

Address by Simon Davis : Director of Public Prosecutions

Grand Court Opening : January 2026

Introductions

My Lady Chief Justice,

Other Honourable Judges of the Grand Court,

Honourable President of the Court of Appeal and other Justices of Appeal

Honourable Chief Magistrate and other Honourable Magistrates,

Honourable Attorney General and Madam Solicitor General,

President of the Justices of the Peace Association,

President of the Cayman Islands Legal Practitioners Association,

President of the Association of Legal Professionals and Advocates,

Chairman of the Judicial and Legal Services Commission,

Special Guests, distinguished colleagues at the Public and Private bars,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

My Lady,

I second the motion of the Honourable Attorney General for the Opening of the Grand Court and I am grateful to my Lady Chief Justice for the opportunity to address the court and, in particular, to mention

highlights of 2025 : aspirations of the ODPP for 2026 ; projects and plans to be executed and also to comment on any initiatives to streamline the relationship which the ODPP has with other stakeholders.

Before I do so, may I echo the words of the Honourable Attorney General. In particular, he has thanked and congratulated a number of people. I adopt his comments.

As I move through 2025, it will become readily apparent that some of the projects I mention are ongoing and will continue as aspirations for 2026. I do not intend to repeat them in each section of my address.

2025 - A Year of Strategic Progress

Our People

I start with my review of 2025 and 'Our People' who are at the heart of everything we do.

As with any organisation, there have been departures and arrivals. We thank those who have departed for their work and, in some cases, for their longstanding presence in the office over a number of years.

The departures this year have enabled the office to build for the future. I am now privileged to have and to be able to work with an extremely strong leadership team with two new Deputy DPPs (Nicole Petit who has been with the office for 18 or so years and Barnaby Jameson KC), a new Assistant Director (Punam Chopra) and two Senior Crown Counsel (Brian Treadwell and Martin Mulgrew).

Saturday, 10 January 2026

Barnaby Jameson KC is a globally recognised expert in terrorism and terrorist financing. He also has substantial experience of prosecuting drug offences as well as complex money laundering cases. In addition to his court practice, Barnaby has lectured for the United Nations, foreign governments as well as being an editor of Archbold. His relationship with Grand Cayman accelerated after he prosecuted successfully two murder cases in this court in 2025.

Punam Chopra joins us after spending three years at the British Embassy in Washington DC as a UK Crown Prosecution Service liaison lawyer. She has substantial experience in international Mutual Legal Assistance, Extradition and Counter Terrorism. Her expertise will be invaluable to the Cayman Islands as the jurisdiction moves up the gears in its 5th round of Mutual Evaluation for FATF purposes.

As those new members join the existing leadership team, I now have the opportunity to drive forward a number of long overdue strategic aims of the office.

In addition, we welcome Nicosia Lawson to the team. She joins the International and Financial Team. Nicosia is a Cayman Islands attorney with over 10 years post qualification experience. Prior to joining us, she was a Senior Associate at an international offshore law firm. Inter alia, her areas of focus are civil fraud and asset recovery, with specific expertise in digital assets.

I thank our finance team and librarian for their continued hard work over the last year. In addition, we would be lost without our dedicated HR team.

We must also reflect on the untimely passing of our colleague, Colleen Williams, who was our HR Manager. She was a stalwart supporter of the office and will be sorely missed.

Projects

Staying with Our People, I move to projects undertaken in 2025. In previous speeches, the 'Legal Family' was a concept. It is now a reality. The Legal Family has been launched as part of what I understand will be a wider government job family. This will assist the office in driving recruitment of Caymanian legal talent, developing and nurturing the skillset of those lawyers entering the office, as well as promoting retention. At its heart, the concept involves a significant volume of training and development. While training and development are important, I am also mindful of the fact that merely training people will not solve long term retention difficulties. Training people well enough so they can leave is one thing, treating them well enough so they don't want to leave is another.

The 'Work Based Learning Scheme' was also mentioned last year. That is now off the drawing board and is reality. It is well developed. Two members of the office have been through the scheme. At its heart, the scheme promotes and develops the advocacy and forensic skills of newly qualified lawyers. This was an aspect of new qualification which I noticed was lacking. Other legally qualified employees in addition to newly qualified advocates have been introduced to the scheme for top ups and refreshers.

All of this points in one direction - succession planning and organic growth of the office. Raising the leadership bar and raising the bar

generally is intended to expose young and newly qualified Caymanian talent to substantial experience, thereby nurturing development and retention.

The Team

I now turn to the ODPP team. I thank the whole team for their dedication and hard work during 2025. They have all experienced substantial disruption in the office and, to their immense credit, have addressed daily problems with a smile and, I believe, have become more resilient as a result.

