

By Michael Odeng

The Chief Magistrates' Court in Kaberamaido has sentenced a court clerk to one year and two months in prison over unlawful possession of court files.

Chief Magistrate Patricia Ndagire handed down the sentence after finding that Emmanuel Osege, a former clerk at Dokolo Chief Magistrates' Court, kept two case files at his home and used them to demand money.

The court heard that the files were recovered from Osege's residence in Abota village during a police search linked to investigations into office breaking and theft of a court computer.

In a judgment dated April 29, 2026, the Chief Magistrate said the convict abused his position by removing and hiding files that were pending hearing, forcing the court to make duplicate files.

"The prosecution proved all the ingredients of the offence of unlawful possession of government stores against

COURT CLERK **JAILED** FOR HIDING FILES

the accused person beyond reasonable doubt. The accused person is therefore found guilty of the offence as charged," Ndagire held.

The magistrate observed that although unlawful possession of government stores is a misdemeanour attracting a lighter sentence, committing it as a court clerk erodes public confidence in the Judiciary and stands against the Judiciary's mission of effectively and efficiently administering justice.

She described the act as a betrayal of judicial values and warned court staff against misusing their positions to hide court files.

ABOUT THE HIDDEN FILES

The court heard that the concealed files related to two criminal cases handled by the Dokolo Chief Magistrates' Court involving Bosco Okuma,



Osege was sentenced to one year and two months in prison.

who is battling charges of demanding money with menaces and obtaining money by false pretence.

LEGAL REPRESENTATION

During trial, the state, represented by Irene Nambozo, presented four witnesses, including police officers and a court process server, who

testified that the files were found in the convict's house.

The convict was represented by lawyer George Engwau, who later withdrew from the case.

The witnesses included Corporal John Martin Odida, Superintendent of Police Absolom Mpala, Constable Debora Grace and Susan Akello, a process server and in charge of archives at Dokolo Chief Magistrates' Court.

According to the magistrate, the prosecution proved that the convict was in possession of government stores suspected of having been stolen or unlawfully obtained.

"I find that the available evidence sufficiently proves that the accused person was found in possession of marked government stores belonging to Dokolo Chief Magistrates' Court. This ingredient is accordingly made out by the

prosecution," Ndagire noted.

The prosecution stated that during a search at the Osege's home, investigators recovered two original court files bearing the inscription "Dokolo Chief Magistrates' Court" and referencing Okuma Bosco as the accused.

They added that photographic evidence was taken at the scene, marking the locations within the residence where the two court files were recovered.

FALSE ACCOUNT

Court documents show that the convict denied being present during the search, claiming he was asked to sign a search certificate while seated at his home after the exercise had already been carried out, thereby suggesting that the search was unlawful.

However, the prosecution maintained that the search certificate bears his signature,

as well as those of his wife and the LC I chairperson, whom he admitted knowing.

The magistrate noted that the convict was no longer serving as a court clerk at Dokolo Chief Magistrates' Court and, upon transfer to Kaberamaido Chief Magistrates' Court, he ought to have formally handed over any property belonging to his former station.

According to the magistrate, there was no lawful justification for Osege's possession of the court files.

Ndagire noted that the convict failed to provide a satisfactory explanation to the court on how he came into possession of the documents.

"I find the accused's account to be false and inconsistent with possession of the Government stores in question. He has failed to court as to how he came by the Government stores," Ndagire held.



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