100 cases which were ‘heard’ during the Hilary Term of 2026 and still active, 14 pre-existing cases were disposed.

A case is considered to be in a backlog classification if it is unresolved in the courts for over two years. A case that is resolved within two years is considered to have been resolved on time. The on time case-processing rate for the Gun Court in the Hilary Term of 2026 is approximately 53.13%, which reflects the proportion of Gun Court cases in the Hilary Term of 2026, which were disposed within 2 years. This is comparatively low by the usual standards of the Gun Court and may be indicative of signs of growth in the gross case backlog rate. Conversely, the crude proxy case backlog rate is 46.87%. While these proxy measurements are insightful, they are not

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meaningful for generalization purposes as they are based on activity from a single Term. These measures over a year or more of activity provides the basis for reliable statistical inferences.

**CHAPTER 6.0: COMMERCIAL DIVISION**

This chapter presents data on case activity in the Commercial Division in the Hilary Term of 2026 as well as important performance measurements and year on year comparisons where applicable.

**Table 54.0: Cases filed in the Commercial Division in the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Division	Number of new cases filed
Commercial	110

In the Hilary Term of 2026, 110 new cases were filed, a fall of 3.10% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The Commercial Division currently steadily averages over 500 new cases per year and its productivity is important in sending signals to economic agents in the country.

**Table 59.0: Sampling distribution of the dominant reasons for adjournment/continuance in the Commercial Division for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Reasons for adjournment	Percentage (%)
Claimant documents not served	20.14
Parties still in discussion regarding disputed judgment	12.13
Defendant’s documents not served or short served	11.10
Mediation Continuing	6.95
Pending Settlement	5.90
Part Heard in Progress Before Another Judge	4.80
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>61.02</b>

***Number of observations (N) = 150***

The above table provides a sampling distribution of the leading reasons for adjournment in the Commercial Division for the Hilary Term of 2026. A total of 150 such incidences sampled reveal that adjournments due to claimant’s documents not served with 20.14%, parties having

discussion regarding disputed judgment with 12.13% and defendants documents not served or short served with 11.10% accounted for the top three reasons for adjournment/continuance in the Commercial Division for the Hilary Term. The top six reasons for adjournment/continuance documented from the sample accounts for 61.20% of the total. These leading reasons for adjournment listed are largely attributable to factors which are not within the direct realm of direct court control.

**Table 55.0: Sampling distribution of cases with chamber hearings for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Hearings	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Applications (Various)	201	62.23
Case Management Conference	61	18.89
Pre-trial review	53	16.41
Judgment summons hearing	8	2.48
<b>Total</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table summarizes a sample of 323 cases which had chamber hearings in the Commercial Division during the Hilary Term of 2026. As with the High Court Civil (HCV) Division, the hearing of various applications for relief sought dominates the list with roughly 62.23% of the matters with chamber hearings. Case Management Conferences and Pre-trial reviews with 18.89% and 16.41% respectively ranks next, rounding off the top three chamber hearings in the Commercial Division for the Hilary Term of 2026.

**Table 56: Sampling distribution of hearing date certainty in the Commercial Division for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Type of hearings	Estimated Hearing date certainty rate (%)
Case Management Conferences	90.52
Trials in Chamber, Trials in Open Court and Assessments of Damages	75.25
All hearings combined (Weighted Average)	82.05

The above table breaks down the hearing date certainty rates for two significant types of hearings and also gives the overall rate for the Hilary Term of 2026. It is shown that Case Management Conferences had an estimated hearing date certainty rate of 90.52% for the period, an increase of percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in 2026, while the combined weighted hearing date certainty rate for trials in chamber, assessments of damages and open court is estimated to be 75.25%, an improvement of 2.50 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The overall hearing date certainty rate when all types of hearings are considered is approximately 80.89%, a decline of 3.32 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The continued general improvement in the hearing date certainty of the Commercial Division is a step in the right direction as over time this will translate into higher case clearance rates and generally greater productivity. The efficiency of the Commercial Division is an important signal for economic activity in Jamaica.