Five members of the team should be singled out for particular praise.

Firstly, Colleen Cummings, Sarah Lewis and Simon Spiers were the Local Organising Committee for a conference hosted by the office in November. Their tireless dedication, energy and professionalism helped to make the conference truly special. The success of the conference was largely a direct reflection of their hard work behind the scenes and the whole team are deeply grateful for the care and effort they put into every aspect of the experience.

Then, over the Christmas period, I should commend the conduct of two Crown Counsel in particular, namely Ben Brown and Stacyann Stewart, whose willingness to look after the work of the office while others were with families and friends over Christmas was exemplary.

Cases before the Grand Court

2025 was another busy year for the office. It received over 2500 requests for charging decisions to be made. This is an increase on last

year, with the last quarter being extremely busy. In excess of 140 indictments were preferred before the Grand Court. In excess of 2600 charges were filed by the office with the summary courts.

Notable cases prosecuted successfully by the office included :

R v Rankine and Welcome - this involved a number of perpetrators zeroing in on a male victim as he slept. There were convictions and sentence has recently been imposed.

R v George Senior - this was a shooting in broad daylight not far from this court. The offender was apprehended after a successful police investigation. Life imprisonment with a minimum term of 34 years 8 months was imposed.

R v Lindsay Watler - this was a murder case where the Defendant was implicated substantially as a result of DNA findings on the deceased. Life imprisonment with a minimum term of 30 years was imposed.

Operation Nassau - this is a substantial case involving the importation of semi-automatic rifles, ghost guns and thousands of rounds of ammunition. It is expected that this case should resolve early in 2026.

R v CE - this was a rape case where the Defendant received a 12 year sentence. The victim was a 12 year old child.

R v YZ - this was another rape case where the Defendant received a 16 year sentence. The victim was an 11 year old child.

R v Hamilton and Salmon - the Defendants were charged with importation of Fentanyl and being concerned in a money laundering arrangement. Each Defendant received a sentence of 9yrs and 6

months imprisonment. A consecutive sentence was imposed for the money laundering charge to address totality.

Child Sexual Exploitation and Complex Casework

There has been a noticeable rise in cases involving child sexual exploitation ('CSE'). This increase will require greater capacity to ensure that appropriately trained Crown Counsel are in place to protect the interests of child and vulnerable witnesses.

The worrying upward trend in this type of case is also something very much on the radar of this government. In 2025, members of the office have attended at and assisted the Government in preparing for their involvement with the Lanzarote Convention which is specifically designed to ensure that the jurisdiction has in place appropriate measures to protect children from such abuse.

Complexity in casework is also on the increase. Whether it involves disclosure to do with numerous digital devices or consideration of cases involving, for instance, 'Decentralised Autonomous Organisations' and 'Foundation Companies', the prosecutor must be resourceful and alive to issues beyond the commonplace. Recruitment of designated Complex Casework Lawyers is the only way to tackle this technological complexity, especially where capacity is already strained to cover the work.

The Disclosure Framework

Disclosure is also something with which the prosecutor has to grapple. The Criminal Procedure Rules presently treat the disclosure test as an

aside. Outdated precedent which was decided at a time when kilobytes and megabytes of storage were 'en vogue' is no good where we now face Gigabytes and Terabytes of data in one simple mobile phone. The CJS cries out for an update to the disclosure framework where any one case can be immersed in millions of pages of digital data. For everyone working in the CJS, the benefits of a structured disclosure framework with defence statements and disclosure management documents are multifold. Defence statements are one of the most powerful — and misunderstood — tools for making prosecutions fairer, faster and more effective. There is a myth that they are just a defence obligation. That could not be further than reality. They are a system-wide efficiency and justice mechanism.

Digitisation

Innovation is not an option for the Prosecutor.

I have been heard to say that too many times. I will continue to say it. I am passionate about the future prospects of the ODPP having the capacity and the means to prosecute cases as technology advances apace.

In September at the recent annual IAP conference in Singapore, I presented a workshop on how to educate the prosecutor, the judge, the defence and the jury in cases where Artificial Intelligence ('AI') is used. I am acutely aware of the benefits and advantages and potential dangers of AI. Without embracing the concept, we are in danger of being left behind. It is hoped that appropriate funding can be put in place to develop an AI model to ensure that the office remains ahead of the technological curve.

The office has prepared well for digitisation. What was a concept is now a reality. This process has taken a long time. Systems are now in place for the office to prosecute cases without paper. While we are in a position to do so, others are not. We still receive regular requests for hard copy bundles of documents from some within the Criminal Justice System ('CJS'). It is respectfully submitted that this reliance on paper, with bundles often involving thousands of pages, needs to end.

