

The Ministry of Justice has criticized some professional court bailiffs for mishandling funds collected from court-enforced auctions, accusing them of delaying or failing to transfer money to rightful beneficiaries.

The issue was raised Wednesday, March 25, 2026, during a general assembly of the national association of professional bailiffs, attended by more than 400 members from across the country.

Under Rwandan law, bailiffs are required to submit a report within 48 hours after executing a court decision, detailing how it was carried out and transferring any collected funds accordingly.

The Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Justice, Théophile Mbonera, said that while most bailiffs act with integrity, a minority continue to engage in misconduct, including withholding or delaying payments.

“Some delay payments and hold onto funds. Others have even claimed the money was stolen from their storage,” he said. “Yet the law is clear: funds must be transferred to beneficiaries within the prescribed time, or deposited into a designated account at the Ministry of Justice.”

Mbonera said the ministry is taking steps to address the issue, warning that such practices are eroding public trust in the justice system.

Vice President of the bailiffs’ association, Me Munezero Malyse, said the body has introduced a new measure requiring all funds collected from court enforcement actions to pass through a single bank account.

“We have opened a bank account to ensure that no bailiff will again handle citizens’ money individually,” she said.

However, some practitioners expressed concerns about the plan. Bailiff Me Hitiyaremye Michel said the centralized system could slow operations and risk non-compliance with reporting deadlines.

“The idea of a single account is good, but we fear it could delay our work and affect our ability to meet legal timelines,” he said, noting that the volume of cases and transactions could overwhelm bank staff managing the account.

The Ministry of Justice said it will continue working with the bailiffs’ association to

improve monitoring and management of funds from court cases, with the aim of protecting citizens' interests and restoring confidence in the judiciary.