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**Table 57.0: Judicial Flexibility Index for the Commercial Division for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Sample of cases heard	Incidence of adjournment	Overall Judicial Flexibility Index (%)
323	150	0.46

The **Judicial flexibility index (JFI)** provides a measurement of the relative ease with which cases are adjourned for various reasons. The closer the rate is to 1 the more flexible the court or Judges are in granting adjournments, however the closer the result is to 0, the less flexible the court/Judges in granting adjournments. In the Hilary Term of 2026, the Commercial Division registered an overall approximate Judicial Flexibility Index of 0.46. This represents a notable improvement of 13.80 percentage points compared to the corresponding period in the previous year, which has a positive and statistically significant effect on the output of the Commercial Division.

**Table 58.0: Requisitions summary for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Requisitions Issued	Requisition Reponses	Requisitions clearance Rate (%)	Requisitions issued per 100 case files
31`	10	32.26	5

\*This figure includes requisitions filed on matters originating prior to 2021

The above table provides a summary of the response rate for requisitions issued in the Commercial Division in the Hilary Term of 2026. It is shown that 31 requisitions were issued in

during the Term while there were 10 responses filed, thus producing a requisitions clearance rate of 32.26%, a decline of 14.50 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. This requisition clearance rate suggests that during the Hilary Term, for every 10 requisitions issued, roughly 3 responses were filed. Additionally, there was an average incidence of 5 requisitions per 100 case files in the Commercial Division for the Term.

**Table 59: Methods of disposition for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Method of Disposition	Frequency	Percentage
Agreed to pay by installment	3	2.03
Application Granted	1	0.68
Consent Judgment	5	3.38
Consent Order	1	0.68
Matter Discontinued	114	77.03
Judgment	2	1.35
Judgment in Default of Acknowledging of Service	7	4.73
Judgment in Default of Defence	3	2.03
Judgment on Admission	4	2.70
Settled	2	1.35
Settlement Order	1	0.68
Struck Out	1	0.68
Matter Transferred	2	1.35
Written Judgment Delivered	2	1.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The data suggests that 148 cases in the Commercial Division were disposed in the Hilary Term of 2026, an increase of 17.25% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. Disposals by way of discontinuances accounted for the overwhelming share of cases disposed during the Hilary Term of 2026, accounting for 77.03% of the disposals.

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**Table 60.0: Time to disposition for Commercial cases disposed in the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Number of observations	148
Mean	24.3124
Median	19.0000
Mode	8.00
Std. Deviation	30.45
Skewness	0.5234
Range	113
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	114

The above table shows that the estimated average time to disposition for the 148 Commercial cases disposed in the Hilary Term of 2026 is approximately 24.31 months or just over 2 years, which is a year better than the corresponding period in the previous year. The maximum time to disposition observed from these cases is roughly 9.5 years while the lowest is roughly a month. It is of note that the modal and median times to disposition were 9 and 19 months respectively, encouraging signs of continued progress in the overall time taken to resolve commercial matters. The positive skewness observed also suggests that the proportionately more of the commercial cases disposed in the Hilary Term of 2026 took less time than the overall mean. Only three cases disposed in the Hilary Term had their origins in that period.

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**Table 61.0: Breakdown of times to disposition for Commercial cases resolved in the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Time Interval	Frequency	Percent
0 – 12	59	39.86
13 – 24	48	32.43
25 – 36	15	10.14
37 – 47	9	6.08
48 & over	16	10.81
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table provides a breakdown of the times to disposition for the cases disposed in the Commercial Division in the Hilary Term of 2026. It is seen that the largest proportion of these cases were disposed of within a year, accounting for an impressive 39.86% of the disposals. This is followed by 32.43% which took between 13 and 24 months to be disposed while 10.81% which took 4 or more years to be disposed and 10.14% which took between 25 and 36 months to be resolved accounted for the next highest proportions. Taken together, the data suggest that a commendable 72.30% of the cases disposed in the Commercial Division in the Hilary Term of 2026 were resolved within 2 years.

**Table 62.0: Case clearance rate for the Commercial Division for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Cases filed	Cases disposed	Case clearance rate
<b>110</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>134.55%</b>

One hundred and ten new cases were filed in the Commercial Division in the Hilary Term of 2026, while 148 cases were disposed which yields a case clearance rate of 134.55%. This

result suggests that for every 100 new cases filed in the year, roughly 135 were disposed, an impressive improvement of 47 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year, affirming the current standing of the Commercial Division as one of the most productive divisions in the Supreme Court of Jamaica.