Strong Relationships

In collaboration with the Commissioner of Police, a monthly meeting at strategic level has been established to promote best practice between our two offices and wider across the Criminal Justice System. I am happy to report that that collaboration is strong, not just with the RCIPS but with all law enforcement agencies and government departments.

In addition, the office has provided training to the RCIPS and a number of government departments. This has been consistent and relevant to what we do together. That collaboration will continue.

A Domestic Abuse Memorandum of Understanding was signed by a number of CJS signatories in late 2024. The statistics produced by this collaboration are still in their infancy and are being formulated. The initiative provoked further work from the RCIPS Offender Management Unit led by DS Lizzie Owens, with whom the office is working closely to audit and streamline existing and future Sexual Harm Prevention Orders.

Overseas Territories

The last year has also seen closer collaboration with our fellow OTs. At a meeting of the Governors of the OTs in Miami, I presented a workshop designed to assist with a joined up approach to crime detection and prevention.

Following on from that, the office has forged closer links with the AG's Chambers in Anguilla to assist them in developing their prosecution team.

It is hoped that the DPPs of the OTs can meet this year in order to share best practices, provide assistance to those who need it and to develop a training programme for OT lawyers.

Community Outreach

I recognise that it is important for the office to get involved with the community. It gives the community the opportunity to see the face of the ODPP.

In the last few weeks of 2025, the office has reached out to a number of entities to offer our assistance. This is charitable and voluntary. This outreach is to continue for 2026 and beyond.

We have also developed our relationship with the Truman Bodden Law School ('TBLs') and are moving this forward in 2026 with a number of engagements at which members of the office will attend.

In addition, the number of internships offered by the office is increasing. This year, four Caymanian interns experienced life at the criminal bar from a Prosecution perspective. It is a sign of success when interns

apply for return visits in 2026. We will continue to offer paid and unpaid internships in 2026 and beyond.

Involvement with International Association of Prosecutors ('the IAP')

Since September 2023, the office has been a signatory to the IAP. The advantages of membership are obvious - it gives the jurisdiction an international voice. It puts the office on the global map. It enables the office to measure success and best practice against its overseas counterparts. It also ensures that the office can monitor where it is with technological advancement.

The IAP provides two webinars each month for the benefit of the office. The majority of those webinars provide relevant training to the legal team.

In addition, presence at the annual IAP conference in Singapore provided me and another member of the team ample opportunity to meet in person representatives from many jurisdictions around the globe. Where necessary, this was to establish relationships for international mutual legal assistance but, more importantly, to develop and nurture existing relationships. By doing so, the word gets out that the Cayman Islands is open to assist other jurisdictions. The word also gets out that the Cayman Islands is serious in its commitment to tackling money laundering, countering Terrorist Financing as well as the combatting of modern slavery, human trafficking, drug trafficking and organised crime.

Our commitment to the IAP and to the global community went a step further in November after our bid to host the 7th IAP Regional Conference for North America and the Caribbean was accepted. Delegates from USA, Canada, Zambia, Gabon, the UK, Anguilla, Bermuda, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands, British Virgin Islands and Jamaica all joined members of the office for what can only be described as an international melting pot of legal minds, all open to new ideas and best practices. The conference enabled the office to showcase Cayman Islands' leadership in prosecutorial innovation and standards. The office also had support in a number of ways from the Premier, the Honourable Andre Ebanks, the Honourable Attorney General and Her Excellency the Governor for which we are extremely grateful.

Central Authority

As the Central Authority for the jurisdiction, I know how important it is to ensure that international Mutual Legal Assistance is nurtured and developed. We process upwards of ten new requests each month. We meet our foreign counterparts regularly over Zoom and ensure that we make the most out of opportunities to meet face to face at international events.

Property freezing, civil recovery, production and restraint orders are the bread and butter of this department. Chasing criminal property, freezing it and repatriating it are key to an effective team. There have been notable successes this year, some of which are still to resolve.

Law Reform Commission

As a Law Reform Commissioner, I enjoy my involvement with the LRC as it celebrates its 20th Anniversary and continues to 'ground break' with regard to reform of legislation for the jurisdiction.

FATF

Throughout 2025, members of the Office have continued to assist the Honourable Attorney General and the government with preparations for the FATF 5th Round of Mutual Evaluation. The office is inextricably linked to the FATF framework. That support and assistance will continue into 2026.

In January 2025, I represented the Cayman Islands at the FATF Joint Experts Meeting in Vienna for Terrorist Financing. That involvement culminated in a contribution to the update for the FATF publication on Terrorist Financing Risks which was published in the summer of 2025.

