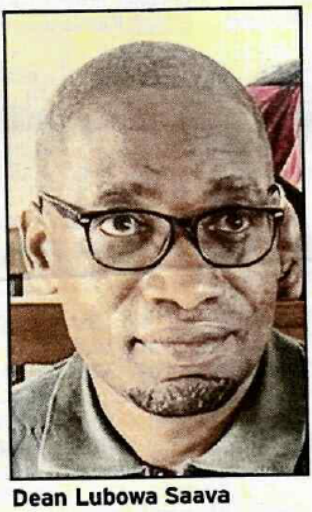
JOURNALIST FINED SH5.1M OVER HATE SPEECH

By Barbra Kabahumuza

The Makindye Chief Magistrates' Court has fined Dean Lubowa Saava, a journalist, sh5.1m after he was found guilty of hate speech.

In default of payment, Saava will serve a three-year jail term.

Saava had been charged with nine counts of malicious information, contrary to Section 28(1) and (2) of the Computer Misuse Act, as well as hate speech, contrary to Section 26(1)(a) and (2) of the same Act. He also faced charges of broadcasting without a licence, contrary to provisions of the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) Act.



Dean Lubowa Saava

COURT HEARING

During the hearing, Chief State Attorneys Jonathan Muwaganya and Richard Birivumbuka informed court that the prosecution was ready to proceed with the case and had three witnesses present.

However, when the charges were read to him, Lubowa admitted to committing the offences.

In her ruling, Chief Magistrate Sarah Basemera directed Saava to take corrective measures within one month.

As part of the orders, Saava must pull down all defamatory publications against the victims from his social media accounts.

He is also required to publish a public apology in the *New Vision* and *Bukedde* newspapers by April 5, 2026.

The court noted that these undertakings formed part of the mitigating factors considered during sentencing.

The magistrate further warned that failure to comply with the court orders would amount to contempt of court.

In delivering the judgment, Basemera urged media practitioners to use their platforms responsibly, emphasising that the press should not be used to demean or defame others.

THE OFFENCES

The Prosecution told court that between the months of July and August 2025, in various areas of Kampala, Saava, while using a computer through an online television platform known as TV 10 Ganomazima, shared, transmitted and published information alleging that Anne Twinomugisha Muhairwe, the deputy Inspector General of Government, had solicited a bribe of sh200m from Danile Lokong, the Kabong district Local Government engineer.

According to the prosecution, Saava alleged that the money was intended to influence Twinomugisha not to proceed with investigations and closure of a road construction project that was ongoing in Kabong.

INVESTIGATIONS FINDINGS

However, court heard that investigations revealed that there was no such road construction project in Kabong district that was under investigation by the office of the President which would have necessitated Twinomugisha's intervention to close it.

Investigations further established that there had been no communication between Lokong and Twinomugisha, and neither was there any contact between Lokong and Ntesibe.

Court also heard that Saava had been operating the online platform without a licence from Uganda Communications Commission.

The magistrate then asked Saava whether he had heard and understood the facts as presented by the prosecution and whether they were true.

Saava responded in the affirmative.

The magistrate subsequently convicted him on his own plea of guilty.