### **Other performance measures**

Among other important performance, which allow for the tracking of court performance are:

**(i) The on time case processing rate**

**(ii) The case turnover ratio**

**(iii) The disposition days**

**(iv) The crude proxy case backlog rate**

The on time case processing provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which are being disposed within the predefined time standard. The case turnover rate is the number of cases resolved, for every unresolved case, in a given period while the disposition days provide a measure of the estimated length of time that it will take the unresolved cases in that period to be disposed. Additionally, the case backlog rate provides a measurement of the proportion of cases, which have been active for over two years as at the end of the Hilary Term of 2026. These measures are summarized in the table below:

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**Table 63.0: Selected performances metrics for the Commercial Division for the Hilary Term of 2026**

Resolved cases	Unresolved cases	Case turnover rate (%)	Estimated Disposition days	Number of cases disposed within 2 years	Total number of cases disposed	On-time case processing rate (%)	Crude Proxy Case backlog rate (%)
<b>148</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>1106 days</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>72.30</b>	<b>27.70</b>

The results in the above table shows a case turnover rate of 0.33, which is an indication that for every 100 cases which were ‘heard’ in the Hilary Term of 2026 and still active, another 33 were disposed, an increase of 9 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

A case is considered to be in a backlog classification if it remains unresolved for over two years. A case that is resolved within two years is considered to have been resolved on time. The on time case-processing rate for the Commercial cases in the Hilary Term of 2026, is a commendable 72.30% which reflects the proportion of Commercial cases in the Hilary Term of 2026, which were disposed within 2 years. Conversely, the crude proxy case backlog rate is a commendable 27.70%, an indication that an estimated annual proportion of roughly 28% of cases are likely to fall into a backlog classification based on the current case disposition and case clearance rates. This further suggests that of the 451 cases which had some court activity during the Hilary Term and were still active at the end of the period, 125 are expected to be in a backlog classification before being disposed.

**CHAPTER 7.0: Aggregate Case Activity, Outstanding Judgments, Courtroom Utilization and Guest Contribution from a selected Division of the Supreme Court**

**Aggregate Case Clearance Rate**

Analysis of the productivity of the judiciary, subject to its resource constraints is an important metric for gauging efficiency and for informing policy and operational interventions. Among the key measures of court productivity is the case clearance rate. The below table provides a summary of the collective case clearance rate for the Divisions of the Supreme Court in the Hilary Term of 2026.

**Table 64.0a: Gross case clearance rate for the Hilary Term ended March 27, 2026**

Total cases filed	Total cases disposed	Gross Case clearance rate
<b>3496</b>	<b>2654</b>	<b>75.92</b>

The above table provides an aggregate summary of the clearance rates in the Divisions of the Supreme Court in the Hilary Term of 2026. The data suggests that 3496 new cases were filed/entered across the Divisions reviewed during the Term, a decrease of roughly 2.52% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. There were 2654 cases disposed across the Divisions of the Supreme Court during the Hilary Term, a decrease of 3.95% when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. These results yield a gross clearance rate of roughly 75.92%, representing a fractional increase of roughly 1 percentage point when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year and suggesting that that for every 100 cases filed/entered during the period, roughly, 76 were also disposed. In the Hilary Term of 2026, the Divisions with the highest case clearance rates were the Commercial Division with

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134.55%, the Family Division with 93.22% and the Estate Division with 82.26%.

### Aggregate Case Activity for the past two calendar years

**Table 65.0: Summary of new cases filed and cases disposed in the Supreme Court (2024 – 2025) [Selected Divisions]**

Division	Aggregate number of new cases filed in 2024	Aggregate number of cases disposed in 2024	Case Clearance Rate (%) - 2024	Aggregate number of new cases filed in 2025	Aggregate number of cases disposed in 2025	Case Clearance Rate (%) - 2025
High Court Civil (HCV)	4934	3135	63.54	4651	3453	74.24
Family	4252	4651	109.3	3749	4124	110.00
Estate	3540	2809	79.35	3218	2935	91.21
Commercial	471	445	94.48	420	558	132
Home Circuit Court	301	169	56.15	260	138	53.08
Gun Court	363	297	81.82	389	244	62.72
Revenue Court	3	1	80.00	2	3	150.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>13864</b>	<b>11507</b>	<b>83.00</b>	<b>12,689</b>	<b>11,455</b>	<b>90.28</b>

*Note: Excludes Insolvency and Admiralty Cases and thus deviates from the overall aggregates*

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## Case Activity Summary for the Hilary Term of 2026

The below table provides a summary of core case activity for each Divisions of the Supreme Court in the Hilary Term of 2026.

