Six Ugandans charged over Shs4.9b cross-border fraud

The accused allegedly committed the offence between February 14 and February 18, at various locations in Kigali and Kampala.

BY JULIET KIGONGO

Six Ugandans accused of orchestrating a cross-border electronic fraud scheme involving more than Shs4.9 billion have been charged and remanded to prison as investigations continue.

The suspects appeared yesterday before Buganda Road Chief Magistrate Ritah Neumbe Kidasa, facing a charge of electronic fraud contrary to Section 19 (1) and (2) of the Computer Misuse Act.

They are Solomon Mugisha, alias Nelson, 33, a businessman; Enock Mpanga Kazige, 34, a farmer; Kateraga Benedicto, 35; Faruk Kiyimba, 30, a farmer; Gerald Oketch, 31, a support engineer at Medix Ltd and Uber driver residing in Kitezi; and Isma Katamba, a businessman.

The proceedings were adjourned to allow the State to complete investigations and verify bail documents.

Prosecution, led by Ms Grace Amy told the court that inquiries into the matter were still ongoing and sought more time before the case could proceed.

"Your Worship, inquiries in this matter are still ongoing. We pray for an adjournment to complete the inquiries," Ms Amy submitted.

Defence lawyers said they had instructions to apply for bail on behalf of the accused.

"We have instructions to apply for bail," the defence team said.

The suspects appear before Buganda Road Chief Magistrate's Court in Kampala yesterday. PHOTO/JULIET KIGONGO

The State indicated readiness to respond but requested that it be formally served with the applications, particularly for one of the accused.

"I ask the lawyer for Faruk to serve me with his bail application. I also seek time to verify documents of the sureties," Ms Amy added.

During the session, Benedicto Kateraga, through his lawyers, presented two sureties to support his bail application. The sureties were David Kasaga, his uncle, and Ivan Sebuliba, a friend.

"We have the introduction letter for the accused. We pray that the court finds the sureties substantial, and since the case is bailable, grants him bail," the defence submitted.

The court did not immediately rule on the application. The magistrate directed that more time be allowed for verification of documents and proper filing by all parties.

Chief Magistrate Kidasa adjourned the matter to April 13 and instructed that the other accused persons file their bail applications electronically.

"The matter is adjourned to April 13. Other suspects should upload their bail documents on ECCMIS," she directed.

According to the charge sheet, the six accused, together with others still at large, allegedly committed the offence between February 14 and February 18, 2026, at various locations in Kigali, Rwanda, and Kampala, Uganda.

Prosecution alleges that the group, using a computer and by means of deception, manipulated the banking system of Equity Bank Kigali and secured an unlawful financial gain.

The alleged sum involved in the fraud is 4.9 billion Rwandan francs.

The suspects remain in custody as investigations continue.

BACKGROUND

Uganda's losses from cyber related crimes, including mobile money and internet banking fraud, are estimated to range between Shs1.5 billion and Shs18 billion annually, though many incidents go unreported. In the banking sector, experts highlighted that losses from cyber bank crime, including sophisticated hacks and fraud, hit about Shs1.02 trillion in 2024.

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