legedly went to the woman's rented residence, where the deceased had spent

scene.

"I went to the scene and found the body in a pool of blood at 2am. It was lyon it. I also informed the defence secretary, who joined me later at the scene," the resident said.

"The suspect is currently in police custody, efforts are in place to arrest the woman," Ms Kawala said.

Katanga's widow starts defence in murder case



Ms Molly Katanga (right), the key suspect in the murder of her husband Henry Katanga, speaks to one of her lawyers, Mr Bruce Musinguzi, at the High Court in Kampala on July 2, 2024. PHOTO/ABUBAKER LUBOWA

The accused has to respond to murder charges following ruling placing her at centre of the incident.

BY ANTHONY WESAKA

Ms Molly Katanga, the widow and prime suspect in the killing of Kampala businessman Henry Katanga, is expected to take to the witness stand today to begin her defence against murder charges that carry a possible death penalty upon conviction.

Her defence comes after a ruling by Justice Rosette Comfort Kania, who dismissed a "no case to answer" submission by her legal team, finding that the prosecution had established a prima facie case requiring Ms Katanga to respond.

In the February 26 ruling, Justice Kania held that the evidence presented places Ms Katanga at the centre of the incident, noting that she was the last person seen with the deceased on November 2, 2023, and that this necessitated her side of the story.

The court cited several key pieces of evidence that Ms Katanga must explain, including the application of the "last seen" doctrine, the presence of her DNA as the most dominant on the alleged murder weapon, traces of gunshot residue on her body, a cut on her right small finger, and what the prosecution describes as suspicious conduct following the incident.

Questions were also raised about the state of the crime scene and her claims that her head injuries were sustained in a traffic accident.

"Therefore, I find that the prosecution evidence establishes a prima facie case against A1 (Molly) requiring her to explain. Consequently, I put A1 (Molly) on her defence on the indictment of murder," ruled Justice Kania on February 26.

Appearing via video link from Luzira Prison, Ms Katanga was advised of three options for her defence: to give sworn testimony, make an unsworn statement, or remain silent.

If she opts for sworn testimony, her lawyers from Kampala Associated Advocates (KAA), and MacDusman Kabega will guide her, and the prosecution will have the opportunity to cross-examine her. Should she choose to make an unsworn statement, neither her lawyers nor the prosecution will be allowed to question her.

The third option allows her to remain silent, in which case the court may rely heavily on the prosecution's evidence.

The first thing Ms Katanga is expected to do this morning is, through her defence lawyers, inform the court which option she has narrowed down to.

Ms Katanga is jointly charged with her two daughters, Patricia Kakwanzi and Martha Nkwazi Katanga, who face lesser charges related to destroying evidence and being accessories after the fact of murder.

Other co-accused include Ch[redacted] Otai, a nursing officer believed to [redacted] been among the first responders at the scene, and George Amanyire, then a shamba boy at the Katangas' residence in Mbuya, Kampala.

The prosecution alleges that Katanga fatally shot her husband using a pistol, and that the co-accused later attempted to conceal evidence linked to the crime.

Following the defence hearings, the court will proceed to final submissions from both the prosecution and defence, consider the opinions of assessors, and subsequently set a date for judgment to determine Katanga's fate.

EVIDENCE IN COURT

- Application of the "last seen" doctrine
- DNA said to be dominant on the alleged murder weapon
- Traces of gunshot residue on the accused
- Injury on her right small finger
- Questions over conduct after the incident
- Disputed account of how she sustained head injuries
- Allegation: Shooting with pistol

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