

Report: Britain is short of judges

by UPI

LONDON -- A shortage of judges in England and Wales is leading to overcrowded prisons and criminal trial delays, The Times of London reported Monday. More than 30 of the 47 vacancies are in the South East Circuit, which includes the London area, the report said. In order to cope, retired judges are being used and the courts have taken to hiring part-time transcription clerks, the Times said. The measures have an advantage in that the government saves money, as the retired judges and part-time clerks aren't eligible for holiday pay or pension contributions from the government, the newspaper said. Sally O'Neill, vice chairwoman of the Criminal Bar Association, urged British Justice Secretary Jack Straw to act soon in filling the vacancies. "It is necessary to keep the appointment system going to make sure younger people are coming through and promote the aim of having greater diversity in the judiciary," she told The Times.

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