

# New justice minister aims for more women judges

## DOREEN PREMDEY

THE new Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Mohamed Enver Surty, says he is up to the challenge of tackling the difficult portfolio.

Surty, 55, a former attorney and deputy minister of education, said he would focus on restoring the reputation of the justice system and on women's issues, including maintenance and social injustices. "South Africa has a proud, strong democracy but we should not take it for granted. We need to protect this and watch over it at all times," Surty told the *Herald*.

He said

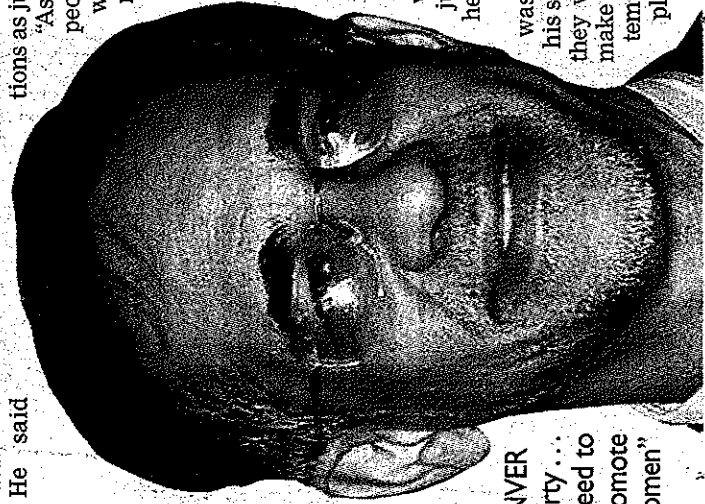
the government would not interfere with judicial matters.

"The judicial system is independent from government, and that is the way it will stay," he said. "I practised as an attorney for more than 14 years and understand the justice system well. I have a feel for the law and know what happens in courtrooms. And when matters are in court, the government will leave the decisions in the hands of the judges."

Surty said the country had made great strides in transformation and his department would continue to encourage and promote attorneys and advocates to apply for positions as judges.

"Aside from getting people of colour, we will motivate more women to apply for positions as judges. We need diversity and a gender balance. Women understand social issues better and we need to promote women in our justice system," he said.

Surty said he was confident in his staff and trusted they would help him make the justice system a shining example for the world to follow.



**ENVER**  
Surty...  
"need to promote women"

## WHO HE IS

**Born:** August 15, 1953

**High school:** Lenasia, matriculated in 1970

**Tertiary education:**

BA, University of Durban-Westville; B Proc, Unisa; Masters in Law, University of Western Cape

**Positions held:**

Human rights lawyer, general practitioner 1974-1994; member of parliament, National Council of Provinces 1994-2004;

Provincial and programming whip, North West 1994-

1999; chief whip, National Council of Provinces 1999-2004; deputy minister, Department of Education

☐ Surty acted for the ANC after its unbanning

☐ He acted for Cosatu and its affiliates, especially the NUM

☐ He was a member of the management committees of the Constitutional Assembly and negotiator for the ANC on the Bill of Rights 1994-1996

**SOURCE:**  
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