

Army court remands 16 suspects over Soroti businesswoman's murder

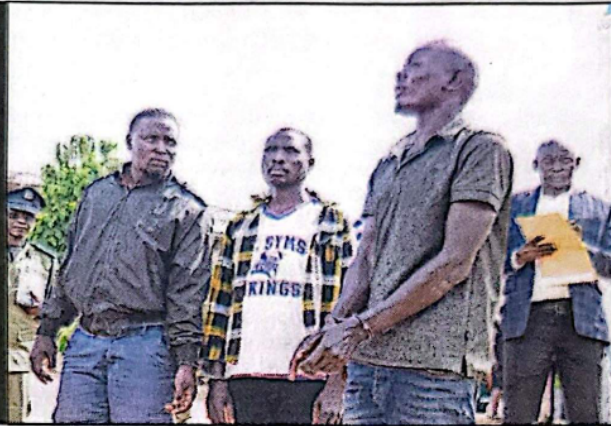
By Michael Odeng

Sixteen suspects, including four women, have been charged and remanded to Luzira Prison over the murder of businesswoman Patricia Kokunda in Soroti city.

The suspects include David Emenyu aka Ogwang Sam, 46, (believed to be the shooter); Rashid Eyamu aka Odekuro, 30, (the alleged mastermind of the robbery); Alfred Elacu aka Denis Oduc, 56, (suspected to have supplied the ammunition); Salume Akello aka Irepu, 23, (the wife of the suspected shooter) and Simon Epeu aka Solomon Iboda, 32. Others are businessman Emmanuel Okello aka Vincent Imorning Opolot, 30; Julius Elwanu, 48; businessman Jorem Ojele aka Jogo, 39; Alex Okello, 38; broker Felix Onebo, 26; Hellen Akello, 49; Salume Akello aka Ingichu, 70; Moses Erasa, 33; businessman Emmanuel Amanu aka Amanu City, 32; MTN data assistant Silver Adetu, 29 and Agnes Apolot, 41.

On April 3, 2026, Kokunda, a 32-year-old mobile money operator, was shot dead by unknown assailants in Soroti city, who made off with her

Simon Epeu, alias Iboda (right), and his colleagues, in handcuffs, are the key suspects in the murder of mobile money agent, Patricia Kokunda, in Soroti city, at the scene of the crime during reconstruction



handbag containing cash and other valuables. The attack occurred at about 4:40am at Station Road near Goalman Supermarket in Soroti city.

Kokunda was not only a mobile money agent, but also a cattle trader, known to move with large sums of cash across markets in the Teso sub-region, making her a target.

On Tuesday, the accused appeared before the General Court Martial in Makindye presided over by Col. Fredrick Kangwamu and were

charged with aggravated robbery and murder, contrary to sections 266, 267, 171 and 172 of the Penal Code Act.

The offence of aggravated robbery and murder attracts a maximum sentence of death, upon conviction.

"Have you heard and understood the charges preferred against you? Do you accept or deny the charge?" the court chairperson asked. In response, the accused denied the charges.

The prosecution, led by Col. Raphael Mugisha, informed the court

ALLEGATIONS

The prosecution alleges that on April 3, 2026, at Station Road near Goalman Supermarket in Soroti city, the accused, together with others still at large, robbed Kokunda of sh28m, a smartphone valued at sh500,000 and three mobile phones worth sh150,000.

It is further alleged that, at the time of, immediately before and immediately after the robbery, the accused had a deadly weapon, namely, a submachine gun registration number CC6594M, a firearm ordinarily the monopoly of the defence forces.

that investigations into the matter are still ongoing and asked the court chairman to adjourn the matter to another date for mention.

Mugisha was assisted by Maj. Ambrose Guma, Capt. Capt. Gift Mubehamwe, Capt. Alex Mukwana, Capt. Alex Lasto Mukhwana, and second lieutenants Regina Nanzala, Anthony Phillip Olupot, Irene

Kyomuhendo and Dickens Kaganda.

The accused persons were represented by Maj. Simon Busagwa Nsubuga, Capt. Daniel Kagombe and Second Lt. Albert Kamukama.

Police investigations indicate that Emenyu, believed to be the gunman, was previously convicted by the Soroti High Court and imprisoned for arson and looting. In his statement, Emenyu reportedly told an inmate that upon release, he intended to obtain a firearm and seek revenge against those he suspected of killing his sister.

HOW THE ATTACK HAPPENED

Police investigations show that the accused persons first devised their plan in Moru Apesur, where investigators believe Kokunda had been under surveillance for several days before the attack.

From her rented house near the YY Bus service offices in the city centre, her movements were closely monitored. At about 5:40am on Good Friday, Kokunda left her home and boarded a taxi along Station Road, near Goal Man Supermarket, heading to Ocorimongin cattle market in Katakwi district.