Also, in January, members of the office attended a Retreat organised by the AMLSG (Anti Money Laundering Steering Group) as the jurisdiction gears up for its preparations for the FATF 5th Round of Mutual Evaluation,

In May, I attended virtually the Overseas Territories Countering Financing of Terrorism (OT CFT) Forum. This was hosted by Bermuda. This forum is funded and supported by the FCDO in order to assist all OTs with their Countering Terrorist Financing capabilities.

In July, a member of the office attended the AGM for the Caribbean Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network (ARIN-CARIB) in Barbados. After holding the Presidency of the ARIN in the recent past, it is wholly

appropriate to maintain strong links with and to support this organisation.

In November, two members of the office attended the CFATF Plenary in Barbados in order to assist the jurisdiction with its 5th Round preparations.

Also in November, further assistance was provided to the OT CFT Forum with a workshop hosted by the Cayman Islands.

In the last three months of 2025, a number of the team were involved as Working Group members or co-chairs of Working Groups as the Office for Strategic Action on Illicit Finance ('OSAIF') drove forward the collation of risk profiles to assist it with production of the National Risk Assessment.

Strategy Refresh - late 2025

The office does not allow momentum to fade or become forgotten. In 2022, the office produced its mission and vision statements. With the influx of new recruits, especially to the leadership team, the office has been going through a strategy refresh to ensure that the direction of the office is sound and that our aims are deliverable.

2026 - Aspirations

Office Re-Fit

The office has been going through a re-fit. The whole team has had to re-locate temporarily as this has been ongoing. Over the next few weeks, the team will move back into an office which is designed to future proof effectiveness, productivity and sustainability for the medium to long term. I thank the whole team for their good will and good humour as this interruption to their work place has been ongoing.

With the new office comes more open space : more light ; more connectivity ; more effective digital capability ; a larger and more comfortable break out area ; secure rooms for video links and sensitive calls ; power, cabling and acoustics designed for digital work ; a bespoke witness care suite and a 25 seater training room designed for local and international connectivity. The goal is to turn the space into a tool which enhances the success of the office. I would like to thank the CIG for the capital injection which was provided to make this all possible.

Sustainability

I know that the CIG has sustainability and the UN Sustainable Development Goals ('UNSDG') well in mind. This is one area where non-legal goals of the ODPP and the CIG strongly align. We need to “meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

In my view, one cannot achieve sustainable development generally if crime, corruption, trafficking, terrorism financing and injustice are allowed to thrive. For this office and for UN purposes, this is especially

important - the ODPP is not just a legal body — it is a core development institution.

A strong prosecutor's office :

- Protects public funds from corruption ;
- Enforces financial crime laws ;
- Disrupts organised crime ;
- Protects children and the vulnerable and,
- Maintains public confidence in the state

In turn, the position of the ODPP at the centre of the Criminal Justice System supports directly or indirectly for the jurisdiction :

- Inward investment ;
- Stability ;
- International reputation, and
- Social cohesion.

In summary, I would suggest respectfully that this jurisdiction should treat prosecution capacity as a sustainability issue, not just a justice issue. Logic tells us that effective prosecution and justice capacity are conditions for sustainable development, not optional add-ons.

Our initiative - "Office Reconfiguration and Criminal Process Digitization" - seeks to modernize our physical workspace and digitize criminal justice processes. This dual approach is designed to enhance staff well-being, promote efficiency, reduce environmental impact and strengthen access to justice in the Cayman Islands. The initiative

demonstrates our commitment to sustainability, innovation, and justice. By aligning with the UN SDGs, this project not only modernizes our operations but also contributes to the Cayman Islands' vision of a sustainable, efficient and equitable society.

Part of that sustainability project requires the office to embrace technology and to stay ahead of the curve. Our intention, subject to funding, is to produce a bespoke AI model which will expand our capacity. I see we have two stark choices. On the one hand, a controlled, prosecution-grade AI model or, on the other hand, an ad-hoc use of external tools by staff. By the end of 2026, we should not be asking..“Do we use AI ?”, we should be in a position to say that we control (I emphasise ‘control’) a prosecution-grade AI model which protects justice, victims and the public interest.

To Close..

Before closing, I echo the comments of the Honourable Attorney General in congratulating Sir Anthony Smellie on his appointment to the Privy Council.

I would also echo his comments with regard to Franz Manderson, the Deputy Governor. Publicly, I would like to thank him for all of the support and guidance he has given to the office of the DPP. I am positive that there will be another time to say more.

My Lady, I also wish to thank your court staff who assist daily with the smooth running of the court process for so many cases filed with the court by the ODPP.

Saturday, 10 January 2026

I wish a safe, prosperous and productive New Year to Your Ladyship, all Judges and Magistrates, the court staff, fellow members of the legal profession and those who attend today.

I second the motion that the Grand Court be declared open for the year 2026.

Simon Davis, DPP
10th January 2026