**Table 66.0: Aggregate case activity in the Hilary Term of 2026**

Division	New cases Filed	Aggregate number of cases disposed	Clearance Rate (%)	Average time To Disposition (months)	Hearing Date Certainty Rate (%)
High Court Civil (HCV)	1436	787	54.81	53.64	83.20
Family	974	908	93.22	43.13	81.24
Estate	778	640	82.26	18.26	78.09
Commercial	110	148	134.55	24.31	82.05
Home Circuit Court	110	61	55.45	45.18	71.88
Gun Court	86	110	74.42	15.84	72.79
Revenue Division	2	0	-	-	-
<b>Gross/Weighted Average</b>	<b>3496</b>	<b>2654</b>	<b>75.92%</b>	<b>33.39</b>	<b>78.21</b>

The above table provides an important summary of case activity in the Supreme Court in the Hilary Term of 2026. It is shown that 3496 cases were filed/entered across the Divisions of the Supreme Court during the Term, the largest proportion of which were filed in the High Court Civil Division with 1436 or 41.08%. The Family Division with 974 or 27.86% and the Estate Division with 778 or 22.25% accounts for the next highest shares of new cases filed during the Hilary Term.

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The Family and the High Court Civil Division accounted for the largest proportion of cases filed during the Hilary Term with 34.21% and 29.65% respectively of the total. The overall case clearance rate for the Supreme Court for the Hilary Term of 2026 is roughly 75.92%, approximately 1 percentage points higher than the corresponding period in the previous year. The Commercial Division registered the highest rate on this measurement with an output of 134.55%, followed by the Family Division with 93.22%. The High Court Civil (HCV) Division accounted for the longest average time to disposition with cases taking an average of roughly 55 months. The Home Circuit Court is next with an average time to disposition of approximately 45 months while Estate Division and the Gun Court with approximate average times to disposition of 18.26 months and 15.84 months respectively account for the lowest average times to disposition for matters resolved in the Hilary Term of 2026. The overall weighted average time taken to dispose of the cases resolved in the period was roughly 33.39 months, a slight decline of 2 months when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. Divisions of the Supreme Court experienced an overall improvement of 1.25 percentage points in the hearing date certainty rate, netting a figure of 78.21% in the 2026 Hilary Term period.

## **Judgments Reserved and Judgments Delivered**

This sub-section provides a summary of the civil judgments reserved and delivered in the Hilary Term of 2026.

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**Table 67.0: Summary of Judgments Reserved and Delivered in the Hilary Term of 2026**

Number of Judgments reserved on cases	Number of Judgments delivered on cases	Clearance rate for case Judgments (%)	Number of Judgments reserved on applications	Number of judgments/rulings delivered on applications	Clearance rates for rulings on application (%)
93	78	83.87	68	37	54.41

A total of 93 judgements were reserved in the Hilary Term of 2026 while a total of 78 judgments were delivered. This output led to a clearance rate of roughly 83.87%, a fractional improvement of 0.55 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. This result means that for every 10 judgments which were reserved in the Hilary Term of 2026, roughly 8 clear judgments were delivered. The Chief Justice has set a standard for all judgments reserved in the Supreme Court to be delivered within three months of reservation, except for complex cases which should take a maximum time of six months after reservation to be delivered.

Various applications are made during the life of a civil case on which judgments may be reserved. The analysis of the clearance rate on judgments on applications is an important supplement to the analysis of judgments and the overall outcome of a case as timely rulings on applications have a direct correlation with the timely delivery of judgments on substantive cases. The data further suggests that there were 68 judgments reserved on applications in the Hilary Term of 2026, while 37 were delivered. This produced a clearance rate for judgments on applications of 54.41%, a decrease of roughly 8.50 percentage points when compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

**Estimated Courtroom/Hearing Utilization Rate in the Hilary Term of 2026**

Using a sample of cases heard in open court in the Hilary Term of 2026, the courtroom utilization rate for the Supreme Court was estimated to be 60%, suggesting that just about 3 of every 5 available hours for hearings were utilized in the period. The significant and successful use of virtual hearings, particularly in relation to civil matters in the Supreme Court has essentially eliminated available physical courtroom space as a resource constraint to total productivity of the Supreme Court as whole and the civil divisions in particular. This is expected to contribute positively to the utilization of judicial time going forward.

