

# University secretary, 3 others charged with corruption

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**KAMPALA.** Four senior government officials, among them the Soroti University Secretary, Ms Ruth Etibot Achimo, have been separately charged in court with corruption offences.

The group, arrested by the Anti-Corruption Unit of State House from their respective workstations, were charged with offences of corruption, diversion of public resources and false accounting. They appeared before the Anti-Corruption Court at Kololo in Kampala on Friday.

The other suspects are the principal of Barlonyo Agro-Technical Institute in Lira, Mr James Mugambe, Mr Steven Mwembe, a senior law enforcement officer at Bugembe Town Council, and Lyantonde District water engineer Francis Kiwanuka. Ms Achimo appeared before Grade One Magistrate Moses Nabende and denied five charges of diversion of public resources worth more than

Shs1.6b. She was released on cash bail of Shs10m upon presenting three sureties.

Ms Achimo, who is jointly charged with another university official, Mr Edward Obeelee, was ordered never to access her office premises until conclusion of the case.

The court also ordered her to deposit her passport and a land title. She returns to court on April 29 for mention of her case.

Mr Nabende also issued criminal summons requiring Mr Obeelee to appear in court on the same date.

Prosecution alleges that between July 2017 and June 2018, in Soroti District, Ms Achimo and Mr Obeelee, being employed as secretary and bursar, respectively, diverted hundreds of millions of the university's funds.

According to the prosecution, Shs268m meant for capital development was used to pay employee allowances and other employee benefits, and Shs69.5m was used to pay rent for the benefit of Esonyu Jo-



**Charged.** Ms Ruth Etibot Achimo

seph and Chrisma Designers Limited.

The charge sheet shows that another Shs812.8m for capital development was diverted to pay for disbursement fees and legal fees in respect of a short term legal consultancy services for the benefit of Okurut and Company Advocates; and Shs212.4m was paid for retainer fees for the same law firm and Shs245.1m used for inland travels.

In another case, Mr Mwembe denied accusations of soliciting a Shs3.5m bribe from a one Wil-

liam Mpagi. It is alleged that Mr Mwembe had solicited for a bribe from Mr Mpagi, claiming that he was able to exert improper influence over a decision of the Uganda Land Commission of Inquiry.

Prosecution states that on March 26, at JAVA House on Lugogo Bypass in Kampala District, Mr Mwembe accepted Shs500,000 from Mr Mpagi claiming that he was able to exert improper influence over the decision of the land inquiry.

Mr Mwembe appeared before the same magistrate (Nabende), who granted him a cash bail of Shs8m. Before another Magistrate, Ms Sarah Namusobya, the principal of Barlonyo, Mr Mugambe denied accusations of false accounting of Shs44.7m. He was released on cash bail of Shs8m. The magistrate also granted another cash bail of Shs8m to Mr Kiwanuka who denied accusations of giving irregular instructions to a motor garage in violation of PPDA rules and false accounting of Shs31m.