Four arrested over sh380m gold scam

By Charles Etukuri

The Police Minerals Protection Unit is holding four suspects for allegedly defrauding a South African national of $103,050 (sh388m) in a fake gold scam.

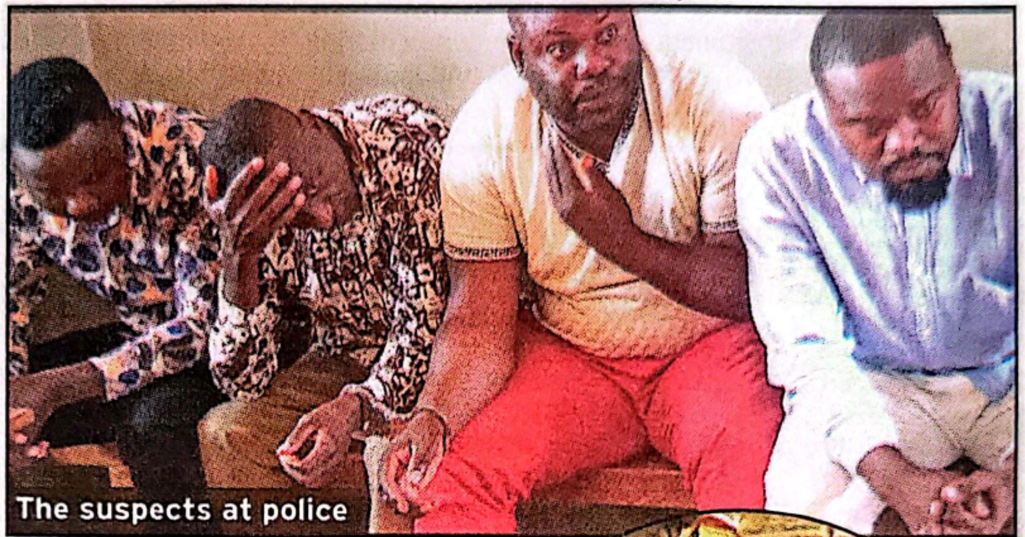
The four suspects, including a Congolese national, were arrested after the Police raided the premises of Huanqui Precious Metal Trading Limited, a company based in Buziga, Makindye division, Kampala.

Kampala Metropolitan Police deputy spokesperson Luke Owoyesigyire said the Police swung into action after Attlee Shaun Robert Lloyd, a South African national, reported a $103,050 (sh388m) fraud case against the four suspects.

The four were Edson Ogwang, Ronald Safari, Joseph Karumba, and Jacob Opio.

"According to preliminary investigations, the complainant was introduced to individuals operating under Huanqui Precious Metal Trading Limited, a company based in Buziga. They promised to sell to him gold and export it to Dubai," Owoyesigyire said.

Lloyd told the Police that he paid the suspects $103,050 (sh388m) to cater for insurance, taxes and logistics in the transaction. However, the promised shipment was never made



The suspects at police

and additional demands for money raised suspicion, prompting him to report the matter to the Police.

"A search was conducted at the company premises, leading to the recovery of several exhibits, including suspected gold bars, a vehicle, passports, identity cards, a precious metals analyser, and documents," Owoyesigyire added.

He said samples of the of the recovered metallic substances have been submitted to the Government Analytical Laboratory in Entebbe for examination.

The fake gold

Owoyesigyire further said the Police had also written to the Uganda Registration Services Bureau and the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development to verify the company's registration and licensing status.

The Police also impounded a fake precious metals testing machine and several forged identity cards which purported to indicate that Opio was a government tester from the energy and mineral development ministry.

The arrest of the suspects comes at a time when security agency are battling increasing cases of gold scamming in the country. In April this year, Police spokesperson Rusoke Kituuma said over 25 companies were being probed by the Police over gold scamming.

Early this month, the Makindye Chief Magistrates Court presided over by Robert Magara charged three suspects with two counts of obtaining money by false pretence after they allegedly conned Cristinel Ile Giju, a Romanian national, $120,000 (sh450m) in a botched gold scam.

The trio included city lawyer Faith Namusana, Jose Maringa, an Angolan and Moise Mawotela, a Democratic Republic of Congo national.