

State declares Red Pepper directors a security risk

Argument. Mr Abdul-Salam Waiswa, who represented the DPP, says they were likely to repeat the offence.

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KAMPALA. The prosecution yesterday asked court not to release the eight *Red Pepper* journalists charged with offending President Museveni.

The prosecution argued that their freedom would endanger national security.

Mr Abdul-Salam Waiswa from the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), who represented the Director of Public Prosecutions, asked Buganda Road Court to send the *Red Pepper* directors and journalists back to Luzira Prison for further remand. He said if they were released, they were likely to repeat the offence.

"The nature in which the accused committed the case makes it unique because it involved the use of electronic gadgets. This means that if they are released on bail they will have full access to their phones, computers, something that will delay the investigations," Mr

Waiswa told the court.

The accused are: the publication's chief executive officer Richard Tusiime, chief marketing officer Arinaitwe Rugyendo, chief operations officer Patrick Mugumya, chief finance officer Johnson Musinguzi, and chief commercial officer James Mujuni.

Others are managing editor Ben Byarabaha, news editor Francis Tumusiime and his deputy Richard Kintu.

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ABDUL-SALAM WAISWA

Mr Waiswa further submitted that court should also take into account the gravity of the offence of publishing information prejudicial to national security allegedly committed by the suspects which shows they are a danger to Uganda, Rwanda and the entire Great

Lakes regional security if they are out of jail.

However, their counsel Mr Max Mutabingwa and Kandeebe Ntambirweki told the court that the accused were not yet convicted and therefore should be treated as suspects, not convicts.

Their lawyers argued that all the accused persons' computers and telephones were confiscated by police and their company was still under siege by the State.

Prosecution states that on November 20, at *Red pepper* offices in Namanve, Mukono District, the accused unlawfully caused publication and distribution of a newspaper with a story on military operations, strategies and troop location well knowing that such publication can disrupt public order and security.

The prosecution further contends that the publication and distribution of said newspaper story injured the reputation of President Museveni, his brother Gen Salim Saleh and security minister Lt Gen Henry Tumukunde and exposed the trio to hatred, contempt and public ridicule.