**Modes of hearing in the Civil, Probate and Family Divisions in the Hilary Term of 2026**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Supreme Court started moving a significant proportion of its hearings online in order to mitigate potentially crippling effects on court operations. Since then, virtual hearings have steadily become a mainstream part of the daily operations of the court.

**Table 68.0: Sampling distribution of the modes of hearing for civil matters in the Supreme Court in the Hilary Term of 2026**

Mode of Hearing	Frequency	Percent
Hybrid	25	0.55
In Person	248	5.45
Teleconference	6	0.13
Video Conference	4268	93.86
Total	4547	100.0

It is seen in the above sample summary that the overwhelming majority of hearings conducted in the combined High Court Civil, Commercial, Family and Estate Divisions of the Supreme Court were done by video conference, accounting for an estimated 93.86% of hearings conducted, while in person hearings accounted for 5.45%, hybrid hearing accounted for 0.55% and teleconferences accounted for 0.13 of this representative sample of hearings in the period. The general improvement in hearing date certainty rate which is being observed in civil cases since the latter part of 2021 is partly a result the mass movement of cases online, a process which started in 2020, but have now becoming customary place. It has essentially removed courtroom space as a constraint on court productivity, paving the way for greater efficiency in the court’s operation.

**CHAPTER 8.0: CONCLUSION**

In summary, the Supreme Court of Jamaica's performance during the Hilary Term of 2026 reflects a structurally resilient judiciary that is navigating uneven operational realities across its various divisions. The Commercial, Estate, and Family divisions emerged as notable pockets of excellence, demonstrating strong case clearance rates and highly efficient on-time processing that prove rapid case disposition is actively being achieved in targeted sectors. To build upon this specific success, the Supreme Court should analyze these high-performing workflows to see how such efficient case management models might be adapted to relieve pressure on the High Court Civil Division, which continues to carry the heaviest systemic caseload and highest proxy backlog rates. Similarly, the criminal courts—including the Home Circuit and Gun Court—are still grappling with extended disposition times that are frequently exacerbated by external, third-party delays. To combat these bottlenecks, the judiciary would benefit from establishing tighter, formalized communication protocols with external stakeholders, such as forensic laboratories, ballistic experts, and defense counsel. This proactive adjustment would help ensure that critical certificates and legal representation are secured well ahead of scheduled trial dates. Although the overall average time to disposition has seen a slight increase across the board, the court's consistent improvements in hearing date certainty, outstanding judgment clearance rates, and case file integrity highlight positive institutional momentum. Ultimately, the ongoing integration of the web-based Judicial Case Management System across multiple registries will serve as a critical foundation for standardizing efficiency. Maximizing resources toward comprehensive staff training for this newly rolled-out system will be essential

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# THE CHIEF JUSTICE'S HILARY TERM STATISTICS REPORT ON THE SUPREME COURT

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**2026**

to fully leverage the technology, optimize scheduling certainty, and systematically mitigate the remaining case backlogs as court operations streamline throughout the year.

**Glossary of Statistical Terms**

**Clearance rate:** The ratio on incoming to outgoing cases or of new cases filed to cases disposed, regardless of when the disposed cases originated. For example, in a given Term 100 new cases were filed and 110 were disposed (including cases originating before that Term) the clearance rate is 110/100 or 110%.

**Note:** The clearance rate could therefore exceed 100% but the disposal rate has a maximum value of 100%.

A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system. The inferred international benchmark for case clearance rates is an average of 90%-110 annualized. This is a critical foundation to backlog prevention in the court system. <sup>i</sup>

**Disposal rate:** As distinct from clearance rate, the disposal rate is the proportion of new cases filed which have been disposed in a particular period. For example, if 100 new cases are filed in a particular Term and 80 of those cases were disposed in said Term, then the disposal rate is 80%.

**Note:** A persistent case clearance rate of less than 100% will eventually lead to a backlog of cases in the court system. <sup>ii</sup>

**Trial/hearing date certainty:** This is the proportion of dates set for trial or hearing which proceed without adjournment. For example, if 100 trial dates are set in a particular Term and 40 are adjourned, then the trial certainty rate would be 60%. The international standard for this measure is between 92% and 100%.

