Rwanda recorded 6,799 divorce-related cases across all levels of courts in the 2025/26 judicial year, nearly three times the number recorded in the previous year, according to the Supreme Court.

Supreme Court President Domitille Mukantaganzwa said the figures highlight the need for families and trusted friends to help couples resolve marital disputes before they reach court.

“Once it goes beyond the family and becomes public, it means the matter has broken down,” Mukantaganzwa said at a press briefing on Sept. 11.

She said family intervention should involve not only relatives but also close friends who can help couples address problems before they escalate into legal disputes.

The Supreme Court recorded 5,980 divorce cases filed at first instance during the year. Mukantaganzwa said the overall figure does not necessarily represent the same number of couples because a single divorce dispute can generate additional cases through appeals or related property disputes.

Separate figures from the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda show that 4,479 divorces were registered through the civil registration system in 2025. Of these, 2,629 involved couples whose divorces had been granted by courts and subsequently registered.

Kigali recorded the highest number of registered divorces at 1,820, followed by Southern Province with 920, Eastern Province with 820, Northern Province with 520 and Western Province with 339.

NISR said couples who had been married for five to 14 years accounted for the largest share of divorces recorded in 2025.

Mukantaganzwa said the consequences of marital breakdown can extend to children and wider families, including those in long-standing marriages.

But she acknowledged that separation can sometimes be the better solution where continued conflict could lead to violence, severe emotional distress or children repeatedly witnessing their parents’ disputes.

“There are times when separation is a solution rather than people killing each other … or children constantly witnessing their parents fighting,” she said.

She added that divorce is not necessarily permanent, saying some couples have reconciled years after separating.

Rwanda’s 2024 Law Governing Persons and Family provides for a Family Council to protect family interests and help resolve disputes. However, the ministerial order required to establish its membership, responsibilities and functioning has not yet been issued.