

Trial by jury not suitable for South Africa

Trial by jury is not suitable for South Africa and would simply clog up the legal system, Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng said in Durban on Wednesday.

Mogoeng said he believed that the wide discrepancies in education between various South Africans would be problematic when using juries.

The jury system was abolished in South Africa in the 1960s.

"It would complicate the system. I'm against it because it's time consuming and it is not suited to our country," he said.

Mogoeng was speaking at the law school of the University of KwaZulu-Natal's socio-legal programme.

He said that after having witnessed the jury trial system in the United States, he believed that the country would "be better off without it".

Asked about perceptions that his appointment last year was politically motivated, Mogoeng challenged anyone to bring proof of that.

He said he was concerned that there were some who "were lazily clasp[ing] at allegations" and challenged the media to "not be lazy" and investigate the facts.

He said the selection process had been exactly the same as that of his predecessors and that there was no evidence that his appointment was political.

"How politics comes into my appointment amazes me."

When Mogoeng arrived at the university he was met by Professor David Mcquoid-Mason who lectured him when he was a student there.

The two men exchanged embraces outside the university's Howard College.

Source: *Sapa* via I-NET Bridge