**Courtroom utilization rate:** The proportion of courtrooms in full use on a daily basis or the proportion of hours utilized in a courtroom on a daily basis. The international standard for this rate is 100%.

**Case congestion rate:** The ratio of pending cases to cases disposed in a given period. It is an indication of how fatigued a court is, given the existing state of resources and degree of efficiency. A case congestion rate of 150% for example, is an indication that given the resources currently at a court's disposal and its degree of efficiency, it is carrying 1.5 times its capacity.

**Case File Integrity Rate:** Measures the proportion of time that a case file is fully ready and available in a timely manner for a matter to proceed. Hence, any adjournment, which is due to the lack of readiness of a case file or related proceedings for court at the scheduled time, impairs the case file integrity rate. The international benchmark for the casefile integrity is 100%

**Standard deviation:** This is a measure of how widely spread the scores in a data set are **around** the average value of that data set. The higher the standard deviation, the higher the variation of the raw scores in the data set, from the average score. A low standard deviation is an indication that the scores in a data set are clustered around the average.

**Outlier:** An outlier is a value that is either too small or too large, relative to the majority of scores/trend in a data set.

**Skewness:** This is measure of the distribution of scores in a data set. It gives an idea of where the larger proportion of the scores in a data set can be found. Generally, if skewness is positive as revealed by a positive value for this measure, this suggests that a greater proportion of the scores in the data set are at the lower end. If the skewness is negative as revealed by a negative value for this measure, it generally suggests that a greater proportion of the scores are at the higher end. If the skewness measure is approximately 0, then there is roughly equal distribution of scores on both the higher and lower ends of the average figure.

**Range:** This is a measure of the spread of values in a data set, calculated as the highest minus the lowest value. A larger range score may indicate a higher spread of values in a data set.

**Case backlog:** A case that is in the court system for more than two years without disposition.

*Source:*

<http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRates.pdf>

<sup>i</sup> *Source:*

<http://courts.mi.gov/Administration/SCAO/Resources/Documents/bestpractice/BestPracticeCaseAgeClearanceRates.pdf>

**Hilary Term:** The first of the High Court Terms, usually spanning the period from early January to just before the start of Easter. In 2019, the Easter Term ran from January 07 – April 12.

**Easter Term:** The second of the High Court Terms, usually spanning some days after the end of Easter through to the end of July. In 2019, the Easter Term was between April 25 and July 31.

**Michaelmas Term:** The Term in the High Court which usually spans a period from mid-September through to a few days before Christmas. In 2019, the Michaelmas Term spanned September 16 through to December 20.

**Weighted Average:** Weighted average is a calculation that takes into account the varying degrees of significance of the groups or numbers in a data set. In calculating a weighted average for a particular variable, the individual scores or averages for each group are multiplied by the weight or number of observations in each of those groups, and summed. The outcome is then divided by the summation of the number of observations in all groups combined. For example, if we wish to calculate the weighted average clearance rate for the parish courts, the product of the clearance rate and number of cases for each court are computed, added, and then divided by the total number of cases across all the parish courts. This means that a court with a larger caseload has a greater impact on the case clearance rate than a smaller court.

A weighted average can be more accurate than a simple average in which all numbers in a data set are assigned an identical weight.

**Continuance and Adjournment:** In a general sense, any delay in the progression of a hearing in which a future date/time is set or anticipated for continuation is a form of adjournment. However, in order to make a strict distinction between matters which are adjourned for procedural factors and those which are generally avoidable, court statistics utilizes the terms 'continuance' and 'adjournment'. Here, 'continuance' is used strictly to describe situations in which future dates are set due to procedural reasons and 'adjournments' is used to describe the circumstances in which future dates of appearance are set due to generally avoidable reasons. For example, adjournments for another stage of hearing, say from a plea and case management hearing to a trial hearing or from the last date of trial to a sentencing date are classified as 'continuance' but delays for say, missing or incomplete files, due to outstanding medical reports or attorney absenteeism are classified as 'adjournments'. Adjournments as defined in this document have an adverse effect on hearing date certainty rates but continuances do not.

**Exponential smoothing:** Exponential smoothing of time series data assigns exponentially decreasing weights for newest to oldest observations. In other words, the older the data, the less priority ("weight") the data is given; newer data is seen as more relevant and is assigned more weight.

**Crude Proxy:** A rough estimate of a metric.