

UNEB scout leaked exams at sh1m

By Cecilia Okoth

The source of the recent leaked Senior Four examinations has been linked to a scout in Iganga district who took sh1m bribe from fraudsters and gave them keys to a storage station for question papers.

The scout confessed to Dan Odong, the executive secretary of Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB), after he was arrested by Police on Tuesday morning.

He and 26 others, majority of whom are teachers, examination supervisor, a school director, a bursar and a student, are currently held at several Police stations across the country, pending investigations.

"As investigations intensified, it became clear that the main source was somewhere in Iganga. A key suspect arrested this weekend revealed their source of the fraud and the persons behind it," Odongo told journalists at a press briefing at the UNEB offices yesterday.

"The source was revealed as coming from a storage station called Busesa, Iganga and he informed Police that it involved the connivance of the area supervisor and a scout who had been posted to oversee the conduct of the examinations," he added.

"The scout confessed to have been paid sh1m and he surrendered the keys, which he was supposed to protect, to the fraudsters."

Who is a scout?

According to Hamis Kaheru, the UNEB spokesperson, scouts mainly include teachers and 'people of integrity' who are recruited by UNEB to monitor the exercise and prevent exam malpractices. They carry keys to the exam storage facilities, majority of which are Police stations. However, in the absence of a Police station, Kaheru said 'strong rooms' can be built at sub-county headquarters or church missions to secure examination materials.

The arrests

Polly Namaye, the assistant Police spokesperson, said the nine suspects arrested in Kampala hailed from different districts, Iganga inclusive.

Five arrests were made in Entebbe and another five in the Rwizi region in the districts of Mbarara and Ibanda, and four in the newly created Bunyangabo district (Rwenzori west). Three suspects hail from Soroti region in Serere and Amuria districts and one prime suspect from Iganga.

"Since most of the malpractices were done through social media platforms, the suspects will be charged in accordance with the computer misuse Act and the UNEB Act," Namaye said.

In one scenario, one of the headteachers in a school in Kawempe division, who alerted UNEB on the leakage, said he was approached by a teacher who wanted to vend exams to him.

The initial motive of the fraudsters in Busesa was to help their students pass the exams, but then came the financial implication where they felt the need to hit two birds with one stone.

No UNEB staff involved

Odongo said the investigations thus far do not link the UNEB printer, printing press or any staff of what he described as an "unfortunate episode in the Board's history".

On whether there will be a repeat of the affected papers, Odongo explained that it will require enough data to necessitate the repeat.

"Any form of malpractice attracts penalties such as holding and cancelling the results of the culprits. Others are withdrawing the school's accreditation as an exam centre, prosecution and deregistration of teachers involved."

The law currently states that once found guilty of exam malpractices, culprits are imprisoned for two years or pay a fine of sh50,000 or both.

PLE kicks off today

Meanwhile, a total of 646,080 candidates will begin today (Thursday) to write their Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE).

The exams, slated to end tomorrow (Friday), attracted a total of 333,495 (51.6%) female candidates.